



## A design based research project: Buckingham's Digital Media Framework and a new media pedagogy

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Is there an urgency to merge media pedagogy into traditional classroom practices, to support teachers and students with their interpretation and understanding of digital media literacies in light of the digital revolution? This paper reports on a design-based research investigation, which focuses on Buckingham's (2003) Digital Media Literacies Framework and seeks to address the impact that digital media will have on students and teachers now and into the future. The study wishes to explore the interpretations of students as they become creators and producers of their own learning and how pedagogies may need to change across the curriculum. The proposed participants in this study are school students, teachers, academic lecturers and media students from different socio-economic groups in the Sydney and Greater Western Sydney areas. The researcher in this study will look at digital artifacts such as the Learning Federation learning objects and student's use of Adobe CS4 and other multimedia software, where students and teachers construct their own learning to evaluate a new pedagogical practice in teaching. In addition, the social software's such as *Facebook* and *MySpace* will also be addressed to determine changes in pedagogies in regards to collaboration in the classroom. Buckingham (2003 p.185) argues that 'media education provides a more concrete and coherent framework for addressing teaching and learning. Comparing current pedagogies with the Digital Media Literacies Framework will be explored in this paper.

Keywords: Media Education; digital video; design research; learning and teaching.

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### Introduction

What strategies do teachers and students use to create 'active learning' when using media rich artifacts such as digital media during teaching? Is the time right to move towards integrating some of the understanding of a media pedagogy across the curriculum, in light of the current debate of different literacies which are flooding students attention? It has been suggested that there is a need to stay in touch and even lead with digital media teaching practices of today for tomorrow's 21st century learning (Jenkins, 2007). This is increasingly relevant in schools today where the new digital revolution is taking place and laptops are being rolled out around the Sydney and Greater Western Sydney region where cultural diversity exceeds any other Australian location and hence could further the cultural and digital divide (Prensky, 2001).

This study draws on Buckingham's (2003) approach to 'media education' which is concerned with teaching and learning *about* the media, yet this paper proposes the need to integrate teaching *with* media and *through* educational media to adequately support 21st century skills in student/teacher learning. The investigation will follow students and teachers using Buckingham's 'Digital Media Literacies Framework and evaluate how these elements of media education can be integrated into teaching and learning in schools and whether ultimately future consideration of changes in pedagogical practices should occur. The first cycle of a design based research (DBR) investigation questions strategies used by teachers in a variety different socio economics contexts education when instructing with digital media as a trigger. More broadly the investigation looks at whether a new pedagogy is occurring and is the time right for digital literacies now to be integrated into other curricular areas which use digital media for teaching and learning and how to make this shift where students become the creators of their own content or where consumers become producers (Goldfarb, 2002).

## Background

Teaching with media is not a new phenomenon (Buckingham, 2003; Postman, 1969) where the debate on the use of visual media in teaching has had a long history particularly in the field of English. As far back as the 60's it was recognized that some subjects should not be taught in a text based format in isolation as discussed by Neil Postman at a 1969 convention of the National Council of Teachers of English. Here Postman states

that the soundest reason for having such a subject as English has always been that children need to be competent in using and understanding the uses of the dominant communication media of their own culture. When these media were largely limited to such forms as novels, poems, and essays, the content of English made some sense. My purpose here is to suggest an alternative to English, now that we are already immersed in the second half of the nuclear space age. I call the alternative *media ecology*.

This new 'media ecology' is alive and well 40 years down the track which weaves through the definition of literacy and each term as a host of sub classifications of skills which need to be acquired inherent in new literacies. The ability to use new skills to manipulate images, text, colour, is now required even more to 'recode the culture' in which students live in (Bamford, 2003 p 25).

