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Cry, the Beloved Media:  
New Media and Student Perceptions in a World Literature Classroom

Timbre J.N. Greenwood

A thesis submitted to the faculty of  
Brigham Young University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts

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June 2011

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ABSTRACT

Cry, the Beloved Media:

New Media and Student Perceptions in a World Literature Classroom

Timbre J.N. Greenwood  
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Master of Arts

This qualitative action research project addressed the infusion of media literacy and new media into a standard secondary English language arts curriculum. In examining students' perceptions of South Africa as they interacted with new media texts in conjunction with the traditional literary text *Cry, the Beloved Country*, this study also explored the manner in which students' media interactions informed their reading of the novel. As a result of the research data, the author asserts that media literacy education can, in fact, play an effective role in teaching literature within the world literature classroom.

Keywords: new media, media literacy education, *Cry, the Beloved Country*, secondary language arts

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to thank Amy Petersen Jensen for all of the time and effort that she has put in over the past two years to ensure that I received an excellent education and had a positive experience throughout this program. As the chair of my thesis committee, she has been invaluable in providing guidance and feedback throughout this process. Thanks, too, to Sharon Swenson and Darl Larsen for being willing to sit on my thesis committee and read all about my students and our experiences with South Africa this year. In addition, I would like to thank the entire TMA faculty for providing a program in which I could learn and grow; as a teacher, I know that, at times, it can be a thankless job, but they have done a fabulous job.

I would also like to thank my students, without whom, there would have been no project. I think that I have learned more from them over the past year than I could have ever taught them, and I am truly amazed at their brilliance.

A huge thank you goes out to my family, who has been the anchor in the chaos of my life over the past two years. Thank you to my in-laws who have provided many meals and much support while I've been at work and at school. Thank you to my siblings, to Lexy and Brayden for hanging out with me on BYU campus from time to time and to Landon for being an unwitting catalyst for all of this. And thank you to my parents who have always been examples of excellence in everything they do and who have always encouraged me to do anything that I'm passionate about, even if it meant that they had to provide the means to do so at times. Thanks too, for always knowing the right things to say when a stressed-out daughter calls on the phone, screaming that "there's no way she can do this."

And finally, I must express my deepest gratitude to my husband, Tony, who dated me during the first semester, married me after the first year, and loved me through the seemingly-never-ending research and writing process. I have been so blessed to have him in my life, and I know that there is no way that I would have been able to get here without his constant reminders that "I am the 'master'." He is proof that the Lord works in mysterious ways, and for that, and him, I will be eternally grateful.

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## CHAPTER ONE Literature Review

### Introduction

I teach English in a suburban high school in the inter-mountain west. In many ways, my English classroom seems to be very similar to those of times past. Green chalkboards may have been replaced with whiteboards, but I, with all other English teachers, am still expected to drill students on specific grammatical principles, require students to write papers and essays that examine a wide variety of topics, and teach students to explore themes and literary devices within texts (International Reading Association/National Council for Teachers of English [IRA/NCTE], 1996; Utah Education Network, 2006). And yet, despite these consistent principles, the English classroom is not the same as it once was.

One of the reasons for the evolution of the English classroom is the potential impact that new technologies have on students (Jewitt, Bezemer, Jones, & Kress, 2009). The “Net Gen” or the generation of “digital natives” that we now find in our classrooms are students who receive and process information differently than their teachers or parents. Because of their experience with digital technologies, “digital learners have...experience at processing information quickly...and they’re [good] at dealing with high-speed information” (Jukes, Crockett, & McCain 2010, p. 36). Because of this, the way these students learn no longer matches up with more traditional pedagogical methods (Davis, 2003; Kelly, McCain, and Jukes, 2009; Jukes, Crockett, & McCain, 2010). Many scholars of education are now looking at the gap between the digital natives and the structure of their schooling, pointing out that “The Way We’ve Always Done It” is probably not the most effective educational philosophy for this new type of student (Kelly, McCain, and Jukes 2009, p.10). They argue that “If we are really going to connect to this generation, we need to be willing...to acknowledge and embrace in classrooms the digital world

that's an everyday and internalized part of students' lives outside of school" (Jukes, Crockett, & McCain 2010, p. 36)

So, how are we to go about teaching this digital generation? And how can we, as teachers, bridge the gap between more traditional, linear pedagogy, and the new, multimodal pedagogical approaches that seem to be required by this new generation of students? How can we truly engage our students, and contribute significantly to their learning, in a manner that is engaging to them? Because, no matter what theories or proposals for change are developed, we, as teachers, operate *now*—within the current prescribed structure. No matter what types of changes we wish to implement in the classroom, we must do it under the watchful gaze of those who adhere to the more traditional pedagogical philosophies, and therefore, new pedagogy must be immediately and obviously effective (McClenaghan & Doecke, 2010).

For the teachers placed in this position, the use of media within the classroom offers a wide variety of ways to respond to these questions. In today's modern world, media are everywhere, and they influence many facets of our lives, offering "us ideas, images, and representations...that inevitably shape our view of reality" (Buckingham, 2003, p. 5). In order to become an active participant and contributing member of society, everyone must interact with the media; it has become virtually unavoidable.

With the increase in the prevalence of modern technology, from the internet to digital satellite radio and television, there is a vast reservoir of information available to the average American high school student, and a vast opportunity to incorporate this information and the accompanying technologies within the classroom. And while not every student has access to all of the new and latest technologies, there is still a much greater opportunity for access to all kinds of knowledge, whether general or highly academically specific, and with this access, how is a



student to know what is and what is not worthwhile information? In attempting to engage students, to prepare them for the twenty-first century world, and to still teach core concepts, it seems as though incorporating the media is no longer optional (Tapscott, 1998).

The concept of media literacy education (MLE) has developed within these murky areas of the educational realm. The Center for Media Literacy Education (2008) has defined media literacy as “a 21st century approach to education. It provides a framework to access, analyze, evaluate and create messages in a variety of forms—from print to video to the Internet. Media literacy builds an understanding of the role of media in society as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy.” In essence, MLE is founded in the idea that students need to be taught to navigate our highly-mediated world. In 2007, The National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE) took this one step further and developed the Core Principles of Media Literacy Education in their efforts to help educators to teach students to critically engage with media in order to achieve these objectives.

Research shows that one of the most challenging aspects of MLE for teachers, even with the research and help readily given by NAMLE, is finding ways in which to integrate the principles of MLE into a required core curriculum where teachers are still held responsible for teaching “content knowledge.” Teachers have a desire to utilize the power of the media within their content areas, but often, there is some confusion regarding the differences between MLE and “Instructional Technology,” the use of media to simply illustrate a point or a concept (Sperry, 2010; Hart, 2001). If teachers desire to truly critically engage students with the media in a manner that enables them to incorporate core curricular concepts, we must make sure that MLE is more than just “teaching kids to make pre-packaged PowerPoint presentations” (Vaidhyanathan, 2008).

It is within this discussion of integrating MLE into the traditional content classroom that this research study finds itself. Is it possible to integrate MLE into a classroom without detracting from the required core content? Can it be used to enhance and engage students with a curriculum that, at times, can come across as dull and uninteresting? And if so, *how* can a teacher use the MLE in an effective manner within the English classroom?

In order to truly understand the context of this study, and the objectives behind its methodology, however, some background information is necessary, which is addressed in this chapter. Here one finds an initial discussion of the contemporary English classroom, how it has evolved over time, and the role of the media and media literacy education within that context. Moving then into a discussion of critical intercultural literacies, it becomes evident that there is a need for this type of literacy instruction, especially within the world literature classroom, as students are expected to function within today's more global society. Media literacy and media literacy education are then introduced as a means for promoting critical intercultural literacies, as well as curricular objectives in English classes. And finally, this chapter ends in an effort to connect all of these concepts together, and one finds a discussion of how media literacy education might be implemented within the contemporary English classroom in order to promote critical intercultural literacy.

### **The Contemporary English Classroom**

As a teacher in an English classroom, like many others, I am faced each day with the need to educate my students in the most engaging and effective manner possible, while still meeting the core requirements set by the state and nation in which I teach. I want my students to be successful on the standardized tests, but I am even more interested in providing my students with an integrated Language Arts curriculum that will prepare them to interact with the world in

which they live. I want to engage students in “a rich variety of language arts experiences: discussing history and humanity, improving reading skills, increasing vocabulary, practicing critical thinking, improving writing, and many of the other sorts of activities that take place in an effective English class” (Grierson, Thursby, Dean, & Crowe, 2007, p. 80).

While these “language arts experiences” have become a standard part of the English curriculum, they are illustrations of how traditional English curriculum, focused primarily on the reading and writing of print text, has drastically changed over time. In fact, the objectives of English language arts courses have altered so much that there is now much debate over what English teachers do and should teach (Gee, 1989; IRA/NCTE, 1996; Utah Education Network, 2006). Reflecting on work done by Peters & Wixson (2003), Grierson & Nokes (2010) state that, “Due to a lack of consensus as to what constitutes English as a discipline, the English language arts standards (National Council of Teachers of English/International Reading Association [NCTE/IRA], 1998) are interpreted in multiple ways which results in a wide variety of approaches to the teaching of literacy within the classroom” (p. 113). Because of this lack of clarity regarding what it means to teach “English language arts,” this discipline is in a perfect position for the integration of MLE and its core principles as defined by NAMLE.

With the introduction and development of technology, educators have recognized that print literacy, while a vital part of a larger whole, makes up only a part. As early as 1961, English educators began to acknowledge that “We must guard against our prejudice of thinking of print as the only medium that the English teacher has a real stake in. We are humanities and language teachers, and what we teach is naturally enlarged when technology makes many more art forms accessible to the great mass of people” (Hazard and Hazard, 1961, p. 133).

The introduction and incorporation of technology within society has done exactly this; the media makes seemingly endless amounts of information accessible to the masses at any given moment. We now live and teach in a technology and media saturated world, a world in which being “literate” means so much more than simply being able to pick up a book and read the words on the page, and as a result, the role of “schooling” has begun to morph. Teachers in general, and English teachers specifically, are being asked to address the wide varieties of literacies needed to navigate the world in which we live, enabling students to make connections between in-school and out-of school literacies (Grierson & Nokes 2010; Hull & Schultz, 2002; New London Group, 2000). As a result, those who have been held responsible, at least stereotypically, for the literacy education of the student population, the English teachers, face curricular and pedagogical overhauls.

Within secondary English curriculums, there are opportunities for MLE to be integrated due to the evolution of the definition of literacy and the overlap between content material and core curriculum requirements. In 1996, the International Reading Association (IRA) in conjunction with the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) published their set of standards for language arts curriculum. Four of the twelve standards “directly address the need for developing critical competencies to analyze and create print and non-print media” (Christel & Krueger, 2001, p. ix). In the state of Utah, teachers are required to teach students principles of inquiry regarding texts as well as the analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of texts, which truly dovetails with the definition of MLE as well as its core principles (Center for Media Literacy Education, 2008; National Association for Media Literacy Education, 2007; Utah Education Network, 2006). And now, with the adoption of the Common Core State Standards for English language arts, there continues to be an emphasis on the need for students to interact with,

evaluate, and even create media themselves. Within these standards, both the writing as well as the speaking/listening strands focus directly on the use of and production of technology to enhance student learning, which also accomplish the objectives of NAMLE's Core Principles of MLE (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010; National Association for Media Literacy Education, 2007).

Research done by Hobbs (2006a) and Hobbs and Frost (2003) shows that incorporating MLE into a secondary-level English language arts course can not only be effective in meeting traditional academic goals, but can also provide students with increased comprehension of the construction of meaning within various types of texts such as print media, audio, and television news. Within their study, students who received a MLE infused curriculum were also able to identify specific techniques used by authors to attract and maintain audience interest, which is also a skill directly tied to traditional English curriculum. In addition, Flynt and Brozo (2010), in their synthesis of research presented by the MacArthur Foundation (2008), Myatt (2008), and O'Brien and Bauer (2005), assert that teens' use of digital media and interest in it should influence schools to incorporate technology in order to make use of the global reach of new media.

Other studies done indicate that in addition to being an effective method for engaging student interest and teaching literacy, MLE can also be effective within the world of standardized testing. In his book *New Literacies in Action: Teaching and Learning in Multiple Media* (2005), William Kist illustrates the effectiveness of MLE in one particular English department in Calgary, Alberta. After completing a high school English program where the curriculum focuses on new literacies, students are incredibly successful on the standardized exams required. "Alberta has a provincial test that all students must take at the end of grade 12. And [these]

students do well on this test, with a student passing rate regularly in the 90% range (although the passing cutoff score is 50%)” (p.107). More and more research demonstrates that MLE, when integrated into a traditional classroom, can have positive effects on student learning as well as test scores, and therefore, incorporating MLE into an English curriculum seems to be a logical next step in the evolution of this discipline.

In addition to having a positive impact on test scores, however, MLE also offers opportunities for positively impacting students in less quantifiable ways. Through the incorporation of media and principles of MLE into the classroom, students are able to expand their worldviews in a manner that has not previously been available within a classroom setting, an element that is particularly interesting to address within a world literature classroom.

### **Critical Intercultural Literacies**

In addressing this idea of worldview, media literacy and the things that today’s student must learn, Henry Giroux, a leading theorist in the realm of critical pedagogy, has said that it is necessary that students:

be multiliterate in ways that not only allow them access to new information and media-based technologies, but also enable them to be border crossers capable of engaging, learning from, understanding, and being tolerant of and responsible to matters of difference and otherness. (as cited in Guilherme, 2006, p. 165)

This idea of “border-crossing,” engaging with, understanding, and learning from “the other” is at the core of any world literature classroom. The literature is a key component within the setting of an English classroom, but in addition to coming to a comprehension of the literary texts that come out of other cultures, within my class, I have a desire for students to gain at least a small understanding of the people themselves.

Learning about other cultures throughout the world also offers up an opportunity to explore multiple perspectives, an issue addressed by Henry Jenkins, a leader in media studies.

He writes:

[I]n such a world, it becomes increasingly critical to help students acquire skills in understanding multiple perspectives, respecting and even embracing diversity of views, understanding a variety of social norms, and negotiating between conflicting opinions.

(2006, p. 53)

Educational Theorists Paulo Freire and Donaldo Macedo (1987) put forth a similar idea in a succinct manner by making the statement that literacy is about “reading the word and the world.”

When teaching secondary world literature English courses, teachers are quick to realize that these men are correct; while it is necessary to maintain the standard of teaching reading and writing, adding an intercultural element to traditional as well as new literacies is absolutely vital (Carey-Webb, 2001). The media, the internet especially, can act as a cultural mediator, and teachers have resources for engaging student interest in the global society and for making connections between the students and the “other,” or those who do not come from the same background or culture as the students themselves (Nixon, 2005).

While examining the other, however, teachers must be sure to avoid, as much as possible, what Nozaki (2007) calls the “discourse of Othering.” This discourse is a means of establishing the “other” in a very value-based and stereotypical manner; it “does not just give a mere description of the Other, but suggests the ‘norm’ is for ‘us’” (p.160). Unfortunately, this discourse *is* often found in American classrooms; a “narrative of ‘difference’ ...usually unfolds like this: we mark some identity as ‘self’ ...and some as ‘different’ ...and then we theorize their unequal relationalities...‘difference’ is usually assumed to occupy a location that is far away

from us, in some ‘other worlds,’ in some other place” (Shome & Hegde, 2002, p. 175). Students are often given the counterproductive impression that while different and exotic, these “others” lack the complexities that are present within our “own” culture, and as educators, we are responsible for teaching students how to look beyond the superficial discourse of Othering.

In utilizing the technologies and media now available, there are great opportunities to expose students to cultural elements from around the world that are not otherwise available. In some cases, students may even be able to participate in online communities on a global scale, furthering their own personal experience with people throughout the world (Stylianou-Georgiou, Vrasidas, Christodoulou, Zembylas, & Landone, 2006). However, as much of the media available within the U.S. is still dominated by western ideology, when dealing with text in general and media text specifically, students must be given the skill set necessary to decode the media itself in its representations of the “other” (Hawisher & Selfe, 2000). Students must be taught to participate *with* the media rather than have the “text define...what they think” about others (Smolin & Lawless, 2010).

In order to do this, students must develop critical intercultural literacies, which “may be defined as the skills necessary to help one ‘read’ cultural events and activities (Kumaravadivelu, 2003, p. 274) in a variety of media and multimedia formats in one’s own culture and other cultures” (Pegrum, 2008, p. 137). In addition, students must be able to engage their own previous knowledge and perspectives in order to analyze and evaluate the text. After doing this, students must be able to reevaluate their own experiences and perspectives in light of this new knowledge. For the purpose of this study, I am using the term “critical intercultural literacies,” defined by Pegrum (2008), as the skills needed to work through this process. Those who have developed these skills will be able to find and then analyze media sources from their own culture



as well as the culture of “the other.” In the analytical process, someone who has developed critical intercultural literacies is able to examine each text for cultural elements, while recognizing that even though something may be *different*, there is not necessarily a value of “greater” or “lesser” that must be attributed to those differences. Eventually, this person, after analyzing the texts at hand, is able to synthesize his or her new knowledge with previous experience and knowledge in an effort to come to a new understanding of the world and his or her place within it.

Teaching critical intercultural literacies through the use of media within the world literature classroom allows teachers and students expanded opportunities for constructing meaning and making global connections in conjunction with traditional literacy as well as the core principles of media literacy as defined by the National Association for Media Literacy Education (2007). The fifth principle, in particular, which focuses on media as a “part of culture” and an “agent of socialization” (National Association for Media Literacy Education, 2007), makes clear the connection between media literacy education and critical intercultural literacies.

