



RE-IMAGINING MEDIA EDUCATION

Looking at Culturally Inclusive Media Education in an Aboriginal Community: A Case Study

DRAFT

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Research conducted as part of my PhD thesis in coordination with Simon Fraser University's LUCID Research Project, School District 50, Tahayghen Elementary School and the Haida Educational committee in Haida Gwaii, British Columbia, Canada

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RE-IMAGINING MEDIA EDUCATION

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THE SUPERNATURAL POWERS OF MOUSE WOMAN

After months of planning and preparation, my media-education research finally began at Tahayghen Elementary school in Masset, Haida Gwaii.

As I gathered my materials on Sunday night, I was both excited and anxious to bring the lessons that I had developed to new students.

While I felt comfortable teaching these very-familiar advertising lessons, I was extremely unfamiliar with Haida culture and taking on a role, teaching culturally relevant material.

This all changed when I woke the next morning to find a small, unravelled bundle of wool attached to a note by the door of our little cabin in the woods. I quickly scanned the note for a signature;



"*Mouse Woman!*" I cried out. And my shoulders sagged with relief. For it was known that Mouse Woman was a friend to young people (and struggling graduate students) in distress.

Mouse Woman's big, busy mouse eyes must have spotted my confusion the night before and left a clue to guide me.

"*Mouse Woman,*" I said again, in an awed whisper. For Mouse Woman was also a spirit, and I knew I must show my respect, "*thank you for the gift*".

In return I made sure to leave this smallest of grandmothers some more knitting wool as a gift, for it was well known that in exchange for such advice, wool must be given.

Mouse Woman's note included a poem called *Jimmy Jet and His TV Set* by Shel Silverstein and a reminder of Christie Harris' collection of beautifully-written stories of Mouse Woman's adventures. These two wonderful pieces of literature became the basis of my four-week, media-education program, inspiring an investigation into the extremes of an unbalanced media saturated world, the chaos that

could result and the strength and ingenuity that is needed to create order and equality once more.



This short guide looks at my adventures with Mouse Woman and wonderful Grade 3/4 class in Masset, Haida Gwaii, Canada.

I have been fortunate during my research to find strength from Mouse Woman to step outside of my own comfort zone, to search for resources and find a way of incorporating Haida content into media education by taking a journey into the wonderful, mythical world of Haida Gwaii.

Ahhh... I just caught a sight of something white flash across the kitchen! I hope it is Mouse Woman again... I start teaching the Grade 5's tomorrow and I am looking for inspiration.

WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THIS GUIDE

The project

aimed to build and interpret a complex holistic picture of a media education program which incorporated both culturally inclusive materials and the theories of Imaginative Education.



A major component of this project was the **LOCALIZATION OF CURRICULUM CONENT** for example using Haida cultural stories, and knowledge for classrooms on Haida Gwaii.

Research Question:

Can media education created using the theories of IE provide students with a more engaging and 'awakening' experience?

Can IE provide the elements to the curriculum that are needed to reach students at a deeper level, to disrupt the naturalness of media in their lives and provide them with opportunities to question the role of media in their everyday life?

Contributions to research:

This project will thus contribute to research on: the role of imagination in teaching and learning in different cultural and social contexts; media education and its impacts of youth health; education in Aboriginal communities.

Components of this guide:

This guide provides an overview of a six week pilot project which used the theories of Imaginative Education (IE) and media education. This guide thus provides:

- 1) an overview of the theories of Imaginative Education
- 2) A focused look at the importance of culturally inclusive curriculum
- 3) A review of a new focus for media education
- 4) Examples of media education lesson plans which focus not only on the use of culturally inclusive materials but which were also developed using the IE frameworks.

The RESEARCH PROJECT:

This project is the first to combines the theories of Imaginative Education and media education content.

Imaginative education provided the main framework for teaching and learning for both students and classroom teachers.

Methods:

Participatory ethnography was the method throughout the project. This included researcher journaling, in class observations, informal interviews with teachers and students as well as formal interviews, to examine the impact this new approach to media education had on the engagement and level of awareness by the students and on any changes in teachers notions of media education and the role of imagi-

nation in the classroom.

Community involvement:

The aim of any media education project, is in my opinion, to connect with the community. Media takes place outside of the school and thus connecting with members of the community becomes imperative in the success and support needed for any significant changes to take place in the media saturated world of children today.



WHY IS MEDIA EDUCATION IMPORTANT ?

As children's lives become increasingly media-saturated, it becomes crucial to provide students with an 'imaginative awakesness' of the impact that media and lifestyle choices have on their physical, emotional and social wellbeing. I have chosen to use the word awakesness rather than awareness because I feel we ARE aware and have been aware of the impacts for decades, now, but yet we have not had the time to become more awakened to its impacts on our lives, our friendships and our families.

Currently, media education programs often lack extensive teacher training or administrative support, are often loosely defined, under-resourced, and focus on technical training; thus leaving teachers to their own devices to meet the curriculum requirements set out by the BC Ministry of Education.

A number of researchers have found that heavy media consumption correlates with risks of increased rates of bullying and anti-social behaviours (Robinson, 2001), decreased school achievement (Gortmaker, Salter, Walker, William, 1990), and increased rates of obesity (Tremblay & Willms, 2000) in the lives of Canadian children as a whole.

A 2002 cross-Canada survey on youth health suggests schools can be crucial instruments in contributing to good health and the avoidance of harmful behaviours, particularly for Aboriginal students (Kinnon, 2002).

Importance of media education in Aboriginal Communities:

Little research, however, has been conducted on the impact that media use is having specifically on Aboriginal children in Canada. The research literature does suggest that Aboriginal children are at higher risk for all of these problems than children in general (e.g. Levesque, Cargo and Salzberg, 2004; Brade, Duncan and Sokal, 2003), and it needs to be ascertained whether media use is implicated in these lifestyle risks, and the role of media education in helping to reduce some of them.

Media education, long identified by the BC Ministry of Education as an essential cross-curricular topic, offers a promising approach to youth health; yet current media-education programs typically lack extensive teacher training or administrative support and are often loosely defined, under-resourced, or focused on technical training (Duncan, Pungente, & Shepherd, 2000, Buckingham, 2003). Their potential impact on youth health is therefore quite limited.



MEDIA EDUCATION IN BC

Although media education has existed in the Canadian school curricula since the 1990s, insufficient teacher training has long plagued its dissemination in classrooms due to funding deficiencies and few accredited media-education-teacher-training institutions.

As such, the chances that media-education professional-development will be relegated to summer institutes or short-term, professional-development courses increases.

I believe two major problems result from the current trends in media-education training.

- 1) **lack of connection to the community:** many programs rely on a curricula consisting of 'sound bites' designed to be easily digested and transmitted to all teachers and students, regardless of their cultural background or geographical location.

- 2) **lack of long-term education and support:** many programs provide ready-made materials; therefore do not support the development of lesson plans by the teachers themselves. Thus leaving teachers with outdated or irrelevant materials to use in their classroom practice.

Many of media education programs have not created a learning community: A *learning community* or group of teachers within a school who act as a support system for one another in their curriculum development and implementation is essential in the long-term and integrated use of new curricula material.



OBSTACLES TO MEDIA EDUCATION

A survey of 80 BC teachers in the fall 2006 and spring of 2007 indicated that many teachers felt that the climate was **not** highly supportive of their media education efforts.

This lack of support was seen not only in their own school environment, but also within the province itself—teachers were not provided with time, curriculum materials nor adequate training opportunities.

Few resources including up-to-date technology (computers, data projectors, video editing equipment) were readily available.

Another major point of frustration was the lack of up-to-date materials including resource books, videos, DVD, ads, etc. Using resources from the 1980s did not for many teacher (nor students) seem very appealing.

These obstacles meant that many teachers seemed to feel that teaching media education made greater demands on them than they were able to handle.

A challenge that many were not willing to take on considered the lack of support from their schools and districts and the reality that many were left to their own devices to search for materials and ways of incorporating them into the curriculum.

Data obtained in 2007 after 80 BC teachers completed written surveys

WHY WE NEED TO REVISIT CURRENT MEDIA EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Grade 3's scurried into position on the carpet and with wide eyes and energetically waving arms. This urgency was caused by a rare chance to talk about their favourite TV shows and video games; In School!

As they were chosen and rushed through the lists of characters and shows they adored many were greeted with confirming nods and 'oh yahs' by their peers. Others were faced explaining why their preference did not appear to correspond with the majority; causing quiet examination or a changing of their mind. *Ahh talking about personal preferences in school can be a tumultuous experience.*

As we chatted I, the media educator, continually reintegrated the lack of knowledge I had about their media culture — I was now the student and they the teachers.

After a couple of weeks we began looking at various cases. One was called 'The Case of the Missing Time', aka media time diaries. We began by examining how often 'time flies' and how surprised we become when 'time slipped away!'