The push for visual media in education created fear in the 1990's, which questioned the value of using books at all (Goldfarb, 2002). Should this consideration of the use of visual media and its role across the curriculum be reviewed as we rapidly enter into a new era of digital media in a participatory culture? Oblinger, (2003) inquires into the need to understand how educators knowingly or unknowingly teach with visual media and the increasingly important questions need to ask as the world globally shifts from printed text to the digital world.

Media is fast becoming a 'part of a students' experience, rather than simply passive viewing; students are now encouraged to be participants in their own learning. This change is continually being questioned by educator's, which suggest a need to challenge whether educators are adapting new practices of media pedagogies naturally in response to a increase in visual media in the classroom (Buckingham, 2003). Media education is not just the domain of professionals and industry. A rapid increase of the use of media in the classroom could boom with the roll out of laptops into schools and students manipulate and produce their own media not just consume. Students are also 'changing the balance of participation and spectatorship as they can 'create their own games, news, blogs, films' (Gee, 2009) and can step into roles which used to be reserved for professional (Gee, 2009) .

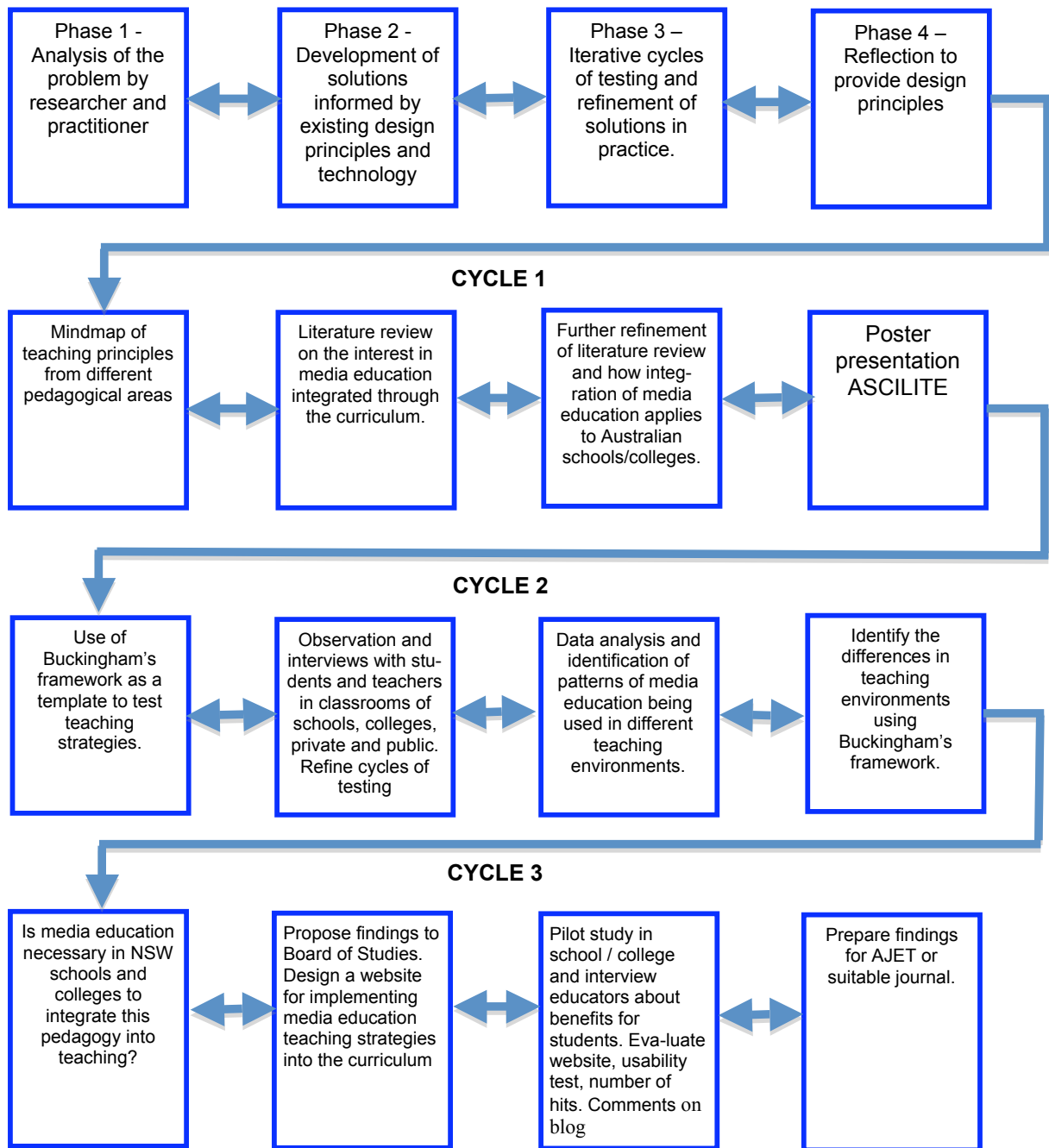
## Buckingham's Digital Media Literacies approach