### **Media Literacy**

The obvious connection between critical intercultural literacies and media literacy supports the idea that integrating MLE into the English classroom, particularly a world literature classroom, is an effective choice for curricular reasons. However, media literacy, whether as a part of critical intercultural literacy or in and of itself, is a logical choice for teachers for other reasons as well.

The students in today’s classrooms are constantly surrounded by and interacting with media, sometimes to the point of conducting illicit internet searches on their cell phones or

various mobile devices during class. Research shows that because media plays such a significant part in their lives, students invest in it and are interested by it, and as any good teacher can attest, there is power in accessing student interest (Burnett, 2002; MacBride & Luehmann, 2008; Ng, 2006; Peterson, 2010). Because of this, the use of media within the classroom has become a popular pedagogical tactic for engaging students. The idea of media literacy is much more than simply using technology to do “old” things, however (Cope & Kalantzis, 2010). It is the expansion of traditional literacy skills “to reflect the media change taking place” (Jenkins, 2006).

In today’s technological world, it has become evident that, while the age of print literacy is not over, there is a need to expand our concept of “text” and what it means to be a literate person (Kellner, 2002; Lankshear, 1997). Even the media itself recognizes the need for expanding old definitions; on one popular website, dictionary.com, a text can now be defined as “anything considered to be a subject for analysis” (2010, “text,” def. 13).

For today’s students, this expands meaning-making possibilities from print texts like novels and newspapers into the realm of websites, podcasts, films, blogs, or even Youtube videos. Research indicates that the media has an influence on how people perceive things, and students interact with and learn from these texts in a wide variety of ways. Because it is so prevalent, the media itself forms a kind of pedagogy (Buckingham, 2003; Kellner, 2002; Lull, 1995; Peterson, 2010). As a result, it has become necessary to prepare students for their interactions with these new texts. Sholle and Denski argue that as teachers:

[W]e must attend to the multiple references and codes that position [students]. This means paying attention to the manner in which popular culture texts are constructed by and construct various discursive codes, but also how such texts express various

contradictory ideological interests and how these texts might be taken up in a way that creates possibilities for different constructions of cultural and political life. (1993, p. 309)

Teachers must teach critical media literacy in order for students to be prepared to interact within the larger community.

One key component for the integration of media literacy within the classroom is the fact that teachers must recognize that media literacy is “about enabling students to decode their own truth,” which is both empowering and engaging (Sperry, 2010, p. 91). This can make a teacher a bit apprehensive at times, because students may not come to the “truth” that the teacher would like them to. However, media literacy is about teaching students to critically engage; it is about giving them the tools necessary to “access, analyze, evaluate and communicate messages in a wide variety of forms” (Center for Media Literacy Education, 2008) more than it is about teaching them what those media messages *are* (Hobbs, 1998; see also Aufderheide & Firesote, 1993; Kaiser Family Foundation, 2003).

Within this definition of media literacy, there is one element that is often overlooked by English educators trying to incorporate MLE into their classroom. This is the element of communicating messages, or production of media. Buckingham (2003) emphasizes the fact that “media literacy necessarily involves ‘reading’ and ‘writing’ media. Media education therefore aims to develop *both* critical understanding and active participation” (p. 4). As is the case with traditional literacy, where a teacher teaches students to both read as well as write, teachers who are incorporating MLE into their classrooms must provide opportunities for media production as well as analysis. This often overlooked element of MLE is one that enables students to synthesize their knowledge and demonstrate true understanding of curricular objectives.

## **Teaching Critical Intercultural Literacies and Media Literacy by Implementing New Media into the English Classroom**

A great deal of research has been done regarding the use of Media Literacy in the English classroom. In reported cases, when MLE is implemented in a way that engages students and explicitly attempts to critically engage them with the media, learning objectives have been met, and student interest in curriculum has increased (Burnett, 2002; Carey-Webb, 2001; Christel & Krueger, 2001; Dockter, Haug, & Lewis, 2010; Kist, 2002; Ng, 2006; Peterson, 2010; Sperry, 2010). In addition, Dillon and Jobst (2005) have found one consistent result in their studies of the incorporation of hypermedia within the classroom: retention among those who used hypermedia was consistently higher. The use of media enables learners to retain information longer, which is key. As teachers, we hope that at least some of what students learn in our classrooms stays with them.

As a world literature teacher, this desire is especially strong for me. I want my students to remember what they have learned so that they can move into the global society as those “crossers capable of engaging, learning from, understanding, and being tolerant of and responsible to matters of difference and otherness” described by Giroux (as cited in Guilherme, 2006, p. 165). Hobbs (2006b) points out that “in the United States, media literacy is increasingly being used as a means to introduce students to cultural studies,” and it is quite possible that through the use of media and the incorporation of media literacy, teachers will be able to teach their students critical intercultural literacies.

In the English classroom, one of the ways in which this is currently being done is through the introduction of new media for teaching course content. Teachers are incorporating non-print texts such as films, online videos, podcasts, and even video games into their curriculum in an effort to illustrate to students that they are constantly engaging with and analyzing, or “reading”

text of some kind. And in addition to constantly reading, students are taught that, as people, “we are never simply reading—we are always reading something, in some context or situation, and reading for some purpose” (Wyatt-Smith & Elkins, 2008, p. 902). As students analyze these non-print texts in conjunction with more traditional, linear print texts, they are able to think critically about the texts as well as the modes for communicating the messages (Brunner & Tally, 1999). The students learn about the topics at hand in a multi-modal manner, and as a result, they are able to construct their own knowledge from a variety of sources in a variety of ways, which coincides with NAMLE’s Core Principles of Media Literacy Education (2007).

Another of the ways in which new media is being integrated within today’s literature classrooms is through the use of weblogs and wikis. These technologies are a means for students to publish online, and in many cases are being used to connect student writing and discussion even outside of class (Farabaigh, 2007; Huffaker, 2006; Kennedy, 2003). In his own literature classroom, Will Richardson (2003) found that “online discussions stimulate debate and motivate students to do close reading of the text. In many instances...students’ understanding of the novel and their personal relationship to it occurred outside of the classroom in the Web log.” Teachers are finding that these technologies are prompting more insightful commentary and discussion from students, particularly those who are apprehensive about verbalizing their thoughts in the classroom setting (English, 2007).

In addition to facilitating discussion, class blogs and wikis “also help create a community of practice among participating students. They can collaborate with each other and build knowledge” in new ways (Huffaker, 2006, p. 346; see also Grant, 2009). These technologies enable students to create repositories of information as well as commentaries on that information. As students find media sources related to the topics being addressed in class, class blogs and

wikis can provide them with the opportunity to post links to other related materials as well as embed audio and visual media, which can promote further exploration of classroom topics. As the students add to the blog or wiki, they become more invested in it, and as a result, they often learn and retain more of the information presented (MacBride & Luehmann, 2008).

This is a study about using these two practices, the incorporation of new media text in conjunction with participation in a wiki project, within the English classroom in an effort to build critical intercultural literacy and inform students' interaction with more traditional text, specifically the novel *Cry, the Beloved Country*. This project required students to critically interact with new media texts on a regular basis, both in and out of class, using NAMLE's "Key Questions to Ask When Analyzing Media Messages" (2007) in an effort to learn about South Africa and South African culture. As they did this, they were to compare their new media interactions to their interactions with the literary text *Cry, the Beloved Country*, analyzing the methods for conveying meaning and telling stories, centering their analysis on four "topics of focus" that were determined through my own prior experience with the novel:

- The Importance of the Land
- The Effect of Fear
- The Unifying Power of Love
- The Cycle of Inequality/Injustice.

Students were then required to post their analysis and response to specific writing prompts on the class wiki, sponsored by the site wikispaces.com, making their media and their analysis available to others for response and critique.

While it is inevitable that student perceptions regarding South Africans would be altered through any form of teaching, regardless of media usage, the purpose of this study was to engage student interest in "the use of literary elements across genres and cultures" as well as analyze the

construction of meaning within various media, enabling students to make cross-cultural connections and increase their critical intercultural literacies (Utah Education Network, 2006).

The goal was to examine students' perceptions of South Africa and South African culture as new media was infused into a world literature curriculum while examining the ways in which new media interactions informed students' reading of *Cry, the Beloved Country*.

The following chapter addresses the methodology of this research study, including a discussion of the research design, an explanation regarding the development of the research questions, and a review of the study's context and participants. In addition, the chapter outlines the methods and procedures for data collection, provides a theoretical background for grounded theory, and illustrates the application of grounded theory in the data analysis done for the project.

## CHAPTER TWO Methodology

### Qualitative Educational Research

The purpose of educational research is “to explain, predict, and/or control educational phenomena” (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009, p. 6) by attempting to “manipulate and control certain variables...to test a hypothesis” (Mills, 2011, p. 3). Initially, traditional research methods may seem straightforward enough—one “simply” has to set up control and experimental groups and then measure the changes in dependent and independent variables. Unfortunately, within a classroom, it is almost impossible to isolate one specific variable and control for the rest as required; much of what goes on within education is impossible to quantify because humans are complex beings and education is a complex process. As a result, within the past thirty years, there has been a significant shift in educational research. Rather than relying on the traditional approach, one that “relied too much on the researcher’s view of education and less on the research participant’s view” (Creswell, 2008, p. 49), qualitative research methods for educational contexts have emerged.

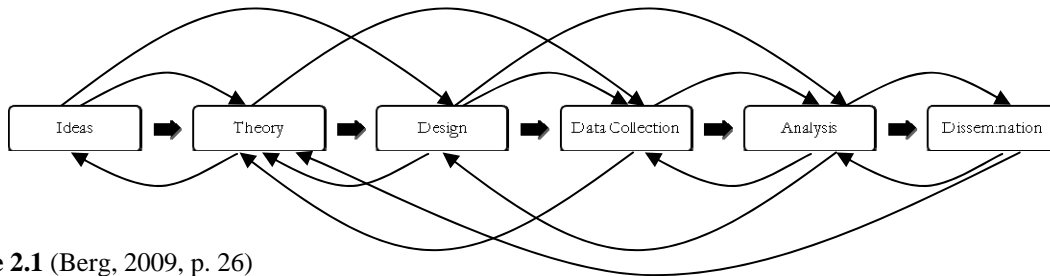
According to Berg (2009), “qualitative research properly seeks answers to questions by examining various social settings and the individuals who inhabit those settings” (p.8). This type of research uses “narrative, descriptive approaches to data collection to understand the way things are and what the research means” (Mills, 2011, p.4) rather than cut-and-dry statistical analysis of numerical data. In addition, qualitative research, especially the spiraling research approach described by Berg (2009, see figure 2.1), enables the research to fold in and reflect on itself throughout the process. Berg’s model for qualitative research illustrates that while one can see how an idea moves through the linear theory-before-research model of idea → theory → design → data collection → analysis → dissemination, at each stage, it is possible to go back,



evaluate and reconsider your initial idea, theory, design, collection, and even dissemination.

This model suggests that the researcher never truly moves out of one particular stage, as they are all interconnected in a spiraling progression.

Because of this constant reflection, revision, and spiraling progression, this qualitative research method functions very well within complex social spaces. It is as adaptable and changeable as the subjects it studies. The educational system, its structure and its clientele are constantly changing, and the research done within this realm must be able to adjust to that constant change. As a result of this necessity, qualitative research has come to the forefront of educational research.



**Figure 2.1** (Berg, 2009, p. 26)

As a classroom practitioner, in examining the various methods for conducting research within my own educational setting, my constantly-changing classroom, this qualitative approach to research quickly demonstrated itself to be the most promising for reaching my objectives. Classroom instruction is a complex process, and Berg's spiraling approach to research, where one is able to reflect and adapt throughout the research process, mirrors the reflective action often taken by teachers as they move throughout a unit of instruction. In addition, it offers opportunities for adapting the research study when working within a complex social structure, such as a classroom, where one cannot truly "control" any part of human behavior.

## **Action Research**

Action research is a specific type of research that falls within the qualitative tradition. Often traced back to Kurt Lewin, who “applied research strategies as a methodology in behavioral science in attempting to solve sociological problems” (Tomal, 2003, p. 8), this methodology has become quite popular within education over the past few decades (Berg, 2009). Adapted from Lewin’s behavioral science application, part of action research’s popularity within the educational realm comes from the idea that it is “not a set of concrete steps but [is] a process of learning from experience, a dialectical interplay between practice, reflection, and learning” (McNiff & Whitehead, 2002, p. 13), a process that is a natural part of successful teaching practice, as teachers constantly reflect and adapt material from year to year. The action research methodology “gives credence to the development of powers of reflective thought, discussion, decision, and action by ordinary people [teachers and their students] participating in collective research on private troubles that they have in common” (Adelman, 2003, p.8). As a result, it is appealing to those teachers who desire to examine their own practice in an effort to improve their own students’ learning experience. This appeal is a part of what has made it so that, as asserted by Creswell (2008), action research has now taken over as the most widely used form of practical research within education.

A wide variety of models for action research have been developed, the general process consisting of a four-step cycle: reflect, plan, act, and observe. Geoffrey Mills has taken these elements and incorporated the general process into his own dialectic action research spiral, which gives teachers a four-step guide to study themselves and their own practice: identifying an area of focus, collecting data, analyzing and interpreting data, and developing an action plan (2011, see figure 2.2). This methodology “is a ‘spiral’ because it includes four stages where

investigators cycle back and forth between data collection and a focus, and data collection and analysis and interpretation” (Creswell, 2008, p. 600).

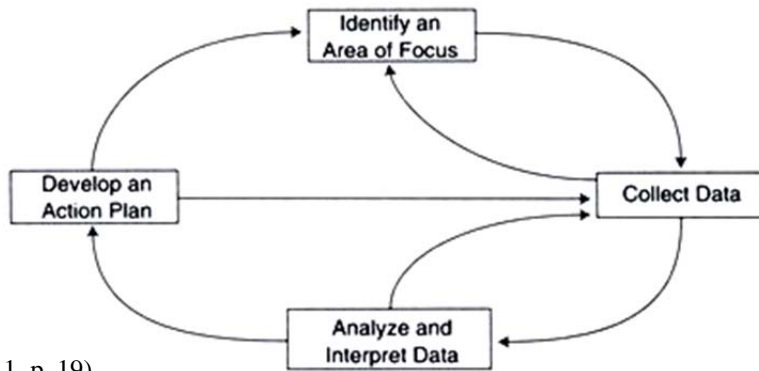


Figure 2.2 (Mills, 2011, p. 19)

As defined by Mills (2011) and summarized by Creswell (2012), each step of this dialectic action research spiral is further broken down so as to lead the researcher smoothly through the action research process. The first step, “Identify an Area of Focus” is actually a compilation of several actions on the part of the researcher: “defining the area, doing reconnaissance (self-reflection and description), reviewing the literature, and writing an action research plan to guide the research” (Creswell, 2012, p. 581). The second step, “Collect Data,” is more straight-forward in that, during this part of the research, the researcher simply collects data, using a variety of tools in order to gather multiple sources of data. The third step of the dialectic action research spiral, “Analyze and Interpret Data” is broken down into two parts: Analysis and Interpretation. During the Analysis phase, the researcher attempts to summarize what’s in the data by looking closely at the collected data, choosing appropriate data analysis techniques, and then beginning to identify themes, analyze antecedents and consequences, and display interpretations. The object of the Interpretation phase is to make sense of and find meaning in the data by “extending the analysis by raising questions, connecting findings to personal experience, seeking the advice of critical friends, and contextualizing the findings in

literature and theory” (Creswell, 2012, p. 581). And finally, the fourth step of the action research spiral, “Develop an Action Plan,” involves summarizing the findings of the research and then offering further steps or actions for improvement, based on those findings.

By moving through these individual steps in the process of the dialectic action research spiral, the practitioner, the teacher-as researcher, studies a “local problem, engaging in inquiry...and focusing on teacher development” (Creswell, 2008, p. 601). Once one round of the spiral has been completed, the teacher needs to complete the action research process through the dissemination of her findings (Berg, 2009). She then finds herself in a position to identify another area of focus and proceed through the action research spiral once again, continuously striving to take action, improve, and effect positive educational change (Mills, 2011).

As developed by Mills, this model for research is designed to be used “*by teachers and for teachers and students, not research on them*” and because of this, it is able to be adapted for a wide variety of purposes, especially when working within the context of any one, specific classroom (2011, p.19). As such, it is a research model that I found to be effective for the purpose of this study. My objective in conducting this research was not to study my students, per se, but rather, it was to examine the way the use of new media forms enabled students to make connections with the ultimate goal of improving instruction and student engagement within the classroom. As such, Mill’s dialectic action research spiral provided an adaptable methodology and a solid outline of procedure, effective for accomplishing that goal. Specifically, I used it to identify my own area of focus through developing research questions, researching the literature surrounding my questions, and establishing a research plan. I was then able to move into the data collection stage, where I worked with the students in my world literature classroom to collect the necessary information for the study. I utilized the analysis and

interpretation stage in order to analyze and then synthesize the data that had been collected, in an effort to find answers to my research questions, and then I was able to use the final stage of developing an action plan to summarize my findings and then propose possible arenas for further exploration within my English classes.

### **Developing Research Questions**

This action research project, completed as a part of my graduate studies, represents one complete cycle of Mills' dialectic action research spiral, with the ultimate goal being that of making a positive change within my own classroom practice. Working as a full-time teacher, I have observed the need for pedagogical changes as technology has developed and students become increasingly "plugged in." Students are often much less engaged with print texts, choosing film and audio over written words, even forgetting that books are even an *option* when it is time to do "research."