What about the time when the world went a bit crazy, and people wore pizza ties and ate tires

for breakfast, now during that time it often seemed like time was standing still! As a class we filled out time diaries for a world gone mad and one which represented a world we often live.

• *"So let's think about what we would often do from 3 to 4 on a weekday!" I say cheerfully*

• *A young boy raises his hand and says "play Game Boy!"*

• *"Did you say Game Boy?" I inquired. Because of the roaring engine of the ancient overhead projector I wasn't sure if I heard 'Game-Boy' or 'Game-Cube'.*

• *His face went pale and he slumped in his desk*

• *"I am terribly sorry, this overhead projector is really loud, I just wanted to make sure I heard you right, did you say Game BOY?"*

• *The student quiet replies "hmm.. I forgot".*

My heart sank, I had failed. This short conversation created a clear vision that getting past the carefully guarded life of the students was something much more difficult than I had anticipated. I reiterated again to them that I was not there to judge or to devalue what they did with their free time, I was only there to help them become aware of it.

My strategy had to change, even with repeated confirmations that they were the experts and I was only here to listen, this unconscious need to please the teacher/adult remained.

How can a media education program which seeks to move away from telling the students how they should live their lives exist?

How could we create critical autonomous thinkers when they are scared to tell adults what they really believe?

I have been carefully working through this problem and have come across a strategy both for teaching as well as thinking about children's learning in a new and more emotionally engaging way.



HOW IE HELPED

My experiences in elementary classrooms as a media researcher and media practitioner have often left me, like other media educators, conflicted as to what I *want* to do, what I *should* do and what I *can* do within the education system.

Sholle and Denski (1993) characterized the field of media education as having “a condition most closely resembling that of schizophrenia”: **where educators are often not trained in media education and theorists are not trained in educational strategy**, leading experts in each discipline to “live categorically distinct separate lives” (p. 298).

These lives often do not allow for extensive meetings, discussions or understandings of each other’s roles, strategies or obstacles faced in their fields. It has even been summed up by media-education researchers as a field which exists “**everywhere and nowhere**” (Buckingham and Domaille, 2003, p. 5-6).

Although the fields are distinct I have been extremely fortunate to have connected with schools and School districts who have sought to decrease this gap between educators and researchers.

In 2003, I started meeting with teachers and discuss how best to incorporate media education into their lessons, NOT in additional to their already busy schedules, but INTO the curriculum they already teach.



At first this was difficult and I faced challenges from parents and teachers who felt that we were displacing other subjects thus forced me to reconsider the strategies I was using. More recently I have shifted my focus from CONTENT to STRATEGIES linked to specific media education CONTENT.



Engaging in this type of ‘teaching-strategy, where content and process are highly linked can be encouraged used strategies based on children’s own ways of imaginatively understanding the world around them, as theorized by Kieran Egan’s Imaginative Education. This guide will provide a brief look at my adventures in teaching media education to three different classes of Grade 3 and 4 students in collaboration with 2 wonderfully open and caring teachers.

I hope these ideas I have described can help teachers understand the theories of imaginative education and the need for emotionally engagement within the field of media education.

Egan, K. (1988). *Imagination and Education*. New York: Columbia University.

Egan, K. (1992) *Imagination in teaching and learning, ages 8 to 15*. London: Routledge.

Egan, K. (1997). *The Educated Mind: How Cognitive Tools Shape Our Understanding*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

MY JOURNEY

What is Imaginative Education?

It is a new approach to education that can effectively engage students' imaginations in learning. The Imaginative Education Research Group (IERG) has developed theories, principles, and practices designed to explain, describe, and implement this new approach.

What is new about it?

Imaginative Education offers you a new understanding of how knowledge grows in the mind, and how our imaginations work and change during our lives. The IERG has also developed innovative teaching methods based on these insights that offer you new ways of planning and teaching.

"curriculum full of things of little intrinsic interest to an educated adult is an insult to children and will likely undermine the possibilities for their further education" (Egan, 1988, p. 196).

Why should I focus on the imagination when I'm up against the need to increase test scores?

Scoring well on tests and being imaginatively engaged in learning are not mutually exclusive. In fact, when you engage students' imaginations in learning you will improve their educational performance by any test or measure.

Won't this approach increase my planning and preparation time?

This approach is indeed new and different, but after a bit of practice, you will likely find it a more 'natural' way to think about teaching and learning. It should return the time you spend learning it with more rewarding classroom experiences; later you should find it no more time consuming than your present forms of planning.

So what is the imagination?

It is the ability to think of the possible, not just the actual; it is the source of invention, novelty, and flexibility in human thinking; it is not distinct from rationality but is rather a capacity that greatly enriches rational thinking; it is tied to our ability to form images in the mind, and image-forming commonly involves emotions.

(O. Tyres, *A brief Guide to Imaginative Education*, 2006, IERG)

CENTRAL FEATURES OF IMAGINATIVE EDUCATION

This guide addresses how the imagination can become a main ingredient in Media Education teaching. It is not new to point out that children's thinking is most deeply and energetically engaged when their imaginations and emotions are active.

IE suggests that the most suitable ways to emotionally and imaginatively engage students in learning is to base our teaching around the ways our students make sense of the world at certain stages in their lives. Table 1 below summarizes the various ways we, as language-using individuals understand the world.

Each kind of understanding is a somewhat distinctive way of thinking. They are all useful for different purposes and all five are required to develop the most educated mind.

The purpose of IE is to enable each student to develop and preserve the five kinds of understanding while they are learning any subject.

Kieran Egan and the Imaginative Education Research Group (IERG), a research group focusing on the study of Imaginative Education, have created frameworks which provide teachers with an examination and explanation of children's sense-making capabilities or cognitive tools associated with five *Kinds of Understandings*: Somatic, Mythic, Romantic, Philosophic and Ironic (www.iERG.net).

Kinds of Understandings; ways of making sense of the world

Somatic: is based on the notion that "our body is the most fundamental mediating tool that that shapes our understanding" (Egan, 1997, p.5).	<i>Pre-linguistic</i>
Mythic: involves the enrichment and expansion of oral language, providing children "with the ecstatic sense of power that words have given humankind" (Egan, 1988, p., 93), as well as an understanding that language is not just to express our thoughts but is also an extension of our experience.	<i>Oral Language</i>
Romantic: focuses on the shift from orality to literacy and is exemplified by a look at heroes, extremes of reality and the humanizing of the content. Egan suggests content should be "constructed by seeing the object of study in the context of someone's or some people's thoughts, intentions, hopes or fears" (Egan, 1997, p. 93).	<i>Written Language</i>
Philosophic: Generalization is central to Philosophic understanding: the search for new organizing principles to make sense of the multitude of experiences in the adolescent's expanding horizons.	<i>Theoretical use of language</i>
Ironic: When we use it together with other kinds of understanding, we not only make sense of our experience, but we are also aware that that meaning has been constructed by us, and does not exist "out there" in some objective world	<i>Reflexive use of Language</i>

Egan, K. (1988). *Imagination and Education*. New York: Columbia University.

Egan, K. (1992). *Imagination in teaching and learning, ages 8 to 15*. London: Routledge.

Egan, K. (1997). *The Educated Mind: How Cognitive Tools Shape Our Understanding*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Egan, K. (2005). *An imaginative approach to teaching*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

KINDS OF UNDERSTANDING

Imagination is not some desirable but dispensable frill, but is the heart of any truly educational experience"

(Egan & Nadaner, 1988)

As an adult, Sara has developed all five of these kinds of understanding. She recognizes that each one makes a distinctive contribution to her understanding, and that they work best if they can be combined.

We do not "naturally" develop each kind of understanding at a particular age in some steady and inevitable process. Rather, the process sketched above occurs when the appropriate forms of IE are used adequately. Sara's teachers have focused their efforts on engaging her imagination and emotions with knowledge about the world and on developing her use of an array of cognitive tools. The aim of IE is to develop as fully as possible each student's cognitive toolkit.

Somatic

The **Somatic kind** of understanding refers to the physical, pre-linguistic way that Sara comes to know the world around her while she is an infant. She makes sense of her experiences through the information provided by her senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell, and crucially with the emotions that these are tied up with. She also experiences the world and sensations of balance, movement, tension, pain, pleasure and so on through the way her body physically relates to the objects and persons she encounters.

Mythic

As Sara grows older and learns an oral language, her understanding of the world expands and she begins to develop the second kind of understanding called **Mythic understanding**. In this phase of her life, she is no longer limited to making sense of the world through direct physical experience. Instead, Sara can now rely on language to discuss, represent, and understand even things she has not experienced in person.

Romantic

Several years later, Sara begins to learn and understand her experience through written language. At this point, she is developing the third kind of understanding called **Romantic understanding**. During this time, she begins to realize her independence and separateness from a world that appears increasingly complex. She relates readily to extremes of reality, associates with heroes and seeks to make sense of the world in human terms.

Philosophic

While she is a teenager, Sara begins to focus more on the connections among things. She begins to see that there are laws and theories that can bring together, and help her make sense of, what she originally thought were disconnected details and experiences. In this stage of her life, Sara is developing the systematic understanding of the world called **Philosophic understanding**.