A more contemporary approach to teaching new literacies is seen in Buckingham (2003) notion of media education who proposes a 'dialogic' or an 'ongoing dialogue or negotiation between the students' existing knowledge and experience of the media and the new knowledge that is made available by teachers'. The approach further attempts to provide experiences for students to reflect on with the reverse order of the students interrogate and critically examine the tools and procedures that the teachers introduce into the classroom. Buckingham also uses media education to create active learners who 'shift back and forth between action and reflection and practice and theory', but more importantly active producers of media' for learning.

Four broad areas to consider when conceptualizing Buckingham's (2003) digital media literacies are *Representation, Language, Production* and *Audience* as a media educator's approach to digital literacy. Applying Buckingham's approaches as a guideline to support teachers and students with digital media is summarised as follows:

### Representation

- How does digital media create authentic learning situations which teachers may encounter in schools in Sydney and the Greater Western Sydney region?
- Is there a presence or absence of viewpoints from students which trigger interests or aspects of experiences
- Are their reoccurring themes that pervade the media?



### Language

- Can students analyse and use meta-languages for describing teaching events and ask new questions?
- Can teachers discuss detail of media images which are aligned with teaching outcomes?
- Do students go from the familiar to the unknown when using the clip and be able to dissect what is happening in the classroom?
- Do teachers understand the affordances of digital media clips for teaching?
- How can students learn to create interactivity with social software to support collaboration?

### Production

- Is the design and creation of students own learning enjoyable and engaging for students. TOT?
- Can the digital media objects create ongoing student learning with technologies used beyond the school?
- Does the media act as a trigger for students to create their own creation of teaching and learning?
- Whose voice is being heard in the clip? What is the take home message?

## Audience

- Could these digital clips create online 'participation' from blogs or other social software? To create discussion.
- How will different groups interpret this new digital media?
- Can students distinguish between fact and opinion?
- Do student beliefs, attitudes and values change when filtering media messages?
- Do the students negotiate their own meaning?

## Design based research

The use of (Reeves, 2006) Design Based Research framework will support the examination of three cycles starting with the identification of different teaching strategies used which may compare with Buckingham's, (2003) media education strategies. The first cycle will address a literature review of media education globally. The first phase will also address a needs assessment to develop media literacies throughout the school curriculum particularly in relation to different socio economic schools that use digital artifacts for teaching in various subject areas. The second cycle explores the use of Buckingham's Digital Media Framework investigating further uses of media education with the view to inform new design principals with exiting principals. This is particularly interesting in view of data being collected in different socio-economic areas of Sydney and Greater Western Sydney region.

The third phase explores the possibility of transferring new pedagogical methods into different Key Learning Areas of teaching with the outcome being a publication of an article in a journal.

The project goals will be working towards solving real problems collaboratively with teachers, students, and practitioners with an end product of constructing a new design principle for the use of digital media in 21st century teaching, which can be implemented, across the school curriculum.

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