As a teacher who works in the realm of traditional literacy, it has become evident that the concept of literacy has begun to morph. Within the English curriculum, there is room to adapt and expand the idea of literacy outside of traditional print texts, and I have made several beginning attempts to utilize the media and teach students that "text" means so much more in today's world than simply words on a piece of paper. For example, in the beginning of each year, my students and I work through a unit where they analyze and synthesize many different types of text, and I make sure to always involve images, music, films, and sometimes even online videos in order to illustrate that "texts" are all around them; they don't need to look for written words to find meaning.

As I began to further explore this idea, especially in relationship to media literacy education (MLE), I began to wonder if an incorporation of new media, which is a "generic term

for the many different forms of electronic communication that are made possible through the use of computer technology” (Webopedia, 2011), in conjunction with traditional texts could do even more than engage students and cater to students’ digital desires. As the purpose of media literacy education is to teach students to “access, analyze, evaluate and create messages in a variety of forms,” (Center for Media Literacy, 2008) it is possible to look at new media, or media that makes up the digital world, in association with the literary texts that are typical of a literature course. Perhaps, I thought, the development of new media literacies might aid in student interpretation and connection with the more traditional texts that are the focus of a traditional English class.

In addition to this, as I teach 11<sup>th</sup> Grade world literature classes, I began to wonder about the abilities engendered through teaching new media literacies and whether those skills could be utilized in the garnering of connections between cultures. Could my students use new media literacy to find connections to other cultures and the texts that come out of those cultures?

These two trains of thought are at the foundation of the two research questions developed for this action research project:

- **Research Question #1:** What are students’ perceptions of South Africa and South African culture as new media is infused into a world literature curriculum?
- **Research Question #2:** How do new media interactions inform students’ reading of a more traditional literary text, specifically, *Cry, the Beloved Country*?

### **Context of Study**

This action research study took place during the second term of an honors-level world literature class, from November 1, 2010 until January 14, 2011. All of the research subjects were adolescents in the eleventh grade, ranging in age from fifteen to seventeen years old, with a

largely homogenous student make-up with regards to ethnic background, socio-economic background, and cultural values. I, personally, was the teacher and the researcher on this project, having six years of teaching experience, all of which involved the world literature curriculum.

I taught five sections of world literature in the 2010-2011 school year, three classes of English 11 and two classes of English 11 Honors. I selected the English 11 Honors classes for the context of my research project because I wanted to reduce the complications that may arise from lack of participation or lack of data resulting from the incomplete assignments that often occurs in regular-level English 11 classes. And, though the novel had been previously used in my classroom, the research as well as this particular approach to the novel was new to me, and I wanted to provide for an ideal situation in which to collect and examine research data.

Another, and perhaps even more important, factor in choosing to do this project with my English 11 Honors classes was found in the objectives of the class and the needs of the students. Honors students expect a more rigorous course load, one that achieves the objectives of the core curriculum but that is challenging and thought-provoking as well. In designing the curriculum for this project, I sought to critically engage students with texts of all types in a manner that exceeded the expectations of the state core, thereby making it appropriate for an honors-level course.

Because the context of this study is what many might identify as an “ideal” classroom, it is necessary to recognize that the study itself does have some limitations. Because the unit design and the data collected are the result of teaching an honors-level class, one must acknowledge that the results of this study may not be universally applicable. Should this study have been conducted within a more heterogeneous context, the end result may have been quite different.

## **Study Participants**

The students who participated in this research study came from the two honors classes mentioned above, one with an enrollment of sixteen students and the other with twenty-eight students. While I initially planned to use only one of the two classes as the source for data collection, due to large difference in numbers within each class, there was a vast difference in classroom dynamics and culture. As a result, I chose to use both of my classes in the research process, bringing the total number of possible research subjects to forty-four. Not all of these forty-four students were official participants in my study, however. In preparation for conducting the research, I was required to apply for approval through Brigham Young University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). As a part of that application and approval process, I was required to create an informed consent document for students and their parents that enabled students to "opt-in" or "opt-out" of the research part of the study.; they were not able to choose whether or not they wanted to do the unit itself, as it was a part of the planned curriculum for the term. These consent documents (see Appendix A) were explained to each of the classes by another teacher in the school who was unaffiliated with the research project in any way in order to assure students that their participation or non-participation in the research itself would not impact their academic achievement in the course. Two forms were distributed at that time, a "Consent to be a Research Subject" document for the students, and a "Parent or Guardian Consent for Minor Child to Participate as a Research Subject" for parents and guardians. The forms, then taken home to parents and guardians for discussion and signatures, introduced the project, explained the procedures, discussed the limited risks, addressed the possible benefits, and ensured the confidentiality of the students' personal identification and information. Forty-one of the students chose to take part in the study, signing and returning the documents as willing



participants. Of the three students who chose not to participate in the study, one was not in class to receive the documents, and over the course of the unit, he/she never showed up to participate; this student stopped coming to English class mid-October and never returned. The forty-one students who returned consent documents were the official participants in the study, and it is from these students that artifacts were collected and participants were chosen for focus groups.

Choosing the focus group began with an in-class survey that students completed (see Appendix B). As a part of this survey, students were asked if they would like to participate in the research focus group. Twenty-one of the students expressed interest, and so I assigned each interested student a number. I then had the random number generator on the website random.org generate a list of twenty-one numbers. The students that corresponded with the first six numbers were invited to participate in the focus group, and the list of numbers was kept as a set of alternates in case any of the six were unable to participate.

The six students chosen were issued a letter of invitation (see Appendix C) that gave them information about the focus group meetings. At that point, two problems presented themselves. One of the students chosen realized that he/she would be unavailable on two of the three days scheduled for focus group discussions, and so I extended another invitation to the student corresponding with the number seven on the list.

The second problem occurred the week before the first focus group meeting, when one of my students' mothers died. As he/she was absent from school for an extended period of time, I was unsure as to whether he/she would be available for the meeting. Because of this uncertainty, I chose to include another alternate and issued an invitation to student number eight. On the day of the first focus group meeting, the original student selected as well as the alternate attended, and as a result, the focus group consisted of seven students rather than six: Calvin, David, Greg,

James, Laura, Megan, and Tonya. All names are pseudonyms, used in order to protect the identity of the participating students.

As mentioned before, the class in and of itself is relatively homogenous, and as such, this group of students represented an adequate sample of English 11 Honors students. Calvin was an articulate young man who participated often in class and in focus groups and who considered himself to be extremely comfortable with new media technologies. David, too, considered himself to be extremely comfortable with new media technologies, but unlike Calvin, he produced and published his own work on a regular basis. He participated in class and in focus group discussions, though he was very particular about when he chose to speak, and when he did speak up, his contributions were significant. Greg was a boisterous young man who was very vocal during class discussions and focus group meetings and who didn't hesitate to propose different or unique views. He was a little less comfortable with new media, but he had some basic experience with media production. James was a quiet young man whose comprehension of class material showed itself in his written work. He rarely spoke up in class, though during the focus group he was incredibly verbose when asked a question he felt strongly about. He, too, said that he felt relatively comfortable with new media, both in use and in production, though he did express some trepidation regarding the final media production assignment. Laura, an intelligent and well-spoken young woman, participated significantly in class and focus group discussions, and while she wasn't initially comfortable with new media technologies, she ended the project with a greater willingness to try new technologies. Megan was a girl who said that she was extremely comfortable navigating the internet, particularly Youtube, and that she wasn't intimidated by new media, and she actively participated in focus group discussions, though her in class participation was relatively limited. And finally, Tonya was an extremely quiet student

who seemed to reflect on, rather than participate in, class discussions and who sometimes needed to be prompted to speak during focus group discussions. However, she was extremely adept at navigating and producing digital context, and she did so with an artistic flair that truly manifested a comprehension of principles addressed in class as well as her own personal take on those ideas and themes.

### **Methods and Procedures**

As my students were initially unaware of the core principles of media literacy education, not having any previous instruction in MLE, when structuring the unit for this project, I recognized that it would be necessary to establish a foundation upon which the students could critically engage with the media. Looking at NAMLE's Core Principles for Media Literacy Education, I chose to focus my unit within the ideas presented in Core Principles #1, #2, #5, and #6 which state:

Principle 1: Media Literacy Education requires active inquiry and critical thinking about the messages we receive and create.

Principle 2: Media Literacy Education expands the concept of literacy (i.e., reading and writing) to include all forms of media.

Principle 5: Media Literacy Education recognizes that media are a part of culture and function as agents of socialization.

Principle 6: Media Literacy Education affirms that people use their individual skills, beliefs and experiences to construct their own meanings from media messages. (National Association for Media Literacy Education, 2007)

The unit created for this project was structured like a funnel, incorporating ideas that support all four of these principles generally before moving into more specific media analysis

regarding South Africa. (For a compilation of lesson plans and corresponding assignments, see Appendix D.) We began by exploring Principle 1 and Principle 2, addressing media itself, the definition of new media, the purposes of media, how media conveys messages, how we can and do use the media, and how we can “read” media messages. We then moved into a discussion of Principle 5 and Principle 6, looking at how media can influence and alter perceptions, focusing specifically on what the media had “told” the students about the country and the culture of South Africa, the setting of the class novel, *Cry the Beloved Country*. Then, as frontloading for the novel itself, or preparing students by giving them necessary background information in order to enable them to contextualize the text, students were shown examples of new media that explored South Africa, its culture and people, which may have coincided or contradicted students’ previous media-influenced perceptions of South Africa.

At that point, students were presented with an overview of their new media assignment for the project. Students were required to choose a particular new media source that was related directly to South Africa or South African culture. This could be anything from published blogs to online newspapers, video repositories, or podcasts. After choosing their media source, and receiving approval for it, students were then required to interact with that source on a weekly basis. They were to analyze and respond to that media electronically on our English 11 Honors Class Wiki, focusing specifically on guiding questions and prompts that I posted in order to guide students’ analyses and to provide connections to in-class discussion. (For a compilation of weekly wiki prompts, see Appendix E.) In addition, upon posting their own media analysis each week, students were to read and respond to at least one of their peers’ media analyses. As we moved through our concurrent reading of *Cry, the Beloved Country*, the wiki prompts and

analyses also required students to make connections between the media and the novel, especially with regards to our four areas of focus:

- The Importance of the Land
- The Effect of Fear
- The Unifying Power of Love
- The Cycle of Inequality/Injustice.

This media analysis and wiki posting element of the project was designed to enable students to examine new media in conjunction with a more traditional text, write about them through the use of technology, and compare them across genres, thereby fulfilling requirements found within the core curriculum as well as continuing to practice the skills developed through the exploration of the chose principles of MLE. The class wiki, sponsored through wikispaces.com, was a highly controlled publication space in which students were able to complete their assignments, express their opinions regarding the media that they analyzed, synthesize the texts with which they were interacting, and respond to their peers' experiences interacting with the novel as well as new media texts. It was a completely safe place to publish, as I was the moderator of the wiki and only allowed permission to access the site to the members of the class; however, because each post was accessible to all forty-four students in English 11 Honors, the "public" element of online publication was still very much present, making the assignment a form of publication suitable for meeting core writing requirements (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010).

This unit culminated in a final project that required students to synthesize the entire unit into a final media production, in accordance with Buckingham's assertion that "literacy clearly involves both reading *and* writing; and so media literacy must necessarily entail both the interpretation and the production of media" (2003, p. 49). Students were required to produce and then publish a type of new media that demonstrated their comprehension of the novel *Cry, the*

*Beloved Country*, demonstrated their thoughtful consideration of the new media with which they had interacted through the media analysis and wiki assignments, and demonstrated thoughtful consideration of the class's four areas of focus in relationship to the novel and the media. The final product had to be published online in some way, and once students had completed the assignment, they were required to analyze their own media using NAMLE's "Key Questions To Ask When Analyzing Media Messages" as a springboard for deconstructing their own work as if they were seeing it for the first time (National Association for Media Literacy Education, 2007). Students then posted links to their published media on the class wiki and presented their projects in class. Classmates were later given class time in the writing lab to provide responses to their peers' final projects. As the final projects were completed and submitted, at this point, I asked students to refrain from making suggestions for improvement and to only post positive commentary about others' work.

### **Data Collection**

The data was collected during this process, which took place during the second term of the 2010-2011 school year, from November to January. Student assignments were graded in order to provide the students with academic grades for the term; however, all analysis of data for research purposes was postponed until after student grades were posted in January. This was done in order to fulfill IRB requirements to protect students' academic interests from being affected by the results of the research study.

While conducting this research study, four types of artifacts were collected for analysis:

- student assignments
- wiki entries
- media productions
- focus group discussions and interviews.

The first of the data artifacts, student assignments, was a collection of actual student work regarding perception and media analysis. In introducing the unit “Cry the Beloved Media,” it was necessary to activate students’ prior knowledge and awareness of the messages conveyed in the media. Students were asked to analyze their sources of knowledge and their own process of obtaining knowledge as well as the origins of their perceptions regarding South Africa and South African culture. Students were also introduced to the National Association for Media Literacy Education’s (2007) “Key Questions to Ask When Analyzing Media Messages,” and they completed assignments designed to familiarize themselves with the application of these questions to media analysis. The assignments completed by those who opted to participate in the study were retained for analysis.

The second type of artifact that was collected was the actual wiki entries completed by students as they moved through the unit. Each week, students were required to read/view/interact with their chosen media and then to analyze and respond to that media electronically through the English 11 Honors Class Wiki. Through this assignment, students were to post links to their chosen media and then demonstrate their connection to the media and how their own personal perceptions of South Africa and South African culture were affected by these interactions. In addition, on a bi-weekly basis, students were to respond to at least one other student’s media analysis posts. These shorter responses were to include further comments, questions, or ideas that were generated while reading the original post. These original wiki posts and the responses made by those who chose to participate in the study were printed and the hard copies were saved for analysis.

The third type of artifact collected was the students’ own media productions. As part of the students’ final assessment for the project, they were required to use their experience with

their chosen new media in order to create a new media project that showcased the things that they learned. Students were to incorporate personal connections as well as the factual information that they collected as they interacted with media throughout the project. These final projects were retained for analysis purposes.

The fourth type of artifact collected was the focus group discussions and interviews with individual focus group members. The focus group consisted of seven students, who met at three different times over the course of the study, once at the beginning of the project, once midway through, and once after the project was completed. In addition, these seven students each met individually with me twice to discuss the project. In the focus group meeting and individual interviews, I was interested in finding out about the students' experiences with media and online classroom interaction and how these interactions had affected their perceptions of South Africa and South African culture as well as their reading of the class novel, *Cry, the Beloved Country*. These discussions and interviews were recorded and later transcribed for analysis purposes. (Questions used in focus group and interview sessions can be found in Appendix F.)

### **Data Analysis: Grounded Theory Research**

The theoretical base for the analysis of my collected data is that of grounded theory. Developed and introduced by Glaser and Strauss in 1967, grounded theory designs for qualitative data analysis are “systematic, qualitative procedures that researchers use to generate a general explanation (grounded in the view of participants...) that explains a process, action, or interaction among people” (Creswell, 2012, p.21). At the basis of grounded theory, as defined by Glaser and Strauss, is the idea that concepts and hypotheses should be based on actual field data. They believed that if a theory develops *through* data collection, then it will “fit the



situation being researched and will work when put to use” (1967, p. 3) better than a theory that is pre-determined or developed before the study actually begins.

In grounded theory research, the researcher seeks to develop her own theory while grounding her analysis and interpretations within the data derived from the participants, rather than using a pre-determined theory. In many instances, this approach is determined to be more effective than the application of an “off the shelf” theory because the theory itself is organic to the situation; it offers a better explanation of the data because it is rooted in specific data, with specific participants, in a specific setting (Creswell, 2012). Within complex social situations, such as education, it also provides the researcher with the means for adapting and altering theoretical interpretations, rather than simply proving a hypothesis to be “correct” or “incorrect.” As mentioned before, adaptability is key when examining the interworkings of a classroom curriculum, such as that addressed in this study. Grounded theory enabled me to pose my general research questions and then allow the data itself to determine more detailed questions as I moved through the analysis process.

Since its emergence in the 1960s, grounded theory has developed into a widely discussed, developed, and altered process of analysis. Over time, Glaser and Strauss began to differ on the particulars of grounded theory and the best ways to approach the methodology. As a result, there are now several different types of grounded theory design, all of which are variations on Glaser and Strauss’s original ideas. For the purpose of this study, I have chosen the systematic design of grounded theory originally detailed by Strauss and Corbin in 1990. This design moves through the analysis process using open coding, axial coding in conjunction with the creation of coding paradigms, and selective coding. In addition to these steps, the researcher participates in memoing, which is the act of recording the thoughts and ideas that occur to the researcher as she

moves through the data analysis. These memos are essentially extensive marginal notes, which often begin as open commentary and then move into commentary on core concepts as the research progresses (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2012).

One of the problems that has emerged within the community of grounded theory researchers is an inconsistency or vagueness in the definitions of terms within each phase of the research process. For the purposes of this project, each part of the systematic design of grounded theory is defined and described below.

The first phase of this approach to research is **open coding**. In this phase of grounded theory, the researcher breaks down or “segments” information, creating initial categories, which are often also called “themes.” As the researcher reads through the data, she closely examines each part of her data, looking to figure out what it is about, what it *says*. As she does so, she begins to identify, name, categorize, and describe each section of collected data, taking note of repeating patterns that begin to emerge throughout the open coding process. As one moves through the open coding process, one can also begin to develop properties, which are, essentially, subcategories. Properties provide further details about categories that have emerged in the open coding process (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2012).