Ironic

After a few more years pass, Sara begins to realize that there are limits to her systematic thinking. She starts to appreciate that theories, and even the language she relies on, are too limited and crude to capture everything that she means and is important about the world. She also recognizes that the way she makes sense of the world depends on her unique historical and cultural perspective. At this point, Sara is in the process of developing the fifth kind of understanding called **Ironic understanding**.

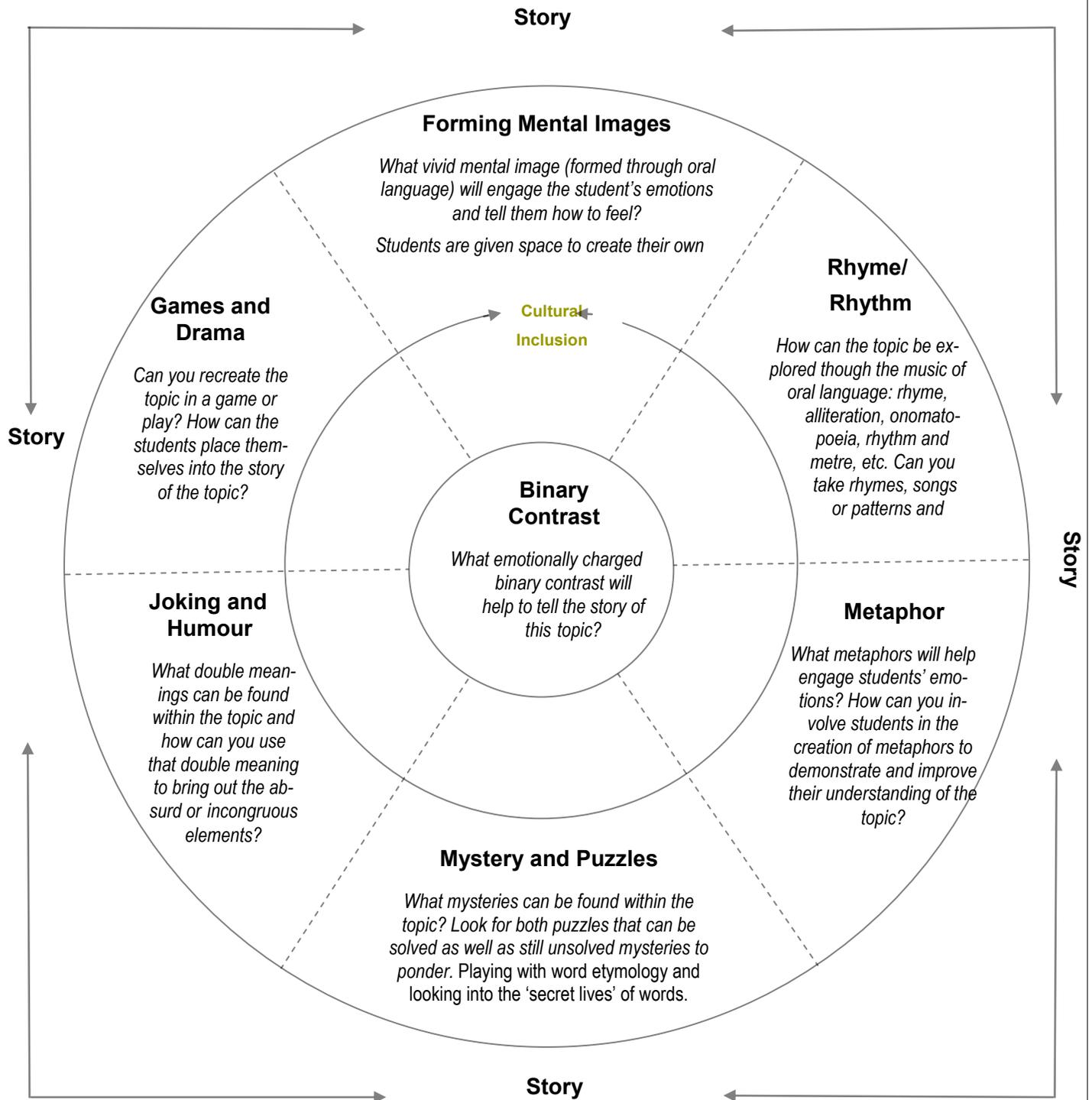
COGNITIVE TOOLS

A curriculum developed using Imaginative Education does not focus on a linear accumulation of facts or developmental stages, rather, it focuses “on the elaboration of children’s sense-making capacities” (Egan, 1988, p. 210). These ‘sense-making capacities’, also termed Cognitive Tools, are used to guide teachers in the construction of lessons and units. Cognitive tools are the set of skills that children acquire within their historical, social and cultural environment. These sets of tools help to shape their understanding of the world and, **unlike a Piagetian model of childhood**.

Imaginative Education Cognitive Tools are social and cultural tools children use in their imaginative engagement with the world; tools that change as children move from a pre-linguistic to a language-based understanding of the world.

Tools for Intellectual Engagement (aka Cognitive tools)				
Tools for:	Somatic Tools of intellectual engagement (TIEs)	Mythic Tools of intellectual engagement (TIEs)	Romantic Tools of intellectual engagement (TIEs)	Philosophic Tools of intellectual engagement (TIEs)
<i>Grasping wholes</i>	Joyful participation	Wonderful stories	Heroic feats and quests	Powerful theories
<i>Grasping composition</i>	Patterns of rhythm and movement	Music of spoken languages	Beauty of written form	Elegance of argument
<i>Grasping details</i>	Intent observation (all senses)	Vivid imagery (oral)	Lively description (written)	Fine-grained analysis
<i>Grasping limits</i>	Beginnings and endings	Binary contrasts	Extremes of reality	Universal and anomalies
<i>Grasping regularity</i>	Prediction and control	Naming and characterizing	Collecting and organizing	Systematization and generalization
<i>Grasping agency</i>	Mimesis	metaphor	Personification	Abstract agency
<i>Grasping possibility</i>	Interactive play and exploration	Gossip and social play	Fantasy and formal play	Hypothesis and experiment
<i>Grasping struggle</i>	Effort and achievement	Conflict and resolution	Revolt and idealism	Contradiction, paradox and proof
<i>Grasping inconsistency</i>	Incongruity	Jokes	Comedy	Irony and satire

LUCID CIRCULAR PLANNING FRAMEWORK : *MYTHIC UNDERSTANDING*



WHY IS CULTURAL INCLUSION NECESSARY?

The media education project was created in collaboration with the LUCID project. A five-year research project funded for the years 2004-2008, which explores the potential of imaginative education to improve academic and other educational outcomes in B.C. public school districts with high numbers of Aboriginal students.

Inclusion through imagination:

Making teaching more imaginatively engaging is good for its own sake. But in LUCID it is also a means towards another end—that of making schools more successful places for students from varied cultural and social backgrounds, and particularly for Aboriginal students.

There are many reasons why middle-class students from the culture that designs and runs the school system tend to do better in that system. Many of these reasons can't be addressed at the level of curriculum and pedagogy alone. The hiring of staff, communication with parents, expectations towards students, and many other aspects of school culture play a huge role. But there is no doubt that the time spent with teachers is central to children's experience of school.

LUCID therefore makes it a priority to expand teachers' knowledge of and connections with the First Nations communities in their district. Not only are students from these communities among the least successful in the public school system, but First Nations also have important things to teach educators in any environment—particularly those working with imagination.

Beyond cultural add-ons:

One of the most widespread approaches to inclusion involves teaching students about aspects of their own culture. In principle, this can be beneficial, particularly if good materials are available and teachers are trained in their use. Yet if such cultural units are taught separately from the rest of the curriculum, their impact on student academic success is marginal.

LUCID encourages teachers to look for ways of connecting the provincially prescribed curriculum with First Nations history and contemporary culture. In order that this not be done in a forced or superficial way, teachers need to understand the imaginative resources present in both curriculum and community, and find an overall narrative framework that enables the students to work with both.

Even on a small scale, this kind of teaching can make a significant difference for students who have experienced little success in school. As teachers become more knowledgeable and confident, they may find themselves planning on larger and larger scales, until eventually their whole year is structured so as to bring curriculum, community, and imagination together.

HAIDA GWAI

Where is Haida Gwaii?

Haida Gwaii ("Islands of the People") or the Queen Charlotte Islands or are an archipelago off the northwest coast of British Columbia, Canada. Vancouver lies to the south and the US State of Alaska is to the North. Consisting of two main islands and approximately 150 smaller islands with a total landmass of 10 180 km² (3,932 sq mi).



Population:

At the time of colonial contact, the population was roughly 10,000 to 60,000 people residing in several dozen towns. Ninety percent of the population died during the 1800s from smallpox and other diseases arrived as well.