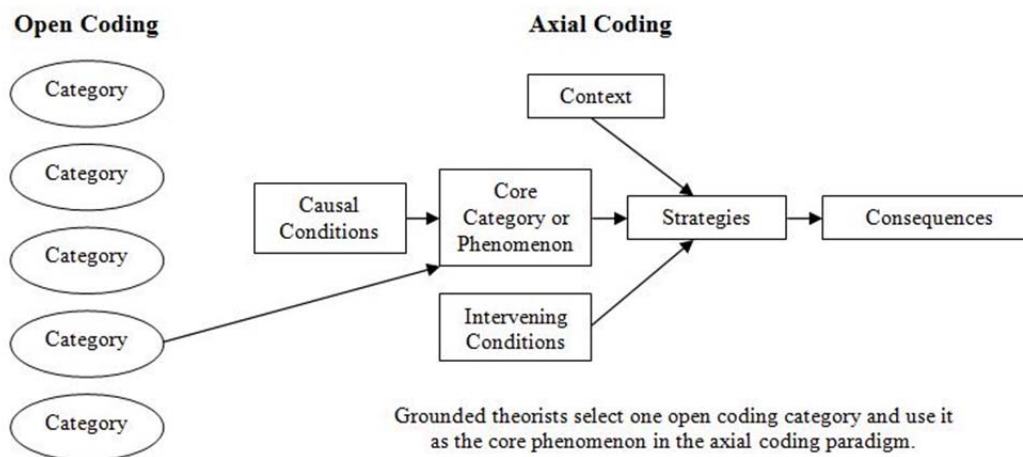
The second phase of grounded theory research is called **axial coding**, and it is the process by which the researcher relates codes (categories and properties) to one another. The researcher chooses one specific theme or category and places it at the center of the research, and then finds the way in which each of the other categories relates to it (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The relationships articulated through the axial coding process are:

- Casual Conditions—“categories of conditions that influence the core category”
- Context—“the specific conditions that influence the strategies”
- Intervening Conditions—“the general contextual conditions that influence strategies”
- Strategies—“the specific actions or interactions that result from the core phenomenon”

- Consequences—“the outcomes of employing the strategies” (Creswell, 2012, p. 426).

The axial coding process enables the researcher to fit the data within a frame of general relationships, examining the core category within the context of all the data that is affecting and influencing it.

As a part of the axial coding process, the researcher also develops a **coding paradigm**, which is a diagram of the relationships that exist between the coding categories (see figure 2.3). This is a pictorial illustration of research findings that enables the researcher to organize the data so as to move into the third and final coding phase in grounded theory research design: **selective coding**.



**Figure 2.3** (Creswell, 2012, p. 428)

**Selective coding** is the process by which the researcher develops a theory based on the relationships brought to light during axial coding and the creation of the coding paradigm. The researcher begins to develop a story line that expresses an abstract response to the research questions at hand, and then she begins to integrate and refine that theory.

While working through these steps, the researcher creates memos which allow her to trace thought processes throughout the data analysis process. The memo serves as a record of

the ongoing dialogue that the researcher has with herself as she develops the theory that responds to her research question. Memos serve to “direct the inquirer toward new sources of data, shape which ideas to develop further, and prevent paralysis from mountains of data,” though the memoing process and the memos themselves are often left out of grounded theory reports (Creswell, 2012, p. 439).

These memos, in conjunction with the coding paradigm created, move the researcher into the final stage of grounded theory research: writing a **grounded theory research report**. In the creation of the research report, the researcher compiles findings and then disseminates those findings in order to contribute to the academic field, inspiring other research questions that may become the subject of future research studies, completing one cycle and sparking another cycle of Mills’ dialectic action research spiral.

In utilizing these definitions and applying Strauss and Corbin’s design of grounded theory, I was able to analyze my data in a systematic manner, which was highly effective for the significant amount of data collected during research. Because of this, I was able to locate and define themes within the research that may have gone unnoticed in a less systematic approach to data analysis.

### **Data Analysis: The Application of Grounded Theory Design**

Finding these somewhat hidden themes within the data began with open coding, as defined above. This process was quite involved, and having collected nine weeks’ worth of assignments from forty-one research subjects, it became very clear that I would need to be selective in my data analysis, so as to not get lost in the data itself. As I worked through this selection process, I chose to focus on the data that most directly related to my two research

questions, as the objective of the analysis was to come to some sort of comprehensive response to those questions.

The first set of data that I coded was the students' "Media, Perceptions, and South Africa" assignment. This is an assignment that the students completed in class at the beginning of the unit, where they identified their own perceptions regarding South Africa and South African culture, as well as the origins of those perceptions. A copy of this assignment can be found in Appendix D, in conjunction with "Lesson Plan 3." This assignment was coded for each of the forty-one research participants.

The second set of data that I coded came from the students' weekly wiki assignments. In looking over the six weekly wiki posts completed for the project, the prompts for both week four and week six were the ones which most thoroughly represented all parts of my research questions and the project itself: the students' perceptions of South Africa as well as the connection between the new media and the novel. Because of this, I chose to code the posts from all forty-one participants.

The third set of data that I coded also came from the students' weekly wiki assignments, but in this case, I chose to focus on the work done by my focus group of seven students. I wanted to include a coded sample of all six wiki posts, and so, for these students, the analysis of their wiki assignment included weeks one, two, three, and five, in addition to the week four and week six analysis done for all participants.

The fourth set of data analyzed and coded included the focus group discussions and individual interviews that were done with all of the focus group members throughout the unit. As I had previously transcribed the audio files, I was able to use the transcripts for the open coding process.

The fifth and final set of data was the final assessment that all forty-one research participants completed at the end of the unit. Students produced a new media artifact that incorporated various elements of the novel and the new media with which they had interacted in order to demonstrate their learning over the course of the term. (See Appendix D, “Lesson Plan 14” for a copy of the assignment and rubric.) As part of the assignment, the students were also required to post an analysis on the class wiki for week eight, and so the analysis of their final projects was also included for coding.

In analyzing the data and coding it, I paid particular attention to the data that connected to the main focuses of this study—students’ perceptions of South Africa and their experiences with the interplay of texts. Doing this, I was able to define fifty-four separate open codes that were then combined into eight open coding categories:

- Influences in Perception Development
- Important Aspects of Perception Development
- Prior Perceptions of South Africa
- Making Connections
- Redefining What is “Real”
- Engaging with a Global Culture
- Classroom Context
- Moving Beyond the Classroom

The coding for all of this data was completed using the coding software found at <http://www.saturateapp.com>. This software enables a researcher using grounded theory to import text data, tabular data, audio data, and web data in order to code it and keep memos and notes at the same time. It creates a repository of open codes, allowing for a smooth and simple transition into axial coding.

As I continued my research and moved into the axial coding process of my analysis, I was forced to revisit my research questions, thereby demonstrating the reflective nature of action research. In examining the relationships that existed between the open coding categories, the

data began to illuminate just how connected my research questions were, and I began to doubt the need for both of them. At this point, I thought about combining the two research questions, or even just eliminating the second question. However, because I teach English, and because I love books, I felt this inherent *need* to examine the effect of the media on the students' interaction with the novel, separate from the concept of perception. Therefore, both questions remained, intact and independent.

Because of this interconnectedness of the two research questions, though, the axial coding process for both continued almost simultaneously. All of the data that had been collected and coded pertained directly to both research questions and so the data analysis moved very smoothly, though creating one coding paradigm to represent both research questions presented some difficulties. In attempting to identify a core concept for my research questions, I realized that, while the two questions and the data pertaining to them are inextricably connected, each question connected to the data a different way, and each question had its own core concept.

In order to illustrate the relationship of all the data connected to these core concepts, and as a part of the axial coding process, I then developed a coding paradigm for each research question separately, emphasizing the subtle differences in the ways that the categories related to each specific research question. Once the axial coding paradigms had been developed, I was then able to begin constructing my own narrative around my research questions. Through selective coding, I was able to develop my own theories, responses to my research questions, that were grounded in the data collected from the study.

The results from this data analysis process are presented in the following chapters. Chapter three presents the research results within each open coding category, utilizing descriptive data provided by the research subjects. Then, in chapter four, one finds the axial

coding paradigm in conjunction with a discussion of my grounded theories for each of my research questions.



## CHAPTER THREE Results

### Introduction to Results

The results for this research project have been organized according to the eight open coding categories discussed in chapter two. In looking more closely at these categories, though, it became evident that they could be further placed into three separate classifications for purposes of organization and clarification: Perceptions, Relationships, and Context. In order to arrange the results in a structured progression, the categories, and their results, have been arranged according to these classifications.

In presenting the results below, one other element of note is that I have chosen to use the research subjects' work and words in their original form whenever possible because the research is essentially about *their* experience. There are many long quotations that come from student assignments, wiki entries, media productions, focus group discussions, and interviews, and as a result, the presence of some non-standard language and grammar is to be expected. Over the course of the chapter, I have altered students' statements only when absolutely necessary for clarification purposes, and all alterations on my part have been clearly marked in brackets.

### Perceptions

As I began this project, I knew that one of the objectives of my study centered on the concept of *perception* and how my students developed perceptions, particularly with regards to unfamiliar countries and cultures like South Africa. In organizing the research results, the first three categories deal specifically this concept, in both how perceptions are developed as well as the students' perceptions of South Africa prior to the unit conducted in conjunction with this research study.

*Influences in Perception Development*

Before beginning this research, I planned to have students discuss and explore the things in their lives that influence the way that they view the world, particularly South Africa. I hypothesized that student perceptions would be highly influenced by the media, but I did not know to what extent, or even if, the students would identify the media as playing a role in perception development. As we began the unit, exploring the idea of media, media literacy, and specific core principles of MLE through in-class experiences and assignments, it became clear very quickly that, even before beginning this unit of study, students *were* aware of and *could* identify a wide variety of things that influenced the development of their perceptions. All of the influences that they identified, though, could be placed into one of three categories: other people, courses in school, and the media.

One general consensus among the focus group, particularly, was that other people affect an individual's perceptions. Two students in the focus group have family members who have either visited or lived in Africa, and they acknowledged that their perceptions of South Africa were significantly impacted by their relatives' experiences and stories. In addition to this, all of the students acknowledged that others' opinions affect them and how they think about things that are unfamiliar. Tonya expressed the idea that, "the majority of people our age and some people older than us often just believe what they hear," illustrating the significance that she places on others' opinions in the development of perception.

The second influence that emerged from class and focus group discussions was the idea that the students' perceptions of other cultures are strongly influenced by their classes in school, particularly history and language courses. While discussing perceptions of other cultures, James said, "I've been finding out that the best way to find out about another culture is to kind of speak

their language a little bit.” He went on to talk about how his experiences in his Chinese and German classes have truly shaped what he thinks of these cultures and how he envisions them. Other students agreed with him, discussing the idea that the emphasis on “culture studies” within foreign language curriculums was what truly influenced them. Calvin described his experiences in his Spanish classes thus:

When I took Spanish, they taught a lot of [pause] not only the language, but also cultural feelings and, uh, what foods they eat, what things they believe, and all these other things. And so [pause] it wasn’t necessarily through language, but they did teach a lot of things.

Laura said that these types of experiences, when integrated into her foreign language classes “definitely” affected her, and all seven members of the focus group, all who have taken a foreign language class at some point, agreed.

As we moved through beginning stages of the unit, it was very clear that the final, and most pervasive, influence in the development of students’ perception was, in fact, the media. When dealing with things that were unfamiliar to them, or things with which they had no personal experience, students readily acknowledged that the media, in a variety of forms, heavily influenced them. One of the first assignments given in class was the “Media, Perceptions, and South Africa” assignment (see Appendix D, “Lesson Plan 3”). As discussed in the last chapter, for this assignment, students identified their own perceptions regarding South Africa and South African culture, as well as the origins of those perceptions. When looking at the “How I Know” column of the assignment, where students listed the origins of their beliefs and perceptions, ninety-three percent of the forty-one research subjects had listed at least one form of media. The most popular media forms that they acknowledged as influencing their ideas about South Africa

were television and films, with the films *The Lion King* and *Invictus* mentioned repeatedly throughout in-class and focus group discussions.

Within focus group discussions, students were able to expand the list of media influences, including online news and videos as well as music. For Calvin, in particular, music was highly influential in his perception development. He said, “Ummm...I get a lot my opinions and stuff from music, because there are a lot of bands out there who sing about social conflict and stuff like that.” He even went so far as to say that radio could be one of the most influential media sources:

I mean if it's not the second most, it's probably the most, but those both go hand in hand because most talk radio people, they have a radio show at one time in the day and they have a TV show at another, so I think that those two are the biggest [influences in perception development].

During this discussion, Greg also pointed out that, even in the other two categories listed above, others' influence and school's influence, one is often receiving media influence as well. His sister went to South Africa on a business trip, and her stories were accompanied with photos that she had taken, allowing him to develop perceptions based on that media. In addition, as he is taking an American Sign Language class in school, he pointed out that films are used a great deal within these courses, giving a specific example:

We just watched a movie today in ASL. We watched one about cochlear implants because it's a big issue in that world because people think that it's going to kill off deaf culture and stuff, and it was just one of those things where you got to be a little bit exposed, because most of the people in it were all deaf, so [fade off].

Jacob confirmed his assertion that media is used in the classroom, speaking of his German and Chinese classes saying, “We’ve watched a few documentaries, of course” as if the use of media is *expected* within the classes.

As a result of the data, I was able to see that students really are aware of the fact that their perceptions are developed in relationship to various influences. Other people, school courses, and the media are the most prevalent influences that they identified, and within the discussion of these influences, other aspects of perception development emerged in addition to simple identification.

### *Important Aspects of Perception Development*

As students identified and talked about the various influences that media had on their perceptions, another interesting thread emerged within their discussion. Without any prompting, or even any overt instruction on my part, several students began to discuss how necessary it is to critically engage with the influences in their lives, particularly the media. Even before being explicitly introduced to NAMLE’s Core Principles of Media Literacy, Tonya expressed sentiments that lie at the heart of Core Principle #1. In the first focus group meeting of the study, she said:

I think that, like, you need to hear both sides of an argument first before you can actually make a strong opinion on what you’re hearing. You need to, like, research to make sure that both sides are telling the truth, and, um, just pay attention to find the truth.

This one sentence triggered an entirely new discussion that reappeared throughout the project, both in class and in focus group discussions. Throughout various parts of the research unit, I found that, while students could identify the types of things that influenced their perceptions,

they were also developing a consciousness of *how* those perceptions were developing. They were thinking deeply about what is necessary in order to develop the most well-informed perceptions as well as why, sometimes, people are content to simply believe what they're told, regardless of the source.

With regards to his own perception development, Calvin said:

At this stage, especially in high school, I'm being taught by my teachers, "Okay this is my opinion, but go find your own" type thing. Also don't just take everything you've been taught your whole life, you know, just actually find out, like see if it's true or not. So I feel like that's how I'm being taught by you, other teachers around, not only to just take everything in.

As a result of this instruction he has been given, he felt that it is incredibly important to critically engage with multiple perspectives, especially when dealing with the media. James agreed, and shared some of his experiences, though he still seemed to be a bit unsure of how to choose between the multiple perspectives he has viewed on television:

I found out through watching the news media and stuff like that, I've watched both ends of the spectrum, so I've seen FOX News and I've seen Media Matters, and they are like two opposites. Total opposites, and I've seen how they both spin things, so it's taught me to see things that, like, okay, you have to take both best sides and compare them against each other, and I guess the one with the most facts wins, I guess, apparently. And I noticed that I do that a lot with documentaries too, anything, you know, anything about a culture.

The media bias that students have noticed quickly became a subject of discussion, and each focus group member acknowledged that they can identify media bias, when they're looking for it, but

even when dealing with seemingly-reliable information, it is still necessary to be aware. David pointed out that when dealing with information:

Uh...it kinda depends, so if it seems reliable, you may want to look into it a little further. Like you'd think Channel One<sup>1</sup> would be an okay source, but I've realized lately how biased it really is, and how one sided it is to make it sound better. So, you know, you kind of need to get multiple sources in order to get valid stuff.

Students also discussed the idea that personal research plays vital role in perception development. Laura described her vision of the process that a person should go through when developing his or her own ideas:

Well, I think that first you have your stereotypical, "well this is what I think about this, even though I don't even know anything about it, this is just my previous knowledge, this is what I think this is." And then you start seeing opposing views and opinions, and then you want to go and research and find out which of what you've learned is correct. And so you do a little research here and there and pick up a book or two and then you just kind of have to think, "Okay, I have these two opinions" and you have to find out where they connect and how the mesh together and how they make up this one idea.

One thing that the students pointed out, though, is that this process is not necessarily an easy one. A person must put in considerable effort to develop well-informed opinions and perceptions. In one conversation, Tonya, Laura, and Calvin discussed various elements of this:

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<sup>1</sup> Channel One is a teen-centered news program that is broadcast throughout the school daily through a network of televisions that have been provided by Channel One. Their objective is, according to their website, to "inform, educate and inspire by making news relevant and engaging for young people and sparking discussion around the important issues impacting youth today" (Channel One, 2010, para. 1).

Tonya: Like, some people will go find their own opinions, but I think that the majority of people our age and some people older than us often just believe what they hear. And they don't research it properly because they're too lazy or because they don't really care. So, they just go off what other people say.

Laura: Either that or they'll just listen to programs and things that agree with their own opinions, and so they'll just accept what they agree with as truth instead of looking at both sides.

Clyde: It's kind of like...I don't know if you guys know who Jason Aldridge [pseudonym] was, he, him and Clint Caldwell [pseudonym] last year were really good debaters. They were partners and everything, and part of the reason why they were good debaters is because they researched both sides so thoroughly that no matter what side they were assigned to debate for, they would know more about your side of the argument than you would. And that's kind of what we kind of need to do is know just as much on both sides, the same amount of things on both sides.

This process, the students recognize, is work. In addition, Laura points out that apathy is a key factor; it is very easy to find information that coincides with one's current opinion, and so many do not feel the need to look beyond that to examine the "other side." She and Calvin also pointed out the role of humility and pride within the process of perception development.

Calvin: In order to form your own opinions, not what you knew before, but to change it into what you now know, you kind of have to say that some of your opinions were wrong, and a lot of people have a problem with that,



[pause] and even if they know they're wrong, they're not going to get it. There are people out there that are like that, and so I think that that's one of the hardest things...er biggest reasons why people are, like, black and white and can't change and stuff like that. Sometimes people have just got to admit they're wrong and that there are people smarter out there, and they've gotta be able to get the best conclusion with the stuff that I have now.

Laura: I think sometimes that the biggest obstacle in learning is pride. So you have to be able to be humble enough to be able to accept other people's opinions and not just think your own way and that everything I think is right and only the people who agree with me are right. You can't just let yourself get in the way of your own learning.

This discussion of pride and the need to admit that there may be other perspectives out there are two important aspects of perception development that came out of focus group discussion, and I was surprised by these recognitions. The effect of pride and humility, the need to put forth effort, and the importance of looking at multiple perspectives were parts of perception development that students articulated, unexpectedly, in focus group discussions. What makes this even more interesting is that, as the class moved through the project, many of the research subjects expressed ideas similar to these very things in relationship to their own perceptions of South Africa and South African culture; for them it took work, multiple perspectives, and humility to successfully complete the project.

*Prior Perceptions of South Africa*

One important element of this project was to examine students' perceptions of South Africa and South African culture before beginning the project. This study was not designed to be comparative in nature; there was never any intention to quantify the "amount of change in perception" or to generate any other comparison of seemingly unquantifiable data. That being said, I did feel that it was important for students to express their perceptions of South Africa before beginning the unit, if for no other reason than to access their own prior knowledge, as is standard practice within English classrooms. This enables students to provide their own context for the work being done in class, and it tends to allow them to grasp in-class concepts more readily. Therefore, towards the beginning of the unit, students completed the assignment described above, "Media, Perception, and South Africa" in class. We were then able to have a class discussion about their perceptions of the country of South Africa, and members of the focus group extended that discussion in our focus group meetings and in their individual interviews.

In examining these discussions as well as the assignments, it turns out that students' perceptions about South Africa prior to this project were extremely diverse. I had some students who had been in classes where the substitute was from South Africa, and he had talked to the classes extensively about his country, so some of them had that background knowledge. Others had seen *The Lion King* and assumed that the landscape depicted by Disney had to be accurate. Some had seen the film *Invictus*, and so they were aware that there had been some cultural conflict that had occurred in the country, but they assumed that everything was "okay" now. And as I have quite a few soccer players in my classes, there were a few who knew that South Africa had hosted the World Cup over the summer, and so they had seen some of the footage of

the lands and cities, as well as the features about the country and its people that were played on television between soccer matches.

In examining initial perceptions of South Africa, there was a wide range of previous knowledge, and while most at least acknowledged that, as one class member wrote, “there might be black people there,” there were some students who knew almost nothing, though in most cases, the students were very willing to admit their ignorance over the course of the project.

Tonya, totally willing to acknowledge her own lack of knowledge at the outset of the first focus group discussion said, “Call me a stupid American; I thought Africa was a country.” Later that same week, she posted similar sentiments in her first wiki assignment:

To be honest, I don't know much about South Africa. If someone had told me they went to the beach in South Africa I would have been really confused, considering that my prior knowledge of anything relating to Africa concerned desert flat-lands, exotic animals, and cool African tribes. Totally illogical, right?

Greg admitted a similar frame of mind in a focus group discussion, saying, “Well, I, like most people, had the ignorant, I guess, would be the right word, American way of ‘South Africa: black people, huts.’” Michelle added, in the same discussion, “I envisioned South Africa to be like something, I don't know how to explain it, like something out of *Lion King*, where everything is so bare, there's like probably no people, etc.” Laura also contributed that, “I thought that it was one of those, like, impoverished countries, you know how they're like the infomercials with the starving children and they're like ‘pay a cent to save a child from South Africa.’ Ahhh!” And finally, another student, not in the focus group, commented in her wiki assignment for week six that, “I did not think South Africa could hold the World Cup. I mean, all I heard about South Africa was that it was full of crime and black people.”

These students were all willing to recognize how little they really knew and that their perceptions of South Africa had been based on their minimal knowledge. In looking at the perceptions that students had of South Africa generally, one finds that, regardless of the extent of their prior knowledge, students' perceptions were incredibly mediated; much of what the students perceived had come from media sources, and their perspectives had not been readily developed through research. The assignments created in conjunction with the planning of this study provided them with the opportunity to research and to continue to develop their perceptions.

### **Relationships**

The second classification of data, including the open coding categories of "Making Connections," "Redefining What is 'Real,'" and "Engaging with a Global Culture," centers on the concept of relationships, whether discovering, acknowledging, or redefining them. Over the course of the project, students expressed a great interest in the ways in which various elements of the project fit together, both texts and people, and they examined, discussed, and explored their place within all of it.

#### *Making Connections*

In analyzing the data produced throughout this project, one of the largest themes that emerged from student discussions and wiki posts was that of connection. Students were continuously commentating on how, as they moved through the project, they were relating elements of the project to one another or to themselves. They recognized connections between their experiences here in the United States and the experiences of those living in South Africa. They wrote about connections between the media and the novel. And they spoke of personal connections to the characters in the novel or to people they saw in their South African media

sources. Each time this happened, they also spoke of how these connections illuminated their understanding in some way.

In an interview after she had completed the novel, but before finishing her final project, Laura talked about the effects that the ability to relate and connect had on her:

I love the book. I loved it. I think that, like, I don't know, especially with the media and stuff, it just helped me a lot more to connect with the novel and like things that were going on with my own life and things that I could connect between the book.

She was able to recognize after reading the book that, in her experience with the texts, her media interactions had intersected with the novel in a way that made both more meaningful. Many other students expressed similar sentiments overtly, but others simply made the connections through their analysis of the novel and the media. David, in his very first wiki post, began to connect the South African experience, as presented in the media, to his own observations of things here in the United States.

David: For my first post, I chose a podcast called *Between the Pages*

(<http://www.mg.co.za/page/podcasts>). The one I chose, Episode 145, is an interview on live radio with an influential M&G producer. [*Mail & Guardian* (M&G) is a South African Newspaper.] Essentially, this producer says that the people are losing the war against political corruption hands down. He goes on to say that people are more sitting back and complaining than actually doing something. There are those who are fighting for a better system, but their numbers are just too few, and they're not making much headway in the sense of man power...While

listening to this, I found it fascinating how parallel our lives are with those in South Africa. Just like them, we sit around and complain about our government while doing little or nothing to change it. I do admit that our government is controlling us in less radical ways, though. In South Africa it is clear as crystal that the government is still corrupted from their past history of apartheid politics. Our government isn't as overtly corrupt, but they are indeed controlling us in frightening ways, i.e. controlling our national market in nearly every way. But that's beside the point.

This connection in experience was prevalent throughout the project, though most students' observations were a little less politically-based than this one. One student, in her week four wiki post, simply expressed that through her experiences with the media, by relating her own experience with those of the people in South Africa, she had become grateful. She said:

I have never really thought about other countries so closely before. I have just thought of them as a different country that has similar problems but I never really internalized it. These kids are homeless, hungry, and without families. It makes me very thankful for what I do have and how lucky I am to be in America.

The connection of experience, the students' ability to relate their own experiences with the experiences of those in South Africa, often brought to the surface appreciation for their own lives, but in many cases, it also inspired curiosity. In a response to an online article about political corruption in South Africa, one student wrote, "If what the man was saying is true, then South Africa isn't in too good of shape. It made me wonder how our country is doing. I know there is a lot of corruption in the government, but how bad is it really? I might just look that up." Because she was able to relate South African Politics to American Politics, this student began to

wonder how the U.S. is doing, particularly in relationship to South Africa. This curiosity and desire to find out more is further evidence that this student connected with the material in a manner that goes beyond simply reading the text.

Another way that students related elements of the project was by simply making connections between the texts they were using, the novel and their media source. In the second week's worth of wiki assignments, there were many students who were able to relate the book to various things that they'd observed in their media source, but Laura's observations seem to be representative of what other students were saying:

As in *Cry, the Beloved Country*, if the people do not protect and keep the land, the land will no longer be able to protect and provide them with the necessities of everyday living. When the land is dead it cannot provide for the people living in it, and they will eventually leave. This probably sounds like tree hugger crap, but when you harm the land, you harm its inhabitants.

She had read an article that discussed mining in South Africa, and how the head of one of the mining companies was corrupt. As she put it:

This connects directly with the importance of land [one of our four areas of focus] because of the immediate harmful effects on the land itself. Mining, already isn't so fabulous for the land, let alone a mining establishment with a corrupt head. Let alone to pursue its course, this company has some significant potential to do extensive, irreparable damage to the land and its inhabitants.

Another student, in response to a peer's week four wiki assignment, made direct connections between corrupt police officers addressed in the media and the characters in the book. She said:

I find it very interesting how the police officers of today can relate to the people we think so negatively of in the book. It is a perfect situation where they came into the force with good intentions, and then it turned into a bad situation because they were given that power. Just like the white people in the book, all police officers can't be categorized as car-jackers. I would say most of them want to serve and help, not abuse their power.

The research subjects, my students, constantly made observations like this one, relating the events and the characters in the novel to various things going on in the media. For some, the lines between the media and the novel began to blur, and the two truly started to work in tandem to deepen students' understanding of both the novel and the media. Calvin talked a bit about this evolution in the final focus group discussion.

The combination of having, of researching the new media and then reading the book, it was, at first it was like, okay, they don't really relate at all, but then as it went on, you know, I kept trying to look up things about the apartheid era so that I could read more about the time period of the book, that it's taking place in, and that kind of turned the book into its own media source, you know, because it is. And it was no longer just a novel that we were reading, but it was also like one of those weekly media sources that we were reading from, and so it kinda like went hand-in-hand.

And this hand-in-hand connection in many cases extended into students' personal lives as well. For example, during week five of the project, James came across an editorial that enabled him to relate the media to the novel but that also affected him as a person. In his wiki post from that week, he said:



My article is about how one man thinks that the protesting violence and fear is getting out of hand....After reading this article, this man almost embodies the author of the book himself. He starts by saying what a shame it is from [sic] some people to be underappreciated and underpaid. He then goes on to say that is a shame on the people of South Africa that some have died because of these violent protests...He says that this is not the way to achieve what you want. He says that since you have been given democracy you have abused it by abusing others. Just because people disagree with you, it does not mean you have to become violent. He never says that the way to disperse fear is by love. However he kind of alludes to it when he say be kind and nice to others. He says that you can change now. You do not have to be a victim of the past. You must act in a fearless and non-violent manner. Problems should not be solved with rubber bullets and tear gas...This was probably the most epic article I have ever read. This smart and sensuous [sic] man is almost alone in a senseless world. He knows of the power of love and the destruction of fear. He says it almost poetically for our day, but it seems like something out of the book. Something like Msimangu [a significant character in *Cry, the Beloved Country*] would have said.

Returning to the subject of this article in our final focus group discussion, James talked more about his personal connection with this editorial, particularly in relationship to the unit.

It was just another assignment, until about week 5, when I ran across an editorial by Jonathan Jansen. That really tipped things over for me; that was like the greatest thing I've ever read, or almost ever. It was the best editorial I've ever seen because it made so much sense to me, because all these people...It was this

protest against rising tuitions and hospital bills going up and so nurses and teachers and students are all protesting, and like, people are getting hurt and dying because they can't get to the hospital, and no one can learn anything...and this guy said, um, "You can protest, but there's no reason to be violent, there's no reason to fear this; if you'd just handle this calmly, it would be okay." And, I, it just made so much sense to me and I was like, "Yes! Finally!" and it really made the whole unit worth it, just finding that. It was just amazing.

This type of personal connection seemed to be at the heart of many students' observations of the novel and the media, and while the students made very specific connections throughout the unit, towards the end, they began to make more general statements. It is in these general statements that I was able to find the impact that the texts had had on the students as people.

Tonya, in a wiki post toward the end of the project, made the comment that over the course of the unit, she had developed the opinion that "these messages are important to me because they give me perspective in my reading assignments and my life." She was able to relate to it all in some way and that gave her, what she calls, "perspective."

Another student spoke specifically of corruption in his week six wiki post, and the connections that he made to himself were very clear. He said:

To me, the battle of corruption in South Africa is a single symbol of the same battle of corruption that takes place everywhere. It is a world event, but it is also a personal event. Bad choices can corrupt an individual as much or more than they can corrupt a government or society. By learning about South Africa, and especially reading and analyzing in depth the events and themes of *Cry, the Beloved Country*, I have learned deep incites [sic] that are universally applicable.

While discussing one of the media sources she had read, Laura, in the same week, spoke of her initial skepticism regarding the ability to relate to the materials in the unit:

It just struck me, in this article, how similar that we are to the people in South Africa. I used to think that it would be ridiculously difficult to find some way that I could relate something in my life to this country and the people who live in it. The more I look up these articles and gather more information, the more I seem to find common ground with their culture.

She had, through her experience, come to the conclusion that it *is* possible to relate to these people that are so far away, and in the final focus group discussion, she talked about her personal connections to the media and the novel:

[Examining the media] helps you make more connections into like what's going on now and what's going on in the novel, and you're able to see, um, things, especially with the media and the things that are going on now, are some things that have gone on before as well. So things, they're still happening, and um, like, you're able to connect them more with your life and see, oh, this happened here and then something will happen to you the next day and you'll just be like, oh, that's kind of like what happened here in the book, or what's happening over in South Africa, like, right now. It's just kinda cool.

And finally, Greg, in his week six wiki post, expressed the idea that what he, personally, is striving for is the same thing that many others, even if they are different from him, are doing as well. He wrote that looking at the media and the novel, "helps me realize that there is still a whole other world outside of the United States that is trying, like us, to try and make the world a better place for the generation that would come after us." In finding ways to personally relate to

the novel, the media, and the people of South Africa, the students that participated in this study began to realize that there are some things that are universal, some things that are similar, no matter who you are or where you live. And this had a significant impact on the students.

In the end, after looking at all the data and all the ways in which students related one aspect of the project to others, this is the singular most powerful element that transpired throughout all of these connections—the concept of similarity. When students were able to find ways in which things were similar, they were able to relate to them or make connections between them more readily. The students seemed to tap into the idea that, no matter where a person lives, a person is still a person, and because what it means to be “human” implies some universality, even though they may never have even *seen* a person from South Africa, they could still relate in some ways.

In discussing an article that she read online, one student, not in the focus group, posted in her week six wiki assignment:

This article relates to me personally, because I honestly always pictured South Africa as mud huts and poverty stricken people, which I’m actually kind of ashamed that I made that assumption before learning anything about the country itself. So I can relate to this article, because it’s talking about kids my age in school who need laptops or computers for school, and I can’t imagine what it would be like to try and do my schoolwork without it. It’s a wakeup call that these kids are just like me, and they’re dealing with school problems, just like I am, which comes as a relief. It just depends on how you look at it, if you think of it as random people in a place overseas it doesn’t mean anything to you, but if you

think of it as fellow teens dealing with the same problems, you understand, and it makes me want to learn more about the subject.

In a response to this post, another girl made an observation about the power of this ability to connect through recognizing similarities:

This article really touched me also. I never realized I could feel for some kids that I have never seen nor met, and never will. I cannot imagine going through my school years with no computer or internet access. I can just see how grateful these kids are for those laptops that they probably never have used before until now. It also makes me feel just as grateful. I think that these kids are someone that we can all look up too. I feel that they put a positive side on life when we hear their stories. I realized that these kids are just like anyone else, going to school to make themselves a life.

And finally, during one focus group discussion, James expressed this same concept in a very clear, concise manner. He said:

I'm finding out...I found out with German that, you know, they do pretty much the same things, they're just Germans, and that the Chinese, they do pretty much the same things, except they're Chinese. And I'm starting to find out that's the same with the rest of the world, you know, that they do most of the same things, some things are different, but for the most part, we're all the same.

### *Redefining What is "Real"*

Another significant theme that emerged from the data analysis was the idea of "reality." As the students moved through the project, they expressed thoughts that that led me to believe that the unit itself was bringing South Africa closer to them. They seem to become more sure of

the reality of this far off place, and as it became more real, they became more invested in learning about it. While the idea of making connections to South Africa, as defined in the previous section, was *absolutely* a part of this, there were other aspects to this category that made me think it was prudent to separate the two.

The first, and probably the simplest way that South Africa became real for my students was through media images that they were able to connect with the novel, bringing the novel to life. Megan was one of the first to make this observation. She said, “Okay, so from the book, it talks about a lot of land, you know, but I never, it was just really hard to imagine what it looked like and so when I do my media sources I can, like, picture it.” Throughout the course of the unit, Megan reiterated this idea that the media helped her to picture what was happening in the book. It gave her a more accurate context in which to allow her imagination to envision the events in the novel, which was good for her, because she readily admitted that she probably would have envisioned Stephen Kumalo (the main character from *Cry, the Beloved Country*) roaming the wild savannah with animals who resembled Simba from *The Lion King*.