By 1900, 700 people were left. Some 3500 people live on the islands today. Indigenous people (Haida) live throughout the islands, and maintain two exclusive communities in Skidegate and Old Masset, each with a population of about 1000.



Cultural revitalization: Within the community

Current focus on the island has been on cultural revitalization. Recently the Haida Heritage Centre at Qay'llnagaay was created to commemorate traditional Haida cedar longhouses. This unique, modern-day replica is a place for the Haida voice to be heard, a meeting and gathering place - a place of inspiration and sharing...Qay'llnagaay is a place to learn... to teach... and to

work according to the Haida way of life.

Within the schools

Both Skidegate and Old Masset have signed local education agreements with the School district in 2003. these documents help to assure that Aboriginal students are treated equally and that the Haida Culture is valued in the school.

For example: *"First Nation students have a right to quality education, which reflects, respects and complements First Nations culture and traditions."*

"The curriculum will reflect linguistic and cultural differences that exist between First Nation and Non-First Nation students and will be designed to enhance the learning experience of both right"



FOCUS ON INTEGRATION; ORAL LANGUAGE

Oral language has often been a major focus of my media education programming; particularly for elementary students.

My classroom research has indicated that students are insightful and confident when asked to orally tell us about their experiences, yet often classroom only focus on written output and often these fabulously rich stories are confided and stifled by spelling and grammatical constraints.

With the new focus on oral language in BC I am hoping that this confidence in speaking and telling can be enhanced and valued more in classes.

Examples from Oral Language component of Language Arts program created by the British Columbia Ministry of Education

<i>Grade 3</i>	<i>Grade 4</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • generating ideas • Sharing ideas and opinions • Recalling and summarizing in logical sequence • Recognizing and using language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing details and explanation to enhance meaning • Summarizing and synthesizing • Comparing and analysing ideas • Expressing ideas clearly and fluently

STARTING WITH WHAT EXCITES, RATHER THAN STARTING WITH 'WHAT THEY KNOW!'

Imaginative Educators suggest that this 'awakeness' need not only lie within arts; but can exist in all subjects.

Imaginative Education is not only about using a certain strategy, it is a complete shift in our worldview of education.

Instead of focusing on what curriculum fits the students grade level, lets focus on how the students own culturally created 'tools' of understanding (cognitive tools) can be used in their educational experiences.

If we listen to kids in the hall, at recess, during 'free' time. They **are** articulate, savvy, cynical; they have adopted ways of understanding the world around them. Grade one students, for example, love narrative, they love rhythm and rhyme— so why do we ignore this in spelling, in math, ...etc.

Why can't a clapping game be used to help students memorize their times tables in grade 2 and 3? Why can't word etymology-based games be used to engage students in a look at history, war, political systems?

For the most part, however, the use of these cognitive tools are often ignored in classroom practice, particularly in the textbook-worksheet world of today's' schools.

By focusing on students' cognitive tools in classroom practice students and teachers gain a heightened sense of wonder and engagement in education and thus can help students' 'see' and become more aware of alternatives; alternatives both with respects to behaviours, but also in worldviews, ideas, philosophies and understandings.

It is this awakeness that is the crux of any educational experience. Providing opportunities for both teachers and students to change, grow and become awakened; moving beyond the textbook, the worksheets, the transmission-model of learning and teaching can be achieved if we believe that an imaginative engagement with the world will provide the confidence, and intellectual stimulus that many of us as educators seek to do in our teaching practice.

Although, Imaginative Education asks educators to change their practice in a dramatic way, for many teachers it is asking them to rely on their own imagination and intuition. Although it asks them to adopt new ways of thinking about curriculum and developing lessons, it is basically asking teachers to really listen, look and understand how students make sense of their world (see circular frameworks page 13)

Nothing is lost, curriculum can still be covered, we are not asking educators to become artists, we are only asking them to find the 'sense of wonder' both for them as well as their students as the leading focus of any lesson; this is not progressive education, this is a historically derived understanding of how humans learn and examine their world.

The premise of the media education program for this unit was to help the students look at their media saturated world through a different lens.

Rather than counting hours spent with the media and moralizing about their own habits we sought to create an extreme world for them to explore— thus moving the exploration of time usage away from their own personal lives to the lives of imaginary friend; a strategy I have seen which works much better in helping them explore the themes of heavy media use without feeling like they are being targeted or condoned for their own choices.

I have found that moving the discussion away from their own personal usage helps them to be more critical about time spent, about programs used and can thus open up the discussion further than when it is focused on their own actual patterns of use; patterns which for the most part are ‘find’ , ‘controlled’ and ‘we need not worry’— similar responses to that of adult:)

CREATING A NARRATIVE

Introduction Letter

“There has been something strange happening at my cabin. Every morning I find my knitting unwound and torn apart and then I find a small letter not far sway from it. There seems to be a mouse in my house, but this mouse seems to be wanting to help us.

Are we in some kind of trouble?

What is happening?

The premise of the media education program for this unit was to help the students look at their media saturated world through a different lens.

Rather than counting hours spent with the media and moralizing about their own habits we sought to create an extreme world for them to explore— which moved the exploration of time usage away from their own personal lives to the lives of imaginary friend; a strategy I have seen which works much better in helping them explore the themes of heavy media use without feeling like they are being targeted or condoned for their own choices.

I have found that moving the discussion away from their own personal usage helps them to be more critical about time spent, and about programs used and can thus open up the discussion further than when it is focused on their own actual personal patterns of use; patterns which for the most part children declare ‘fine’, ‘controlled’ and ‘we need not worry’— quite similar to typical adult responses as well.

Previous pilot projects have taught me to be keenly aware of the importance of **narrative** in any unit.

Narratives can not only tie the lessons together, but it keep the students engaged; and with engagement comes deeper learning and understanding of concepts, ideas and beliefs.

For many of the projects I have used the narrative of Detectives. Seeing that the focus of my media education project is to uncover the naturalness of media in our lives today; to search for clues, to uncover agendas and hidden messages and to report back to the group.

However, for my work in Haida Gwaii I found that the detective theme could be enhanced using the stories of Mouse Woman and Raven (or other mischief-makers).



CASE #1: FIRST ENCOUNTERS!

Introduction to Mouse

"I awoke this morning and found my daughters knit keychain unraveled at the bottom of the stairs, as I reached to pick it up I also noticed a small note—I have heard of the spirit of Haida Gwaii, but didn't expect to run into supernatural beings on my trip here.

Do you want me to read the note to you?



For this unit I really wanted to incorporate First Nations stories and the story of Mouse Woman fit wonderfully with my idea to examine our increasingly chaotic media saturated world.

Using Mouse Woman was a wonderful way to create a story about extremes, about chaos and then move it from the mystical and magical towards an examination of reality.

Mouse Woman liked everyone and everything to be proper. To her, anyone who was disturbing the proper order of the world was a mischief-maker. And being the busiest little busy body in the Place-of-Supernatural-Beings, she always did something about the mischief-makers" (Harris, 1979, p. 18).

Any book or story will do. I selected Mouse Woman because of the mysterious nature of her characters and the one particular story which emphasizes greed and shortsightedness; a perfect story for our current fast-paced technological driven society

COGNITIVE TOOLS USED

Rhyme : This set the stage for the rest of the unit. I began by creating a discussion circle and introducing them to our new clue each day in this manner. It became so habitual that as soon as they entered the class from recess they went to the circle— it became a very nice transition period from recess to looking, talking and reflection about clues.

Narrative: The adventures of Mouse Woman created a narrative around a wonderful, exciting and secretive character who is astonished by the chaos in our world, and thus sought to help us regain the balance.

Mystery: the case involved the searching and seeking out of mysterious clues left by Mouse Woman. With each clue came a reciprocal 'thank-you' from the students— a give and take format was established. Mouse Woman gave us clues and ideas to stop the tricksters and in return we would give her a bit of wool— for even though Mouse Woman was quite proper, she couldn't help being a mouse sometimes.

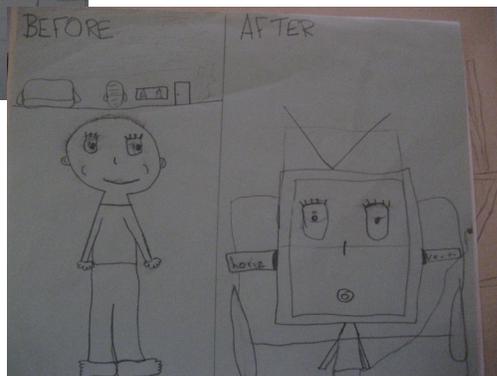
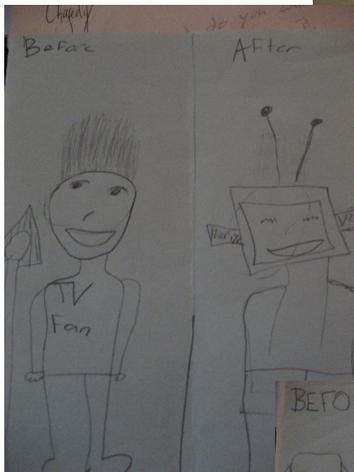
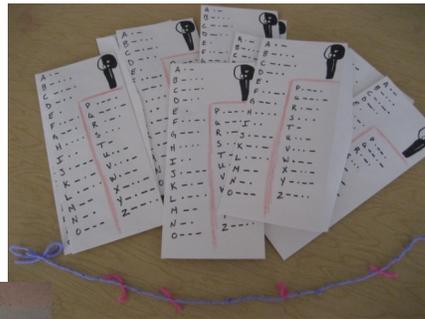
Binary opposites: the Binary contrast of chaos and control drove these unit, however, they were not discussed explicitly until later on.

Puzzle: this lesson, like all the others, began with a clue. In this case it was knot clues the students had to figure out. I found a detective kids book that was full of various types of code activities that could be used in the lessons.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

I entered the classroom with the knot codes and letter from Mouse Woman

- 1) Once I read the letter we talked a bit about WHO could have sent this. Who was Mouse Woman? What did the students know about her.
- 2) I then gave them their **knot codes** and off they went to solve the secret message.
- 3) Once they had solved it, they were given a piece of paper and I started to read them



the Jimmy Jet poem

- 4) The poem didn't have a picture so it was left to each student to come up with their own Jimmy Jet as they listened to the poem
- 5) Walking softly around the classroom, I read the poem over and over while they drew.
- 6) We didn't share the pictures, rather let the students show them to us if they wanted, otherwise the art that was created from the images in their own minds remained personal items.

Jimmy Jet and his TV set

I'll tell you the story of Jimmy Jet
 And you'll know what I say is true
 He loved his TV set
 Almost as much as you

He watched it all day, he watched it all night
 Till h grew pale and lean
 From 'the early show' to 'the late late show'
 He watched till his eyes were frozen wide
 And his bottom grew into his chair
 And his chin turned into a tuning dial
 And antennae grew out of his hair
 And his brains turned into TV tubes
 And his face into a screen
 And two knobs saying 'vert' and 'horiz'
 Grew where his ears had been
 And he grew a plug that looked like a tail
 So we plugged in little Jim
 And now instead of watching TV
 We all sit around and watch him

Shel Silverstein (1974)
 Where the Sidewalk ends

CASE #2: CHAOTIC CHARACTERS!

Does Jimmy have friends?

*Remember Jimmy Jet?
Wow, poor guy— do you
think he has any other
media-friends, or other
friends who loved their
technology so much
that they BECAME their
technology?*

Over the years and during my various pilot projects I have found that moving the focus from the students own media use themselves to an external character allows them to be much more reflexive and critical.

Therefore I have found using extremes & limits and narratives helps the students to deal with serious issues in a non-confrontational way.



COGNITIVE TOOLS USED

Rhythm once again we began in the circle, first sending around a secret message by having the students hold hands (or even hold each others pinky fingers) and squeezing ever so lightly to send the message around. This creates a calming and connection—a wonderful way to begin a lesson. set the stage for the rest of the unit.

Rhyme: we reintroduce the poem by presenting the class with a shortened version, as a template for them to make their own poems .

Narrative: although the adventures of Mouse Woman is the main narrative for the units, in this lesson we are looking at the Jimmy jet poem as a template to create our own characters an our won poems. We will then connect again with Mouse Woman as she is the being who helps to recreate order.

Binary opposites: we begin to explore the ideas of chaos and control in this lesson when we ask the students to imagine a world that was so chaotic that people became their favorite technology— and foreshadow an introduction of Mouse woman as a helped to regain balance once more.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

I brought a shorter version of the poem to class and posted it on a poster

- 1) we recited the poem together couple of time and had a chance to revisit the drawings the students did.
- 2) I then asked if they thought Jimmy had any friend? If maybe the world became so chaotic that all the kids in the neighborhood suddenly became their favorite mass media technology
- 3) The students mulled over this idea and then spent some time drawing their OWN media characters
- 4) Once they had finished they took turns approaching the teacher and myself and explaining verbally what they knew about their characters and why they had selected that mass media form.

We put this shorter version up on the wall of the class and practices it— using it as our recitation piece- bringing in the skill of memorization and presentation into the class.

Jimmy Jet and his TV set

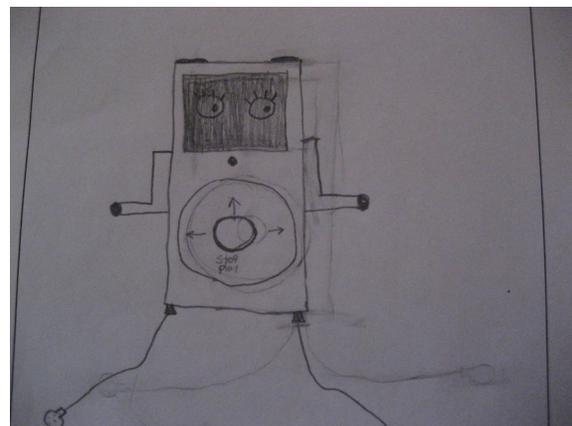
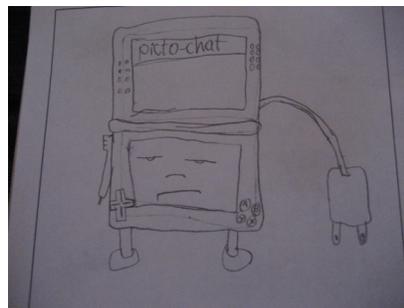
Let me tell you story of little Jimmy Jet
Oh how he loved his TV set

He watched it all ay and night
And oh what a sight!

His bottom grew into a chair
He had antenna for hair

His face became a screen
He changed before our eyes

Now instead of watching TV
We all sit around and watch him.



CASE #3: LOOK OUT FOR THE TRICKSTERS!

Since I've been in Haida Gwaii I have been overwhelmed by the number of ravens I have seen around... But they are quite tricky aren't they? I have heard of them picking locks and stealing groceries out of peoples cars. Do you know any other stories?

This lesson really tried to incorporate Haida culture with the unit thus far. We are focusing on an examination of a world which becomes chaotic because of tricksters in the world.



COGNITIVE TOOLS USED

Rhythm: we began with the circle and once again we began in the circle.

Rhyme: once again we incorporated poetry, but this time it was the students chance to play with the words and come up with their own poem that describes the transition of their friend from a human to a media-person.

Narrative: here we expand the Mouse Woman story by bringing in the idea of tricksters. The tricksters will play a major part in the explanation of how the world went from controlled to chaotic.

Binary opposites: in this lesson we begin to explore in more detail the chaos and control binary contrasts. We will bring in the tricksters to help them expand their story

Puzzle: the pieces of the story are beginning to emerge now with the introduction of another characters. With each unit they begin to put pieces together and add to the growing mystery.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

We were fortunate enough to have Haida storytellers in the school.

1) to introduce the lesson we had a storytellers tell the children a Haida story about Raven and the tricks he plays.

2) after this story we talked about tricksters and all of the funny things they could do.

3) we talked about them having the power to change a controlled environment like the ones we often know into a strange world.

4) we brainstormed what a controlled work looked like and what a chaotic world looked like.

5) we then started to merge these binaries with the lives of the characters they created.

Again creating short poems and asking the students to recite the, and play with them helps them play with the language a tones and clarity.



Lilly Laptop

Lilly, oh silly lilly always spent the day
typing away
Oh what a shame because it make her
friend not want to stay
She worked until her lingers merged
with t he keys
And her legs couldn't move at the knees
Her eyes became square like a screen,
Oh Lilly, Silly Lilly became that laptop,
oh what a scene!

CASE #4: LOOKING AT THE TECHNOLOGY FAMILY TREE

So now we see that a trickster may have been involved in the transforming of our friends Jimmy, Lilly and others. But what do we know about these friends? Lets take some and investigate our friends a bit more s.

It is always interesting for students to understand the magnitude of media in our lives. This is often done by looking at numerical values of how many TVs we have or are in use. Rather than just giving them number to look at it make more sense to follow with the story and have them

This exercise is also an extremely important media education lesson because it helps the students look at the sources of the information they are obtaining from the web.

Often we assume students know how to surf the web—they seem to do it so effortlessly, but I have found over the years that the web is often confusing and they need help to decipher good sources from bad ones and to sift through the mounds and mounds of data.

COGNITIVE TOOLS USED

Rhythm: we started the class with the circle, but this time they were given a secret destination to figure out using the secret codes— knot coded letters which was decipher and made the words 'computer room'.

Narrative: here we see the Jimmy Jet poem is reincarnated to their own characters and helps them define themselves. This will be an important step between the next step will require that they turn to Mouse Woman for help.