Along similar lines, though dealing with a deeper concept, some of my students expressed that through their experience with the unit, through interactions with the media and the novel, the people themselves became more real, more human. David expressed this very idea toward the middle of the project, “Um, I think [South Africa has] become more real to me, like beforehand, Africa was just a thing they showed on Channel One all the time with starving people and getting malaria and stuff, but now I actually picture them as actual people and going through what we go through and they’re more human, I guess.”

This humanity was also made more authentic to my students through the various connections that students made with the texts and the media (as discussed in the section above).

However, there were other observations that students made which helped them to see South Africa as a real place with real people. For example, several students commented on the fact that examining the media in and of itself helped to illustrate the reality of the South African culture.

Speaking of his own experiences, James said:

What I found that was interesting was that the ads on the sites that we were going to really kinda showed what they were after, because they target the people of South Africa, and they seem just like the ads that we would have on our news sites. And just kind of the news stories and see that they deal with the same problems we do on the day-to-day basis. They have, you know, they have TV networks and they have newspapers, and just kind of a real modern city kind of feel, I guess.

This modern feel, he later expressed, was a bit of a surprise to him, as he had envisioned South Africa as lacking in the technology that would be necessary to produce these types of media.

Calvin had a similar experience while listening to an online radio station; he was surprised by what he heard:

I was listening to the radio and it was just this car show, it was like “A Word on Cars” that was the name of it. And they just, literally, just talked about cars. The whole time, it reminded me of *Car Talk* here...But, I was just, you know, and they were doing the exact same things, joking around. They had accents or what not, but they would just talk about those things and I was like, “What the heck? They have cars down...what?” And so then, that kinda just changed my point of view.

Calvin was extremely interested in, not only the idea that they *have* cars in South Africa, but that there would also be a radio show about cars where they would laugh and joke about the cars. In comparing it with his experience with the media here in the United States, specifically *Car Talk* in the United States, he was able to formulate a more accurate image of some of the people in South Africa.

Greg found this to be the case as well, looking at his media source. In the first focus group discussion he expressed his surprise at some of the things he found integrated into his website. He said:

Well, my site's kinda, basically compared to America's MSN.com, like it's just one of those local news sites and you just...it's got lots of information on it, and I can't help but laugh because as I'm reading my article, I'll sometimes look at the other advertisements and stuff, or other articles, and they have the same celebrity gossip and fashion faux pas that America goes nuts over, and I just can't help but laugh because they can be just like us in some different ways that I never thought that people would.

Here, again, is a specific example of how the media enabled a student to develop a more accurate, more real concept of South Africa. All of these students recognized the ways in which the media catered to the people themselves, and in doing this, they were able to make inferences about the people themselves. As they did so, it was as if the people came to life; South Africa became full of real people with real lives who went shopping, talked about cars, and gossiped about celebrities.

This process of "making things real" enabled the students to engage more critically with the texts at hand and made it so the unit was more meaningful for them. In the end, the students



seemed to benefit from the fact that this place and its people were more real in their minds than before. James initially broached the topic in a focus group discussion, saying:

Instead of South Africa just being a made up place, it started to be a real place where real things happen and go on there. And it made it more real to think about how they face these problems and to think that [*Cry the Beloved Country* goes] deeper than just the story plotline. The media and the focus areas help to just go deeper into understanding the people and what's going on.

Because of the way in which the project was structured, and because of the reality that was introduced through his interactions, his reading of the novel was more effective, and he was able to “go deeper” into the novel. Laura had similar sentiments, responding to James by saying:

I think a lot of it, too, is that as I'm reading the book, or as I'm reading through people's wiki posts, that I'm thinking a lot about the other the other text [either the novel or the media source], and I'm thinking of what I can connect between the two. Or I'll be reading through *Cry, the Beloved Country* and it will remind me of something that I read in someone's article or something that I posted online. And then you just kind of want to research that more and find out a little more. It's like you [James] said, it make it a little more realistic. It makes it a real place and these people with real problems and what's going on.

In a later interview, she added to these feelings when she said:

I really loved doing the media and looking up articles and connecting it with it because it made the novel seem a whole lot more real and the problems that they had seem more real because you can make connections with it on different things that were in South Africa today that were still happening. And so, just for me, it

made the connections to the book a lot more, I hate saying real like fifty times in a row, but it just made everything seemed really real and like, just um, it seem to affect me more than it would have had I not done the media stuff.

Laura talks here about how effective the media was at making both the novel and South African life real to her. It was almost as if she and the other students were working to put together a puzzle; the more they interacted with the media and with the novel, the more clear the picture became, and the more real it was for them. James described it perfectly when he said, “I think [the project] just kind of brings...if you start studying, it kind of brings the world a little closer than it used to be.” And as the world came closer, the entire experience became more meaningful.

#### *Engaging with a Global Culture*

In addressing the concept of student perceptions it was anticipated that, despite the fact that this study was not designed to be a comparison of the “before” and the “after,” at some point, students would begin to discuss the impact that their experiences were having on their perceptions of South Africa. In looking at the students’ statements regarding their interactions with South Africa throughout the term and how it had affected them, an interesting theme emerged. Students, in discussing how their perceptions had altered over time, began to acknowledge that not only had their ideas about South Africa changed, but that there were benefits to engaging with “the other,” in becoming a part of a global culture.

As I began to analyze the data that had been collected, I realized that I had, on several occasions, asked students about the impact of the unit on their perceptions, and as a result, many students *did* directly address the ways in which the unit had altered their vision of South Africa. Now, while I recognize that student perceptions regarding South Africans would be altered

through any form of teaching, regardless of media usage, it was interesting to note that many students expressed that they had learned so many new things over the course of the term through their media interactions as well as through the reading of the novel. For many of the students, it seemed as though they had simply combined the two types of text into one large “experience” that helped them to develop a new view of South Africa and South African Culture.

In looking at students’ commentary about their altered perceptions of South Africa, many expressed that their outlooks were much more well-informed than they had been before beginning the unit, and they felt much more confident in their ideas regarding South Africa because of the research that they had done. One student, a young man who is extremely interested and invested in politics, wrote a considerable amount about how his perceptions had altered and what he had learned over the course of the unit. He said:

I had a tough time finding an article that really embodied all the stuff that I learned about South Africa, equality and everything else in the book and the media, so... I decided to get down to the very basics of what defines South Africa today, and the source I found ended up being the Bill of Rights to the South African Constitution...I didn’t count, but in the Bill it seems that every other word is equality. It’s [sic] whole purpose is to insure equality for all. Before this term, this would have been completely mysterious to me, but having learned so much about equality, or more specifically what it means to lack any equality, and the struggle that these people went through to get it, I have a better understanding of what equality really entails, and why they emphasize it so greatly...

Although I disagree with parts of the bill, as someone who is obsessed with human affairs, politics, and understanding the world around me in general, I

appreciate the chance to look at the ideas of different cultures and people.

Reading the book, learning some history, and looking at current events has given me a chance to get a better understanding of where the ideas embodied in this source (and others) come from, and why they matter. So regardless of my opinions, I value any chance to learn why people believe what they believe and do what they do, and that's what I'll take away from this unit.

Though this student doesn't name any specific ways in which his perception has changed, he does acknowledge that through his study he has gained a greater understanding of the people and why they have chosen to do some of the things that they have done.

Other students, however, were able to name specific ways in which their perceptions of South Africa had altered over the course of the unit. One student, in her week six wiki post, expressed the views of many of her classmates when she wrote:

Over the course of this term I've realized you can't ignorantly put things into little boxes. I'd always thought most of Africa was simply desert (like in *The Lion King*) and maybe some cities but way more poor people. I thought their only problems were no clean water and AIDS... I was wrong. Using new media I have been able to get a better look at the real South Africa, one with climates and problems as diverse as the United States. I also think if we, as a nation, look to other nations, learn from them and then proceed to act on what we've learned we could avoid a lot of mistakes. It would be wise for all to become familiar with other countries, if only to avoid making the same mistakes they all did.

In response to this post, another student commented:

I had the same exact image of South Africa as you did: *The Lion King's* endless desert and pararie [sic]! (How the heck do you spell that word??) Reading the book and articles made me realize that that image is very wrong indeed. They're just like us with our technology, vast geographically varied land, and many array of problems.

These two girls experienced a shift in the way that they viewed South Africa, and their new views are much more well-rounded and grounded in their own experience. This is representative of the commentary that came from other students as well; in her final interview with me, Laura expressed similar sentiments. When asked what she'd learned over the course of the unit, responded:

A lot. That's kind of broad, but um, it's completely different than I had first imagined it. It's not, like, this whole little, like, Serengeti wilderness, you know, where there's like people in huts. That's not how it is; there's, like, city, there's industry, and um, a lot of things that I've learned is that there's a lot of similarities between our culture and their culture.

Rather than being what she'd originally imagined as a distant foreign land where the people are so completely different that there would be no hope of ever finding any way to relate to them, what Laura has learned is that, perhaps, South Africa is not as different as she initially perceived. Like her, many students were able to recognize this change in their own views, and several even took it a step further. One girl said, "Prior to interacting with this South African media, I did not want to go to South Africa. It would be scary. After my interaction with the media, however, I would love to visit South Africa. It would be so awesome!" And she was not alone in her desire to travel there someday; there were several other students who mentioned that they would now

like to visit South Africa. And though they may never have that chance, by critically engaging with the media from South Africa, all of these students have been able to expand their perceptions about these people and their culture, recognizing that engaging with others throughout the world can be rewarding.

### **Context**

The final classification of data includes two open coding categories: “Classroom Context” and “Moving Beyond the Classroom Context.” In sifting through the data, it became clear that, throughout the study, there were forces at work within the classroom as well as forces that were influencing students to look beyond the unit itself, all of which affected the results of the study. Students were quick to talk about the structure of the unit and the impact that it was having on their experience with South Africa. In addition, the students showed evidence of taking the lessons learned throughout the unit and extending them beyond the parameters of the unit and the study. A report of the research findings would be incomplete without an exploration of these two elements.

#### *Classroom Context*

Throughout the research study, while students were moving through the unit, there was a great deal of student commentary about their assignments and projects, and while one would expect that there would be some complaint regarding homework, I hoped that students would find the new media elements of the project engaging and effective as learning tools. While analyzing the data, I found that there seemed to be a general consensus toward the end of the unit that, while at times it was difficult, the effort put into the project was worth it.

With regards to the wiki element of the project, it was interesting to note that many of the students stated that the wiki itself was, as Megan put it, “really stressful” at times. Calvin

described the overall experience as a “love-hate relationship” because “it was kinda stressful for me, but then, you know, like once I started doing it, like once I had already found the media and then I connected to it, then was a lot better to, it was a lot easier.” And yet, despite the “stress” there was a lot of positive feedback as well.

In discussing the wiki assignment about half-way through the project, David said:

I think that it’s been good just to research it myself, but I think that what works best for me is actually starting a conversation online, post to post, like some people just post and forget about it, but for those who do click the “monitor this topic” and come back and post about my post and then we post back a few times, I think that’s the most effective because you get multiple opinions and you get to hear other people’s side of the story.

Here, he identifies some of the positive results of the “response” part of the wiki assignment. As the students were required to respond to at least one of their peers’ posts each week, they gained further exposure to South African media, and as in the case described here, students like David were able to engage in an online exchange that deepened their own experience.

Tonya also expressed a positive response to this part of the wiki assignment:

Okay, I like it a lot, just cause, like the first media source, you have to go find it yourself and figure everything out and it’s really confusing sometimes, but the second one, you just go on someone’s post, click on the thing, you can read it and then read their opinion and get your own opinion off that because, I don’t know, it just seems a lot easier. And then I also like it because, in the same way, we can, just, use each other’s different media sources to learn more.

As one of the objectives of this part of the assignment was to enable students access to a wide variety of South African media without asking them to go in search of more than one source at a time, I feel that Tonya's statement here illustrates the effectiveness of this part of the project. Even though she sometimes had difficulty finding and then responding to her own media source each week, she was able to easily access someone else's media through their initial post and then respond to it. Because students were able to view each other's media posts, they *were* able to access much more media than they would have on their own.

In addition to sentiments about the wiki assignment, students also consistently expressed opinions regarding the four areas of focus that had been established at the beginning of the unit. These areas, created in order to focus the students' attention while reading and interacting with the media, received incredibly positive responses overall. The students seemed to really like having specific topics to look for throughout their reading and analysis, and the four areas helped them to connect the novel to their new media source and vice versa. In one focus group discussion, the students described their feelings regarding this part of the project:

Calvin: Having those four areas of focus, it kinda, every time I was reading through the book and I would see that they were talking about land, I'd be like, to "Oh okay." And then I'd, like, analyze it and think about the importance of the land and then I'd notice, oh, the effect of fear, it just gave me something, an automatic question ask already. Like, to delve a little deeper into the story, why the author put it in there.

David: I also agree with Calvin. I've had several English teachers in the past who'd just throw a book at you and say, "Have fun with it," but I think that it really helps to have four areas of focus where you read the text and



pay attention to those things and know what you're supposed to be listening to, what the author wanted you to get out of it, what your teacher might want you to get out of it. It just helps you kind of focus on what you're supposed to be reading....to help you analyze the text.

The effectiveness of the four areas of focus was also very evident when analyzing the students' final projects. While they were required to demonstrate a comprehension of the areas of focus in their media productions, many of the students chose to place the areas of focus at the center of their media production, linking all other parts of the project to these four concepts.

Overall, as evidenced in the data, the research subjects were content with the structure of the project itself. The classroom context seems to have provided a positive learning environment, one in which students were able to engage with literary and media texts, expand their own knowledge, and do the research necessary to further develop their perceptions regarding South Africa and South African culture.

#### *Moving Beyond the Classroom*

This final coding category was one that developed out of the students' musings as they expressed themselves over the course of this project. This was a phenomenon that I did not really anticipate, though now that I have thought about it, I should have expected it. As the students experienced South Africa through the novel and through the online media, many took the concepts that they were thinking and learning about, and they began to move beyond the scope of the project itself. Students began to wonder about things that were not a part of the initial "plan" that I had developed. Many of these tangents in thought presented themselves as questions the students wondered about as they expanded their desire for knowledge about South

Africa, examined their own lives in light of their new knowledge and experiences, and, in some cases, thought more deeply about media in general.

In one student's final project, he illustrated this concept of reflection. After analyzing the novel as well as the media over the course of weeks, he ended his experience with further questions about South Africa:

So the real question is: what's it like in the real world? In the book we see a (supposedly) realistic view of inequality in South Africa, but that view was from over sixty years ago and South Africa has gone through a lot. As we went through this unit we got to explore a (supposedly) new version of South Africa after it's [sic] triumph over eliminating apartheid. One of the most interesting documents I got to interact with emerged right after the end of apartheid: the new Constitution and Bill of Rights...The Bill of Rights is full of hopeful messages about equality and ending injustice with statements like: "Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms," so on a very basic level it appears the cycle has been broken, and that equality reigns, but I'm not convinced. My exposure to some of South African media has left me feeling that it remains. Seeing links to blogs titled "Why Blacks Suck" and comments that support AIDS as a way to exterminate black people (JrsC). It is clear there's not a general consensus on the equality of races. Using the logic of the judge in *Cry*, injustice is ended when a society changes its ways, so it's clear that some progress has been made; the laws in the country now support equality instead of struggling against it, but the cycle will not be fully eliminated as long as people don't accept these changes in the

law... This shows just how long a cycle of injustice can take to dig out of, but it also proves that it is possible if people are united.

Over the course of his experience with this unit, this student learned a great deal, but he still wonders about things. He's "not convinced" that things are "all better" after apartheid, which seems to be a well-informed stance. He wants to know what it's *really* like, and how things are in the "real world." Though, unfortunately, this may be an impossible question to answer, his desire to know could quite possibly inspire further exploration on his part, moving his experience out of my classroom completely.

Another student wondered and reflected beyond the classroom walls, but rather than wondering about things in South Africa, he internalized his reflections. After listening to a South African podcast from August 2005 that discussed Hurricane Katrina and rising oil prices, he expressed how the unit affected him personally:

The largest idea that I get out of the fuel section is that everything on this earth is connected. If someone's oil prices are going up, chances are that everyone's prices will too. Everything is connected, and if we are smart we should pay attention to what is going on around the globe. Before we started this unit, I really didn't care much about South Africa. I never heard about it, but it was still there. The people in South Africa were concerned about us when the hurricane was threatening us at our doorstep, but we still have this image that all of Africa is a savannah and everyone still lives in huts. Even if we didn't care much about the people of South Africa, we selfish Americans should still watch out to see what might affect us in the future. After this unit, I feel like it is part of my duty as a human to at least educate myself about what is going on around the globe.

In this case, the media illustrated to him that some in South Africa were concerned about “us,” as Americans, when “we” were in a tough situation, and it made him rethink his own initial view of South Africa as well as his general attitude toward world affairs. He now feels as though he has a responsibility to learn about things that are happening in the world around him.

Many students expressed similar feelings of responsibility; they now feel the need to be more engaged in the global community in order to develop a more open perspective about life in general. Others examined the power of the media in relationship to this, and they discussed the media’s role. One student, in a wiki post entitled “I actually got more out of this unit than I thought I did. Writing things out helps more than I realized.” said:

This whole unit was not only about South Africa, but also all about our generation and our relationship with new media. One thing I’ve been aware of is how global our world is becoming, but I think this unit really hit it home for me, especially the effects it has on people. Some people, (our generation) love it; we live by it, and cannot live without it. Others, (people like my aunt) seem to think, “Yeah, it’s cool and all, but it’s downright scary as well!” Which, let’s be honest, it kinda is; but it’s even more so if you don’t understand it. South Africa has this as well, the effect fear of the unknown has on people, especially those who have this need for control. That’s something that has already had an impact on my life, so reading about this entire country that’s been dealing with it for a while now...well, I could just really connect. Fear is so consuming and overwhelming, it takes a lot to get over it; in fact, most negative emotions seem to be that way—Light bulb moment right there; I never really connected that before. :D

Anyhow, I mostly... have realized just how global this revolution is. It's a new way of life evolving, and it's not going to go away. It's scary, but exciting, and it opens SO many opportunities for us; also both good and bad ones. Seeing this, and just how much bigger my world is than I thought, makes me want to, I don't know, do things, go places, experience it all! It's just kinda exciting, eh? And I don't want fear to limit me in what I do with this power. That is something I've taken from this; new media is amazing and has limitless opportunities, and I won't let fear stop me reaching that potential. :)

The power of the media is something that the research subjects have become very well aware of, and as this student comments, it is not going anywhere. Learning how to use the media and how to interact with it is important within today's world, which is at the core of media literacy education. Learning to interact with the media in an intelligent manner is absolutely vital, and another student explicitly commented on the importance of MLE in a response to an article he read:

How powerful is media and what is its purpose? The article talks about how the media in South Africa needs to better train its journalism in good reporting practices to avoid corruption. Well as we've been studying new media, we encounter the same problem, with newspapers on the decline to bloggers who sit at their home computer and type whatever they want, quality, truthful reporting goes down the drain. When you're on your own anonymous blog it is a lot easier to twist your opinion into fact, and I think that's why NAMLE's key questions [and media literacy in general] are important for everyone to use subconsciously.

This student “got it.” He recognized the importance of engaging critically and of being aware of the media with which we interact. There is no limit to what can be published online, and as a result, he points out, people need to be discerning about what they choose to believe.

This further contemplation regarding people’s interactions with media, as well as other students’ further reflections on South Africa and the impact that the unit had on them personally, was all part of this “unplanned” part of my research that appeared toward the end of the project. It was interesting to look this part of the data and examine how the students continued to think beyond the classroom. As a teacher, I was very excited by this, and as a researcher, the results of the study, in their entirety, were much more complex than I had originally imagined.

In order to develop responses to the research questions at the heart of this study, these results had to be synthesized and organized into theories, which are presented and discussed in the following chapter. As part of the discussion of the grounded theories developed, chapter four includes the final axial coding paradigms that contributed to theory development, as well as a discussion of their evolution. In addition, the chapter addresses the consequences of this research within my own classroom, its implications for others’ classrooms, and possible opportunities for future inquiry within this field.

## CHAPTER FOUR Discussion of Findings

### Answering the Research Questions

After reviewing the results of the study, presented within each coding category, one must examine the relationships among these eight categories in order to respond to the research questions initially posed. As part of the axial coding process, I created two separate axial coding paradigms that illustrate these relationships as they pertain to each research question.

While situating the coding categories into the axial coding paradigm and examining the ways they interacted, I was able to begin to construct a narrative that presents my theory in response to the research questions I had posed at the beginning of my project. As pointed out by Creswell (2012), because my theory is grounded in this specific data, it may not have a universal applicability; however, in the context of this project and in conjunction with the tradition of grounded theory research, I feel that the theories I have developed are sound.

In the following two sections, an exploration of the relationships among categories is presented, followed by the axial coding paradigm and a discussion of how the coding categories interact to offer a possible theory in response to each research question.

*Research Question #1: What are students' perceptions of South Africa and South African culture as new media is infused into a world literature curriculum?*

In choosing a core category for this question regarding student perceptions of South Africa and South African culture, I had to examine all of the coding categories and the results within each one in order to identify what seemed to lie at the core of student perceptions. One thing that clearly emerged from the data with regards to perceptions is that as the students' perceptions altered over the course of the unit, and they became more engaged with the global culture over time. Though this was never meant to be a study that compared the "before" and the

“after” of students’ perceptions, they did acknowledge that their perceptions had altered, and I found this to be significant; therefore, I examined it closer in order to see if it was, in fact, the core category for this research question. It was not. The concept of “Engaging with a Global Culture” seemed to be more of a result of other categories at play within the data rather than being the center point, and so I began examining other categories as well.

After looking through the data within the other core categories, I found that, in a significant amount of the data, students’ altered perceptions tied back to the category “Making Connections.” There seemed to be a connection between these two coding categories, and upon further analysis, it became clear that, though altered perceptions were an absolutely vital part of responding to this research question, it was students’ ability to make connections that lie at the heart of developing a theory in response to this question.

The reason for this is that students’ ability to relate to South Africa and South African culture affected their perceptions in every way. They spent a great deal of time speaking and writing about ways in which they could connect to the people in the media or in the novel. They observed ways in which South Africa was similar to the United States. They connected to this place and these people that were so far away, and as the students were able to relate, their views changed significantly in order to incorporate those new connections. Their perceptions were directly linked to that ability to make connections, which provided ample evidence for placing it at the core of my coding paradigm.

Once the core category was in place, I began to look at the ways in which the other categories interacted with the core category. As mentioned before, the category of “Engaging with a Global Culture” had seemed to be a result of “Making Connections,” and in looking at the data specifically, it was. Choosing to place it in the role of “strategy” came from analysis of the



data that pointed to the fact that this was the strategy that students employed once they had found connections with or ways to relate to South Africa in some way. Rather than try to harmonize their prior perceptions and these newly developed connections, students, either consciously or subconsciously, chose to alter their perceptions so as to accommodate their new knowledge. At this point, because I had established two central parts of the axial coding paradigm, rather than going back to the beginning to identify the causal conditions for this paradigm, I chose to look first for those elements that directly affected strategies: context and intervening conditions.

In the case of defining context, the fact that I had developed a category called “Classroom Context” seemed to make the choice very clear. I did not want to simply make that assumption, however, for it seemed almost too obvious. Therefore, I went back to the definition of “context” and compared that with the data within each of the coding categories. What I found was that the Classroom Context category did, in fact, coincide with the requirements for context because, by definition, the context consists of the conditions that influence the strategies, and in this project the conditions that existed were the mechanics of the project itself. Students’ engagement with the global culture was significantly impacted by the context of the classroom experience.

Defining the intervening conditions proved to be a bit more difficult, as there was not any one coding category that directly coincided. Intervening conditions can influence both the strategies and the causal conditions, which then influence the core category, so this is one part of the grounded theory structure that must be carefully placed. As I looked at the remaining categories, I tried to visualize the impact that each category directly had on the strategies and how it could impact causal conditions as well. Going back to the data, I began to imagine flow charts using specific examples from students’ experiences throughout the project, and I quickly realized that the category that affected both strategies and causal conditions was “Redefining

What is ‘Real.’” Because this idea of “reality” was so closely connected to the core category anyway, the idea that it could move through the causal conditions to impact the core category made sense; when South Africa became real in the students’ minds, the ability to relate and connect became that much easier. And by way of affecting the strategies, students engaged much more readily with “the other” as South Africa became a part of their reality.

And finally, it was time to define the “causal conditions” as well as the “consequences” within the axial coding paradigm. Because of the arrangement of the other sections, this became a matter of choosing what influenced the established part of the diagram and what resulted from it. As a result, finding the causal conditions was relatively simple; after analyzing the data, it was easy to see that the coding categories “Influences in Perception,” “Important Aspects of Perception,” and “Prior Perceptions of South Africa” were all things that worked to influence and contribute to the core category and the rest of the data. All of these categories are elements that were established before the other categories came into play, and as a result, they became defined as the causal conditions for the project.

Within the axial coding paradigm, the consequences of the research are simply the outcomes of employing the strategies, and looking at the data, there was one category that seemed to be the obvious consequence of all of this research: “Moving Beyond the Classroom.” This was the unexpected category, the data that illustrated that the students were taking things a step further and beginning to wonder about the lessons learned in new and different ways. This category was the proof that *something* had happened as a consequence of everything else, and as a result, it simply made sense that it would be placed as the consequence in the axial coding paradigm.

The final constructed axial coding paradigm for the research question “What are students’ perceptions of South Africa and South African culture as new media is infused into a world literature curriculum?” is found below in figure 4.1.

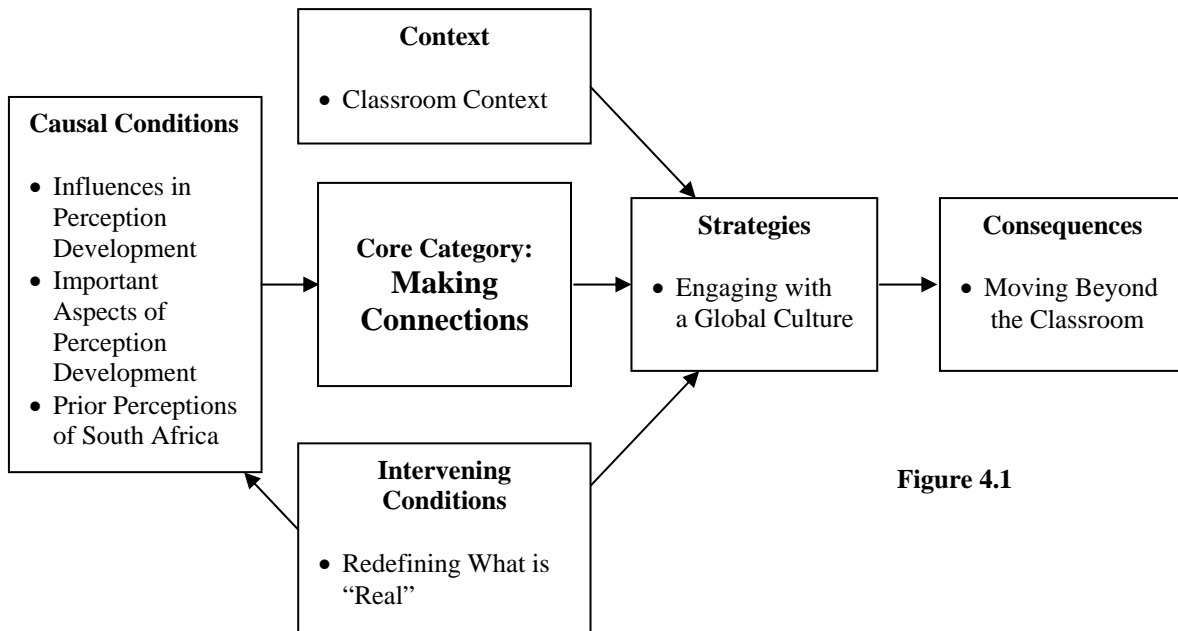


Figure 4.1

Looking at this diagram, one is able to see an overview of everything: the open coding categories, the roles that they play within the research project, and relationships between the different categories of coded data. The only problem is that, while there are hundreds of codes represented by each category, and there has been significant effort put into demonstrating how all of the data works together, there is still no definitive answer to the research question at hand, “What *are* students’ perceptions of South Africa and South African culture as new media is infused onto a world literature curriculum?” After collecting data, coding data, analyzing data, and comparing data, the simple response based on the research at hand is that:

Students’ perceptions are *different*.

As new media was infused into *my* world literature curriculum, students' perceptions altered and changed in relationship to their exposure to South African media as well as the class novel *Cry, the Beloved Country*. Everyone's perceptions were unique all the way through the project, and so it is impossible to define any one particular perception as being representative of all students. However, there was not a single research subject who, in their final project, did not express indications of altered perceptions over the course of the research unit, making the assertion that their perceptions were *different* 100 percent accurate within the context of this research study.

*Research Question #2: How do new media interactions inform students' reading of a more traditional literary text, specifically, Cry, the Beloved Country?*

As mentioned before, this second research question originally evolved from the fact that I am an English teacher and that I am always looking for ways to enhance students' interactions with the literary texts that I teach in my class. In the case of *Cry, the Beloved Country*, a story that takes place in pre-apartheid, 1940s South Africa, I have always had a difficult time getting students to invest in the novel, as it is quite different from the books that students are accustomed to, even within an English class. In addition, I have personally struggled with this particular novel because it is one of my *favorite* books. It was my first significant introduction to a world outside of Lafayette, Indiana, where I grew up, and as it had such a significant impact on my life, I've always wanted to find a way for my own students to tap into the power of the novel that I found the first time I read it. It was my hope in beginning this project that, as I looked into students' perceptions of South Africa, I could also examine how their experiences with new media would interact with their reading of the novel, and if it would inform that reading in a positive way.

Because this question is directly related to the first research question, the process by which the axial coding paradigm was developed was exactly the same, and as a result, many of the details are condensed here. There were two very different developments, however, that must be discussed.

The first of these differences came in the development of the core category, in defining the heart of the data with regards to this second research question. In this case, looking at the way in which students' new media interactions informed their reading of *Cry, the Beloved Country*, it was very clear from the data that in this case the key was the category "Redefining What is 'Real.'" While this category was closely related to the core category for Research Question #1, in this case, it was the "reality" of South Africa created by the new media that had the most significant relationship to the students' reading of the novel, rather than the ability to make connections. As South Africa became more and more real through the new media, the events in the novel became more significant to the students. Despite the change in time and genre, by finding the reality of the country and the people in today's world, the students invested more significantly in a story about the same group of people from over sixty years ago. And because of this, "Redefining What is 'Real'" became the obvious core category for Research Question #2.

The second change in the axial coding paradigm for this research question resulted from this change in core category. Once I had chosen a different core category, I knew that I would need to reexamine the other parts of the coding paradigm in order to ensure that the open coding categories were placed appropriately in response to Research Question #2.

Fortunately, after careful examination, it seemed that all of the other relationships were still intact, with the exception of the intervening conditions. As the category originally placed

there was now the core category for this research question, the intervening conditions category would need to be altered. And so I began to analyze for the possibility that the code “Making Connections” could work within this role as well.

Before looking very closely, I was a little wary that perhaps I was oversimplifying by simply exchanging the two categories, and so I made sure to look at the data and their relationships from all sides. What I found was that, again, because the two categories were initially quite similar, they function very well in these roles in relationship to one another. In looking closely at the data, I was able to define the intervening conditions as the category “Making Connections” without any disruption of the data and without finding any problems within the relationships of the data.

Once I had defined these two categories, I quickly analyzed for the other parts of the axial coding paradigm, finding that everything else remained the same. The strategy that was resultant from the core category was still altered perceptions, only in this case the altered perceptions involved the novel as well. The context of “Classroom Context” and the causal conditions of “Influences in Perception Development,” “Important Aspects of Perception,” and “Prior Perceptions of South Africa” all remained the same quite easily, as did the consequences of “Moving Beyond the Classroom.” Because all of the data for the two research questions was so completely connected, I was not surprised to find this to be the case; it simply made sense. Once all of the data had been placed in the proper relational structure for Research Question #2, the axial coding paradigm found in figure 4.2 was developed.

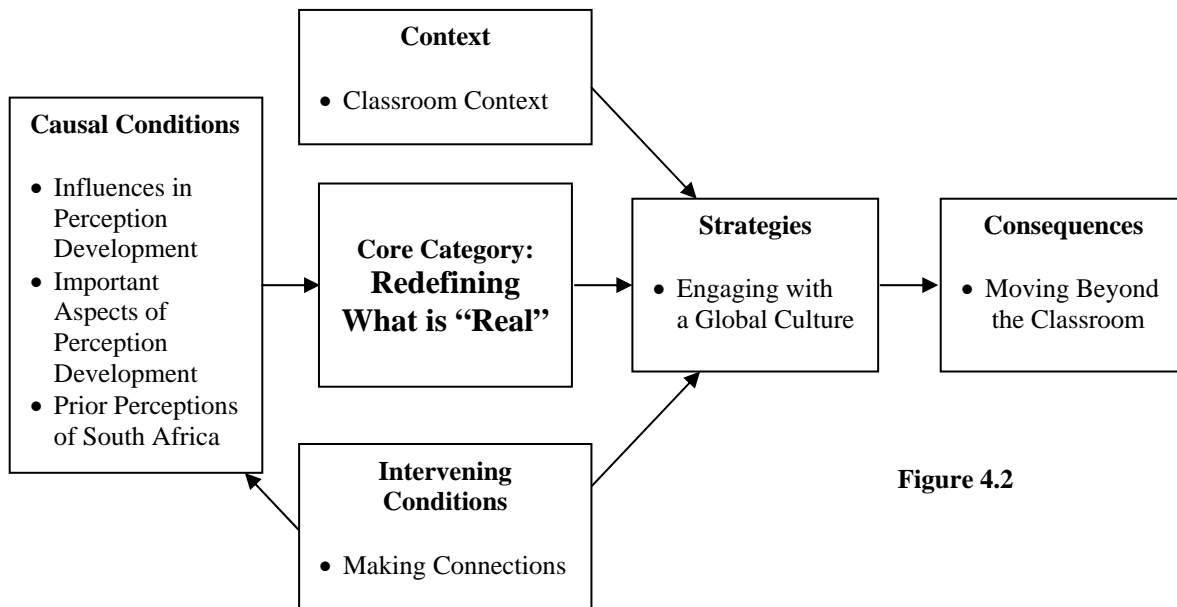


Figure 4.2

And so, again, while this axial coding paradigm is an illustration of a great deal of information, one must return to the initial question that I so wanted to answer. “How *do* new media interactions inform students’ reading of a more traditional literary text, specifically, *Cry, the Beloved Country*?” In this case, the response is found within the core category itself:

The new media made the novel more *real* for students.