Binary opposites: they will play with this idea as they conduct their research looking for the most extremely opposite— biggest phone versus smallest phone

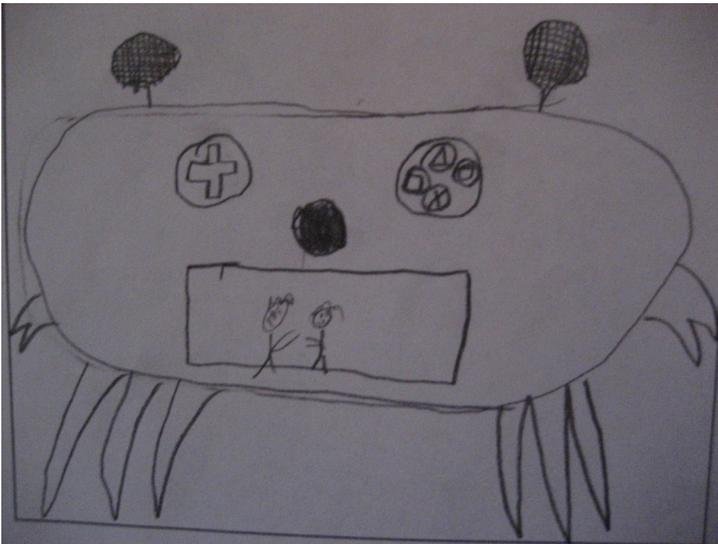
Puzzle: this research will let them add to their back-story for their characters an important part of the lesson for it become important that they become increasing knowledge about their character, both technically but also as a characters.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

We need to find out more about our characters so off to the computer lab we go.

- 1) the students are asked to fill out a worksheet which asks them to look more closely at their technology– including when it was invented, by whom and how many have been produced since its in-

The students loved to find the most extreme examples and share them with other peers. They also had a great time embodying these characters and getting to know one another.



roduction.

- 2) However we are taking a different approach, instead of asking when was it invented we are asking 'WHEN WAS YOUR CHARACTER BORN?' 'HOW OLD ARE THEY NOW?' 'DO THEY HAVE ANY SIIBLINGS?'
- 3) We also asked them to look for the most exciting feature of their character's life
- 4) They then shared their findings.

Did you know?

The first phone was the size of your shoe? Can you imagine carrying that around? Well at least it wouldn't get lost in your bag.

Did you know the first computer was so bit that it has to be set up in a separate room? Wow, couldn't put that on your lap.

CASE #5: NICE TO MEET YOU LILLY LAPTOP

Wow! We found out some amazing things about our characters.

Now is your chance to do some role-playing. Become your character and meet others around their room.

Once again since oral language was a major component of the lessons I asked the students to take part in role-playing activities.

For this lesson they had to embody their media-character (if they created sally ipod, they BECAME Sally ipod for the day) . They had to think carefully about what language would be use

“ please turn your volume down, you are too loud”

“ oh my batteries are low!”



COGNITIVE TOOLS USED

Rhythm: we began with our circle and from there moved around the room introducing themselves by using the motto created for our character (the short poem to explain what happened to us)

Rhyme: the short motto allowed the student to play with rhyming as they created their own jingle/ motto that explained to others how they were once a kid and now they are a media-kid.

.Narrative: we begin to use the narrative of Jimmy Jet to create our own characters and use this narrative to carry the conversations along within the classroom.

Binary opposites: again it became very important that the students had a good grasp of the binary contrasts at this point since they needed to now engage with the characters who had suddenly been changed because of the chaos.

Puzzle: as they heard the stories of how others were changed from kids to media-kids, the pieces of the puzzle (ideas) began to fill out; an important element since the following activity would ask them to merge ideas together to create a play. This also helped them situation themselves in the bigger picture created by others stories.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

We began by having the students recite their own poems which are linked to their characters.

- 1) then they were asked to move around the room and find another friend they could talk to
- 2) Taking on the role of their characters and they begin to weave their own back stories with the data they have collected from the web.
- 3) They talk about how old they are, when and where they were born and if they have any sibling.
- 4) For the rest of the day you have to BE your character. Think how they would walk, talk, sit, interact, eat.

"I can't compute that"

The class created a whole ipod family. Since ipods were quite popular, particular for the girls, they became to look at who was the youngest sister (nanos) and who was the eldest (—_



CASE #6: CHAOS MEETS MOUSE WOMAN

So we've met the trickster and saw how their tricks completely changed our world—remember the chaos! Now we are going to see how it all unfolded, what happened first, who was there? Who can tell the story?

This lesson will bring in 'traditional' forms of lesson; story writing, vocabulary development, use of adjectives and adverbs.. But it has a twist; the story will be created to then be retold and then dramatized into a class play. So we are really using this written exercise as a warm up for more in-depth look at the stories, characters and chaotic world they will create.

COGNITIVE TOOLS USED

Rhyme: the Mouse Woman stories provided us with a new rhyming sequences that can be adopted into their own stories.

Rhythm: not only did we continue with the circle, but found a rhythm in the Mouse Woman stories. Chaos ensues, mouse woman finds out and usually helps a young person in need by providing hints and ideas to get them out of trouble. She must then be nicely rewarded with a piece of wool.

Narrative: as the two narrative begin to merge we find that a third one is created. Mouse Woman meets the transformation of Jimmy Jet to create Mouse Woman helps kids help their friend turn back into kids instead of media-kids.

Binary opposites: this is where the students can really play with the ideas of control and look at what they think mouse woman can do to create control in their lives.

Puzzle: the worksheet that is used in this activity resembles a puzzle with each piece of information or new account of the chaotic world falling into place. Much of the story has been given to the student and they often only had to fill in the adjectives and adverbs, but as is seen in the next lesson they will be asked to verbally expand this story; thus creating their own puzzle pieces to discover the mystery behind of how people are becoming media people.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

We began by handing out the worksheets which had sections of the Mouse Woman story (mouse woman and the Snee-nee-ig) mixed with the ideas of a friend becoming a media character .

- 1) the students filled out the worksheet adding adjectives, adverbs, nouns and verbs to the story.
- 2) They also added some of the essential items such as 'why the world became chaotic', who was involved and how mouse woman helped.
- 3) Once they fill out the worksheet they brought it to the researcher and teacher.

Also because she was a spirit being, she should have let any gifts be transformed into their essence, by fire, for her use.

But the mouse in Mouse Woman was so strong that sometimes—if the things were woollen—she snatched them up before they were more than scorched. And her ravelly little fingers began tearing them into a lovely, loose, nesty pile of wool. It was the one improper delight of a very, very proper little being.

(Harris, 2005)

CASE #7: EXPANDING THE SCENE

Wow, rewriting the text must have taken a lot out of your— Was it difficult to create a screen-play?

Now is your big chance to 'pitch' your screen play to a producer ; and you are one step closer to creating your Masterpiece!

One by one you'll have a chance to secretly meet with the producer to expand your ideas and really tell them what happened to your friend, who the trickster was and how mouse woman helped.

This activity really helps the students move their ideas beyond their 'spelling' and 'writing' skills.

Often stories seem to stall because the students run into grammatical or spelling obstacles; but this activity really provided the teacher with an opportunity to engage with the students' and see the potential of their storytelling abilities.

We used video conferencing scenario to make the producer and screen-writer conversation 'more official'.

COGNITIVE TOOLS USED

Narrative: Mouse Woman and her characteristically helpful nature was brought to the attention of the students and used extensively in their stories during this section of the unit. Having a spirit whispering helpful hints into the ears of the students helped them find new ways of coming to terms with the chaos in their media saturated world.

Binary opposites: This is really where the ideas of chaos and control was extensively explored. The students were provided with an opportunity to develop their narrative a bit further based on the structure of chaos and control; a structure that both gave them freedom but also supported as they sought to manage media use.

Puzzle: as their narrative progressed we saw how the students put the pieces of the 'puzzle' (story) together. Each chance they have to review their story and their ideas allows for the puzzle pieces to be expanded and deepened.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Once the students have a chance to create their stories they met the producer and 'pitched' their stories.

- 1) set up a small table in another room or at the back of the classroom and have the students come one by one and sit with the producer (teacher).
- 2) Ask the student to sign an release form in order to allow them to tape the conversation.
- 3) Explain to the students that not only is this a story pitch, but also a chance for them to take on the role of the director and actor. **** Any activities which can help to create the scene works really great with the students*****
- 4) Ask the student to either read or tell their story to you; use this time to help them expand their idea— 'did mouse woman say anything else? What was she wearing? Where was she hiding?
- 5) Sketch out their ideas together and send them off to rewrite or expand their ideas further.

The students were really exited to pitch their stories and expand on their ideas verbally.

It was these conversations regarding their stories that allowed them to expand their ideas and connections with Mouse Woman and their media friend.

CASE #8: RECREATE THE SCENE

Ahh your stories are really expanding and we can really see how Mouse Woman has helped to change the world from chaotic to controlled once more.

Many of you had great ideas, but now we are challenging you to form groups and share ideas with other storywriters to come up with one story which will be turn into a play.

Often we ask students to write and rewrite stories– a wonderful way of learning new vocabulary and expanding their use of adjectives and adverbs.

We have focused on this in a slightly different way, by providing them with time to expand their ideas **verbally**.

They will continue this storytelling activity by sharing their stories with their peers.

As the students shared their stories they were also met with some new challenges to answer their peers questions about their media friend and mouse woman.

COGNITIVE TOOLS USED

Rhythm: there is a distinctive rhythm in ‘good’ engaging storytelling. Too quick or too slow the audience will quickly lose interest.

Narrative: the narratives expand as new ideas are shared with one another during storytelling time. As the stories are told, they are expanded through the questions and helpful hints from other peers.

Binary opposites: here we see not only how the stories of media characters and Mouse Woman can embody the binaries of chaotic and controlled, but the students themselves can engage in the activity of storytelling which in itself can be sometimes chaotic and sometimes controlled.

Puzzle: here we have the opportunity to engage in an activity that allows the students to piece together elements of a story as a story– they can see how everyone can put the pieces together in a different way and how the pieces can fit to create a ‘whole’ story.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Proving models of storytelling is quite useful in this section. You can invite storytellers or tell a story yourself— ask the student to distinguish ‘reading’ from ‘storytelling’.

- 1) Place them into groups and ask them to share their stories with one another. This can be done in small group settings, even around a fire.. Or while passing a piece of wool around.
- 2) Their peers can then ask questions and engage in the development of the story further.
- 3) After each student shared their stories they will be asked to merge their stories to create one play.
- 4) This is the challenge— to create one play out of many and this is why the structure is important; they will need to think of the main ideas such as who becomes a media person, how, and what Mouse Woman does to help.

The more they told the story the more depth it gained, the more complex it became and the happier they were with its growth and metamorphosis.

Becoming a storyteller

This can be modeled and the students can learn and practice their storytelling abilities each day with various stories including jokes and riddles.



CASE #9: CELEBRATION TIME

Its time to show off our story and acting skills! We will set a time and date, invite students and parents to come and see how mouse woman helped a bunch of kids save the world from chaos.

Drama is a fabulous way of encouraging vocabulary development, cooperative work and imaginative engagement with a subject.

The use of drama in this setting not only provided a means of oral language development but was the culmination of multiple weeks worth of learning about mouse woman and the role she can play in helping us regain control of our media saturated lives.



COGNITIVE TOOLS USED

Rhyme and rhythm: much like was seen during storytelling the students had to become increasingly aware of the rhythm needed to create an engaging drama. Not only are their movements rhythmic, but also are their voices and stories.

Narrative: Their narrative will shine through their plays and because of the focus on oral language they have been able to further their ideas and thoughts more than in a written form.

Binary opposites: Chaos is often seen in drama—and with much luck control will follow the chaos. Not only will the students understand how drama moves from chaos to control, but they continue to play with the chaos and control in their media saturated lives.

Puzzle: Creating a play helps the students to form a *whole* and to celebrate their understandings. The puzzle pieces fall into place as the stories are merged and revamped, but also as they try to work those stories into a play.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

The students will create and show their plays.

- 1) provide time for them to practice both in classrooms, but also on the stage
- 2) Officially invite others to watch (parents, other students) . Ask the students to create invitations, draw the characters and write a synopsis of the play for those invited to the play.
- 3) They can even create a program where they will have to summarize the play and talk about the actors and directors.



****The play was rehearsed with all of the students playing each part. Although this take longer than the traditional way of creating plays in class it provides multiple perspectives of the play— reduces boredom of playing the same character over and over.

This also allows for the use of a chorus— thus it creates a rhythm in the play and enhances participation. *****

Importance of Imagination

Maxine Greene (1995) an arts educator and social activist suggests education should focus on an **awakening of ideas, emotions and connections with others.**

She claims that the arts, for example, may provide the needed shocks of awareness which could then encourage people to shift from their mundane submersion in the everyday.

Imaginative Educators suggest that this 'awakeness' need not only lie within arts; but can exist in all subjects.

Imaginative Education is not only about using a certain strategy, it is a complete shift in our worldview of education.

Instead of focusing on what curriculum fits the students grade level, lets focus on how the students own culturally created 'tools' of understanding (cognitive tools) can be used in their educational experiences.

If we listen to kids in the hall, at recess, during 'free' time. They **are** articulate, savvy, cynical; they have adopted ways of understanding the world around them. Grade one students, for example, love narrative, they love rhythm and rhyme— so why do we ignore this in spelling, in math, ...etc.

Why can't a clapping game be used to help students memorize their times tables in grade 2 and 3? Why can't word etymology-based games (see appendix 1) be used to engage students in a look at history, war, political systems?

For the most part, however, the use of these cognitive tools are often ignored in classroom practice, particularly in the textbook-worksheet world of today's schools.

By focusing on students' cognitive tools in classroom practice students and teachers gain a heightened sense of wonder and engagement in education and thus can help students' 'see' and become more aware of alternatives; alternatives both with respects to behaviours, but also in worldviews, ideas, philosophies and understandings.

It is this awakeness that is the crux of any educational experience. Providing opportunities for both teachers and students to change, grow and become awakened; moving beyond the textbook, the worksheets, the transmission-model of learning and teaching can be achieved if

we believe that an imaginative engagement with the world will provide the confidence, and intellectual stimulus that many of us as educators seek to do in our teaching practice.

Although, Imaginative Education asks educators to change their practice in a dramatic way, for many teachers it is asking them to rely on their own imagination and intuition.

Although it asks them to adopt new ways of thinking about curriculum and developing lessons, it is basically asking teachers to really listen, look and understand how students make sense of their world (see circular frameworks in appendix —)

Nothing is lost, curriculum can still be covered, we are not asking educators to become artists, we are only asking them to find the 'sense of wonder' both for them as well as their students as the leading focus of any lesson; this is not progressive education, this is a historically derived understanding of how humans learn and examine their world.

IMAGINATIVE TEACHING

Mouse Woman has become my image of what such an imaginative teacher could be. Able to exist wholly in various worlds, she has the patience and understanding to see diversity, bias and various points of view. It is this ability that allows her to gain respect and trust from the children, two essential elements in learning, development and growth. Most importantly, however, it is this ability that allows Mouse Woman to see children's potentials—even if they have been tucked away or hidden. She never sees young children as victims incapable of helping themselves. Rather she can see how they have been tricked or their attention diverted; and it is up to her to reawaken the children to their own skills and provide tools for courageous and powerful decisions and choices they will be faced with.

Well...." Mouse Woman squeaked, properly touching the Stick, though she was too small to pound it. "You all know that I'm very good at handling young people. I don't tell them what to do. I simply point out the dangers and let them have some choice in the matter. So perhaps I could talk to them and...." (Harris ,2005, p. 321).

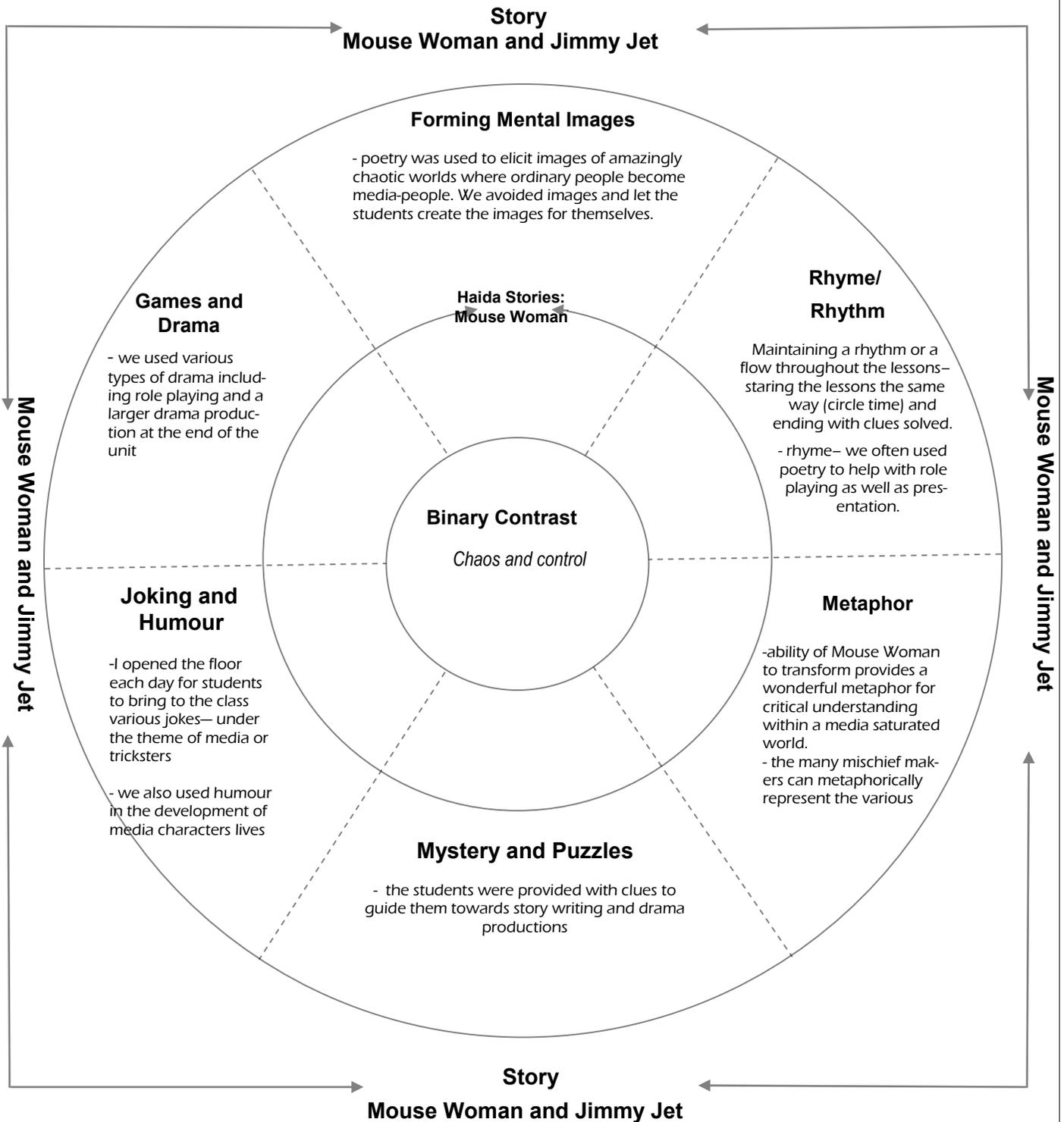
Like Mouse Woman, I too see children as full of potential, and now recognize both the media and school as Mischief-Makers. The media represents the cunning, tempting spirits like the Snee-Nee-iq, who often promise to give children what they want. The schools represent the humans in the myths, who often neglect or cannot see potential because it is not the same as theirs. It is through my immersion in the world of West Coast myths and living on Haida Gwaii that I was able to take a leap and see beyond my academically-trained world of objectivity and facts. I began to experience Haida Gwaii through the eyes of my daughter and Mouse Woman, and thus reconnect with kinds of understanding that had been hidden. I no longer see IE in terms of a mechanistic implementation of the cognitive tools (tools for understanding as theorized by Egan, 1997), but as a re-organization of the way we view teaching, education, students and schools. (Stewart, 2010,p. 307-308).

<http://www.c-s-p.org/flyers/Proceedings-from-the-6th-International-Conference-on-Imaginative-Practice--Imaginative-Enquiry1-4438-2142-X.htm>

ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR MYTHIC KIND OF UNDERSTANDING

	Possible prompts by the teacher	Not yet meeting, even with support (limited)	Meeting at a minimal level or with support (partial)	Fully meeting with little to no support (proficient)	Exceeding expectations (highly imaginative/insightful)
Wonderful stories	How do you think the story of Mouse Woman and the media characters adventures might continue?	Unable to guess where the adventures may end up next	The students will attempt to further the adventures with Mouse Woman and the media characters as they attempt to regain balance once more.	Continues the theme of Mouse Woman and media characters' adventures in a consistent and detailed manner	Introduces new adventures for Mouse Woman and the media characters using content knowledge as well as incorporates unpredictable ideas.
Vivid imagery	Tell me in as much detail as you can the images that come into your mind when you think about meeting Mouse Woman.	Can only describe the adventures we described in class or needs to hear prompts from the teacher. i	Can describe the adventures without prompts, but they lack detail	Clearly describes the reasons for Mouse Woman and the media characters adventures and can incorporate full range of senses when prompted.	Describes and elaborates on the imagery, incorporates sensory details that can be extended with little effort when prompted.
Naming and characterizing	What are some different kinds of media characters can you think of? What makes them different from each other?	Unable to describe the characteristics beyond simple modifiers (size and colours)	Can recall the characteristics and locations when prompted but also tends to use simple modifiers	Uses many specifics to name and characterize characters and their adventures.	Uses many specific names and characteristics for describing characters and adventures and they can imagine new kinds or new adventures and characters.
Make believe and drama	If you were engaging in a make-believe drama involving Mouse Woman and the characters, what would it look like? / What would happen if another trickster showed p.	Can only suggest an expansion on the narrative based on ready-made scripts, unable to change in response to prompts	Suggests familiar narratives with simple roles and plots; has difficulty accommodating disruptions or new elements without prompting	Suggest narrative which is somewhat similar but can accommodate disruptions and new elements into the adventures of Zayah	Invents new adventures and places to spot logos for Zayah. Willing to accept disruption and can elaborate on them further
Conflict and resolution	What are some risks, difficulties and dangers associated with ____? How do you think they can be overcome?	Unable to suggests any other consequences of meeting a trickster.	Suggest simple kinds of struggles or consequences of the tricksters appearance, unable to elaborate	Incorporates new understanding of the role of the trickster in their make-believe world	Offers complex descriptions of the role of the trickster and the consequences from different perspectives.

CIRCULAR FRAMEWORK FOR THIS PROJECT



APPENDIX 1:

LIFE IN A BAG

Becoming a media detective takes a great deal of hard work are you ready for this!! To start our training we first learn to focus on objects and signs all around us; did you ever realize that we are surrounded by signs?



1) This lesson begins with the Life in a Bag activity.

Place 5 objects in a bag that represents you. One by one show the students these objects and ask them to think about what each might mean to you. You can then ask the students to share as a group, write down their answers then share, or share as a whole class.

2) Another important feature of this class is the creations of code names for each student, as well as a class name for the detective school.

Begin with a brainstorming activity asking students to come up with names for the group. Using blind voting ask the student to vote for the best name.

Have the students make badges or create some sort of identification badges to help the students in their transition from students into detectives-in-training.

This initial 'getting to know each other' activity was essential because it set the tone for the whole semester. The life in a bag activity;

1) provided them with personal information about myself to create a deeper connection with me as a researcher and teacher. This was essential because we sought to create a space where they felt comfortable enough in to discuss their *own* personal media habits, preferences and ideas.

2) provided an opportunity to illustrate that we are continuously surrounded by clues/symbols in our lives and often our interpretation may be quite different than those around us. This activity helped to illustrate that some the interpretation may have been developed 'within' groups (such as my family) and because of this non-family members would not necessary understand the meaning of an object in the same way.

This provides a great basis for discussing advertisements and target audiences. It also creates an a notion that each generation may be seen as experts for their own peer groups and thus allows them to see that their knowledge is quite different from that of the teacher and hopefully this will create a space where these differences of media culture knowledge can be shared.



Appendix 3– using Mouse Woman story to create our own worlds

1. Once, in the days of very long ago, when the world was _____.
(tell us how you see the world before it becomes unbalanced)

2. There lived a _____ young person named _____
(adjective for your character) (name of your character)

3. The world, during this time, was very unbalanced because _____

4. Due to these situations, our _____ friend _____ became a _____ person
(adjective) (name of your character) (type of media)

5. Now, there were other media-tricksters living in the same world, but only _____
(name of your character)

could _____
(tell us something fantastic your media character can do-- remember let your imagination run wild!!)

6. As you can imagine, the world, during this time, was very unbalanced because _____.

(please explain in more detail WHAT was happening during this time. What made it so unbalanced?)

_____.

7. Now, there was only one tiny person who was watching the world and heard the rumor of all the problems. This, of course, was Mouse Woman. Mouse Woman was the tiniest grandmother and a narnauk (spirit). As Mouse Woman watched the world and the transformation of _____ from a _____ person to a person who had become a _____.

(name of your character) (adjective of the person) (type of media)

8. Mouse Woman's nose twitched as she peered at the world and said " _____ *(what would she say when she saw the world)*



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Kieran Egan argues that even young children learn through imaginative engagement with the complex, abstract, and unfamiliar, and that the nature of this engagement develops and changes as children pick up new ways of thinking, speaking and acting that are prevalent in their cultural environment.

That is, this is an approach that attends closely to what children actually find most imaginatively engaging, analyses that engagement, derives principles from the analysis, and then seeks to apply those principles to everyday curriculum topics to engage children's imaginations in learning.

The results of this project suggested that imaginative-based-media-education is able both to engage elementary students in questioning the role media play in their lives and also provide teachers with the understanding and confidence to create and incorporate media-education into their own practice.

Not only can Imaginative Education strategies create a positive environment for students, but they can also create a stimulating teaching and learning environment for teachers. At present, teachers are often unsure of how to incorporate media education into the classroom without displacing other valued subjects like literacy and numeracy. They may also be hesitant to introduce topics that they themselves have not been taught.

From my own research I have not only been able to cover the mandated curriculum, but have also seen how an increase in the level of engagement has created an excitement for learning in all of the students, including struggling students whose skills and talents in imaginative understandings of the world are often undervalued.

For an extensive look at the lessons created during these pilot projects please go to:

www.kymstewart.com

For a look at other units created using the Imaginative Education framework please go to:

www.ierg.net