As mentioned above, when these students were able to interact with South African media, the place, the people, the culture, and their history all became real to the students. South Africa was no longer a “made up place” that appeared in a story, and because of this, they were able to construct a more solid context for the novel itself. Even though the novel was, in fact, fictional, the reality that they found online enabled the students to draw more from the novel itself, and as a result, that “power” that I have found within the novel was acknowledged in many of the students’ assignments throughout the unit.

### **The Research within My Classroom: A Discussion of Findings**

This research study was designed to examine the role of new media within the world literature classroom, focusing specifically on student perceptions and the interaction of the media with more traditional texts. In moving through the project, in analyzing the data, and in defining the results, it has become blatantly obvious to me that the media *does* have a place within my English classroom. The media is prevalent in students' lives, and as such, students need to be taught to engage with that media in a manner that will enhance their experience with it, as well as with other things like traditional literary texts.

Focusing on the Core Principles of Media Literacy Education that I chose for this project (Core Principles #1, #2, #5, and #6) in conjunction with the traditional literary texts that I teach, I have found that students' engagement with all of the texts has increased. In addition, the level of critical thinking and reflection that my students demonstrated throughout the unit, and especially in their final projects, was considerable, indicating that the unit had attained some measure of success.

When I completed this unit, and even before I had begun to analyze the data as part of the research study, I knew that I would use this unit again in the future. In fact, I knew that I would probably expand the scope of media literacy education (MLE) within my classroom because the students seemed to have had such a positive experience and because their final media projects demonstrated the success of my student learning objectives. Now, having analyzed the data and come to the conclusions that I have developed, I'm even more positive that this is something that will remain constant within my classroom.

However, regardless of the learning objectives and research findings, if I wanted to look to the success of this unit, the final statement made by Laura in our last focus group meeting



made it blatantly obvious. When asked what her overall experience with the entire project had been, she said:

For me, it was, just kind of like you guys have said, just another assignment, until you find that one article or that one item that just hits home. And for me, it was the abuse article because of things that have just gone on in my family. Like just to see that there are those things that have gone on in other places and you're not alone, that is something that just hits really hard, and that was the one connection that I made that I just really appreciated. And, um, ah, [gets a bit teary] you're not supposed to get emotional about assignments, this is so hard, oh my gosh, um, hang on... um, that was just really hard for me, and to see that things like that go on everywhere, and, um, it just makes you feel less alone. And I just loved relating to that and seeing people in other situations and to see how they dealt with those kinds of situations. It just helped me a lot, and it just really made it a horizon-broadening experience, and to be able to see things in a different light, and to be able to see all these different opinions and things that you just have such a narrow point of view until you see all these different perspectives, then you see that there isn't just one way out. There's so many different ways that you can deal with these things. And so, that's something I just really appreciated about this unit.

Though she stumbled through her answer to the question, as she began to cry, I, too, was moved to tears. Here was a young woman who, through the power of the media and its connection to the novel we read in class, was able to empathize with people in a strange place with a strange culture. In that moment, those people became real for her, and she was able to find comfort in

their experiences. That is something that transcended anything that I could have *ever* anticipated coming out of this study.

### **The Research in Other Contexts: Implications for Other Classrooms**

This research study, as discussed in chapter two, took place within what many teachers would view as an “ideal classroom,” an honors class replete with engaged students who complete assignments and who actually admit to *enjoying* school from time to time. That being said, this unit, focused on infusing new media into a standard secondary English classroom, has some implications for teachers of many subjects, whether in an honors, regular, or remedial setting.

#### *Critical Intercultural Literacies*

The first of these implications lies in within the development of critical intercultural literacies, which, as discussed in chapter one, is a vital component of becoming a part of today’s global society. As presented in the data, it seems that classroom teachers, especially within the world languages, have grasped onto the idea of using media to add a cultural element to the classroom. “Culture studies” are often conducted through the screening of documentaries, used to show students the culture of the people whose language is being studied, and though the media is used effectively to “show” students new things, this is not a situation in which critical intercultural literacies are developed.

In order to develop these literacies, one must actually *engage with* “the other” in some way, and this is often the element that is missing within the classroom. We, as teachers, often use media as a representation of another culture without deeply exploring the implications of this *particular* representation, and therefore, students’ experience is extremely limited. Students are rarely asked to participate *with* the text, as we often establish situations where they passively observe and simply take in what they’re being shown, often answering very basic questions

about the media with which they are presented. We use the media as a teaching tool, rather than actually *teaching the media* within the cultural context, and as a result, we miss the opportunity to teach students to develop critical intercultural literacies.

What this study has shown is that one essential aspect of developing these critical intercultural literacies is that students must first be taught to critically engage with the media that surrounds them. Because their initial interactions with the global culture often come through observational types of media like movies, television, music, and online videos, the students often develop opinions and perceptions of other cultures through very passive means, and without an initial recognition of the impact of the media in their lives, students cannot become what Giroux called “border crossers,” (as cited in Guilherme, 2006, p. 165) a key component of critical intercultural literacy. If we hope for students to gain their own *experience* with other cultures through the media, media literacy education is not optional.

In addition to this need to be taught to engage with media, this study also suggests that “connection” is vital in developing critical intercultural literacies. As students learn to interact with and analyze the media of their own culture as well as the culture of “the other,” they start to refrain from making comparative judgments of “better” or “worse.” Instead, the students are able to find ways in which they can *relate* to this other culture, developing personal connections to this new and different place, synthesizing their new knowledge in an attempt to come to a new understanding about the world. If we, as teachers, can provide opportunities for students to develop their own connections with “the other,” we can use those opportunities to help them to become more critically and interculturally literate, whether teaching foreign language, history, geography, music, English or any other course where the ability to engage, learn from,

understand, and be “tolerant of and responsible to matters of difference and otherness” (Guilherme, 2006, p. 165) enhances the curricular content.

*Improving Teaching Practice*

Another implication of this study is the suggestion that perhaps Kelly, McCain, and Jukes (2009) are correct in saying that, when it comes to teaching practice, “The Way We’ve Always Done It” (p. 10) needs to be examined and adjusted. Traditional pedagogical strategies, while they have been proven effective in the past, may need to be customized for today’s students. These students are accustomed to working in the digital world, and research, including this study, suggests that meeting students in the digital realm can enhance their learning (Bower, 2006; MacBride & Luehmann, 2008).

In addition, this study affirms other research suggesting that when students are interested, they are more engaged in learning, and providing opportunities to work with media can, in fact, encourage student interest (Burnett, 2002; MacBride & Luehmann, 2008; Ng, 2006; Peterson, 2010). In this study, the course material presented to the students, the novel *Cry, the Beloved Country*, was typical. It is a conventional novel that appears in many literature curriculums, and yet, the students engaged with the novel in a way that I had never before seen in my years of teaching. Their interest in the core curricular content increased as they continued to engage with media pertaining to that content.

One can hypothesize, then, that even when the course content initially seems to be “plain” or even “dull” to students, in reinventing the curriculum through the incorporation of MLE, there is a possibility that students may become more interested and, thereby, more engaged in the content. And as shown by research, as student become more engaged and interested in the content, retention of knowledge increases (Dillon and Jobst, 2005). No matter

the subject area, retention of knowledge lies at the core of every teacher's learning objectives, and as implied by this study, incorporating MLE into the content classroom can help to do just that.

### **Conclusions and Further Inquiry**

In the beginning of this research process, before focusing the research at all, I had several very general questions about media literacy education and its place within the content classroom. I wondered whether it would be possible to integrate MLE into a classroom without detracting from the core content. I wondered whether MLE could be used to enhance and engage students with a curriculum that can come across as dull and uninteresting at times. And I wondered how I, personally, could use MLE in an effective manner within my own classroom.

Now, after conducting this study, I have found that, in my classroom, media literacy education has found a permanent home. Not only did its incorporation *not* detract from the core content that even I sometimes find tedious, but it enhanced my students' experiences to the point that they actually enjoyed much of the material we addressed, and I attribute this positive development to the media literacy instruction that was infused into my curriculum.

As a practicing teacher, I am beginning to see that there are a wide variety of possibilities for incorporating the media, in analysis as well as production, as a part of my normal class without "disrupting" the curriculum in any way. With the new technologies constantly being developed, chances are that there will always be new and exciting types of media to integrate into curriculum, and students enjoy being able to use these technologies. My experiences with online writing through the class wiki, though, has shown me that, as students enjoy the technology, they are also engaging with the course material, and even if I am not initially comfortable with the technology, the time invested in learning to use it and then enabling the

students to use it can pay off significantly in student learning. In addition to this, to truly function within today's world, students need to be able to critically navigate the digital world in which we live, which includes interacting with and using the media. Placing media literacy within the content curriculum provides an excellent opportunity for students to develop these necessary skills.

And so now I begin to wonder what comes next. This study had opened a number of doors within my own teaching practice, and I have begun to wonder a great deal about how a unit such as this would look in other classes in other content areas. *Does* MLE help to increase student engagement across the content areas, or is it just in English? Or is it just in *my* classroom because of the way I chose to use it?

In order to answer these questions, one would have to study the effects of MLE on student engagement within a wide variety of subject areas, across a wide demographic of students. While this type of prospective study is well beyond my own scope for research, it would be interesting to see what someone with a larger range for research could find.

On a smaller scale, and in the reflective tradition of action research, I have begun, once again, to examine my own practice for further opportunities for the infusion of media literacy education within my curriculum. What would it look like outside of the context of "culture"? Can it be used when exploring poetry rather than a novel? What about grammar? *Could* MLE be used to make grammar instruction both effective and fun?

While all of these questions move the study of MLE into realms well outside of the scope of this particular research study, I hope to find opportunities to successfully incorporate the principles of MLE into these different parts of my curriculum. But even if my efforts prove

unsuccessful, I am well aware of the success that MLE can have when dealing with the idea of text itself.

Recently, three months after the conclusion of my official research study, my students proved that the media literacy skills developed during the project have been retained. Several weeks ago, we began reading the book *Three Cups of Tea*, by Greg Mortenson, the founder of the Central Asia Institute (CAI) and a significant public figure in the promotion of girls' education in the Middle East. On April 17<sup>th</sup>, I received an email from James that simply stated, "I just saw this today, and I thought it was very interesting. We may have the wrong story. <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2011/04/15/60minutes/main20054397.shtml> I think it might be a good idea to discuss." That evening, CBS had aired a segment on *60 Minutes* that put into question much of what had been published in the novel *Three Cups of Tea* as well as Mortenson's ethics in running the CAI.

News of this *60 Minutes* presentation spread through my classes very quickly, and at the request of the students themselves, we have begun to analyze the novel in relation to the *60 Minutes* accusations and the media messages that have now flooded the internet as a result of the scandal presented. My students have pulled out their old copies of NAMLE's "Key Questions to Ask When Analyzing Media Messages" (National Association for Media Literacy Education, 2007) and they have begun to, once again, critically interact with the media as text. They are exploring the various nuances of all of the texts surrounding the issue, the book, the video, and the various online publications, in order to come to their own conclusions about Mortenson, and I could not be happier with this unexpected result of my research study. My students, having developed the ability to critically engage with the media, have moved those skills into another unit within my class. While I was a bit unprepared for this and have had to rush around to

develop lesson plans and find resources to support these new developments, the students are, once again, engaged in a manner that I find to be incredibly worthwhile.

During a class discussion the other day, one of my students even mentioned that I should revamp my curriculum next year so that *Three Cups of Tea* is a part of the “media unit” in order to teach the book in conjunction with the media scandal. While I truly do appreciate the sentiment, it is my hope that, in future years, and as I find ways for successfully incorporating media literacy education, it will become such an integral part of my curriculum that there will no longer be a way to distinguish the “media unit” from all of the rest.



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**APPENDIX A**  
**Consent Documents**

**South Africa: New Media and Student Perceptions**  
Consent to be a Research Subject

**Introduction**

This research study is being conducted by Timbre J. Newby Greenwood, a graduate student, and Amy P. Jensen, PhD, at Brigham Young University to explore the nature of student perceptions of South Africans as new media is infused into a world literature Curriculum unit centered on African Literature. You are invited to participate because you are enrolled in Mrs. Newby Greenwood's Eleventh-Grade Honors English Class, which is focused on world literature.

**Procedures**

This project will take place during the second term of the school year, from October 26, 2010 to January 8, 2011. As part of the regular classroom activities and requirements you will be required to post weekly to the class wiki, outlining your interaction with various media during the previous week. Each week there will be a specific assignment with questions to answer. You will also be asked, as part of the regular classroom assignments, to read and respond to other students' wiki entries as well as participate in small and large classroom discussions regarding the media in relationship to the class novel *Cry, the Beloved Country*. Students who volunteer for the research study may have their entries and responses selected for specific study, looking for alterations in perceptions as well as their ability to critically interact with media sources. Several volunteers will also participate in three separate focus group discussions and will be interviewed by the teacher; both the focus group discussions and the interviews will focus on the students' media experience as well as their perceptions of South African culture.

**Risks/Discomforts**

There are minimal risks for participation in this study. You may feel some anxiety knowing that other students will read your wiki entries, however this will be a course requirement and not specifically limited to the volunteers for the study. The analysis of the data (writing excerpts and media projects) will take place after the term grades have been reported. This will prevent any benefit or penalty based on evidence for the study. Since you know the teacher well, there will be minimal discomfort in focus group and personal interview situations. The focus groups and interviews will require that you choose to miss another class, stay in for FLEX time, come in during lunch, or meet before or after school. If you choose to miss another class, you will not have an attendance penalty.

For those participating in the focus group, you will discuss personal opinions, and therefore, extra measures will be taken to protect your privacy. The teacher will begin the focus group by asking the participants to agree to the importance of keeping information discussed in the focus group confidential. She will then ask each participant to verbally agree to keep everything discussed in the room confidential, and will remind you at the end of the group not to discuss the material outside.

Only the teacher will have access to the data collected. Any tapes and transcripts of the focus group will be destroyed after one year or at the end of the study.

**Benefits**

There are no specific benefits to you as the volunteer subject, but, if this experience is beneficial to helping students become more media savvy and culturally aware, that in itself is a benefit to U.S. society. As this research is shared with other educators, who then attempt similar experiences with their students, the benefits will be multiplied. If this is not a successful experience, that information would also be beneficial to educators attempting to teach literature in a similar project, helping them to avoid ineffective teaching methods. This benefits society as a whole as students are educated by more effective and efficient teachers, using methods appealing to students—new media.

**Confidentiality**

All information provided will remain confidential. If background information, interview material, or writing excerpts are used in the research report, volunteers will be identified with a false name. All data, including questionnaires and tapes/transcriptions from the focus group, will be kept in a locked storage cabinet and only those directly involved with the research will have access to them. After the research is completed, the questionnaires and tapes will be destroyed.

**Compensation**

There will be no compensation for participating in this study.

**Participation**

Participation in this research study is voluntary. Although you are expected to complete your normal class assignments, refusing to participate or withdrawing from the research project will not affect your grade in the class or standing at school.

**Questions about the Research**

If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Timbre J. Newby Greenwood at 801-760-7000, [tgreenwood@alpine.k12.ut.us](mailto:tgreenwood@alpine.k12.ut.us) or Amy P. Jensen at 801-422-1886, [amy\\_p\\_jensen@byu.edu](mailto:amy_p_jensen@byu.edu)

**Questions about your Rights as Research Participants**

If you have questions you do not feel comfortable asking the researcher, you may contact IRB administration, A-285 ASB, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602, (801) 422-1461, [irb@byu.edu](mailto:irb@byu.edu)

I have read, understood, and received a copy of the above consent and desire of my own free will to participate in this study.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### **South Africa: New Media and Student Perceptions**

#### Parent or Guardian Consent for Minor Child to Participate as a Research Subject

#### **Introduction**

This research study is being conducted by Timbre J. Newby Greenwood, a graduate student, and Amy P. Jensen, PhD, at Brigham Young University to explore the nature of student perceptions of South Africans as new media is infused into a world literature Curriculum unit centered on African Literature. Your student was invited to participate because he or she is enrolled in Mrs. Newby Greenwood's Eleventh-Grade Honors English Class, which is focused on world literature.

#### **Procedures**

This project will take place during the second term of the school year, from October 26, 2010 to January 8, 2011. As part of the regular classroom activities and requirements the students will be required to post weekly to the class wiki, outlining their interaction with various media during the previous week. Each week there will be a specific assignment with questions to answer. The students will also be asked, as part of the regular classroom assignments, to read and respond to other students' wiki entries as well as participate in small and large classroom discussions regarding the media in relationship to the class novel *Cry, the Beloved Country*. Students who volunteer for the research study may have their entries and responses selected for specific study, looking for alterations in perceptions as well as their ability to critically interact with media sources. Several volunteers will also participate in three separate focus group discussions and will be interviewed by the teacher; both the focus group discussions and the interviews will focus on the students' media experience as well as their perceptions of South African culture.

#### **Risks/Discomforts**

There are minimal risks for participation in this study. Students may feel some anxiety knowing that other students will read their wiki entries, however this will be a course requirement and not specifically limited to the volunteers for the study. The analysis of the data (writing excerpts and media projects) will take place after the term grades have been reported. This will prevent any benefit or penalty based on evidence for the study. Since volunteers know the teacher well, there will be minimal discomfort in focus group and personal interview situations. The focus groups and interviews will require that students choose to miss another class, stay in for FLEX time, come in during lunch, or meet before or after school. If students choose to miss another class, they will not have an attendance penalty.

For those participating in the focus group, students will discuss personal opinions, and therefore, extra measures will be taken to protect each participant's privacy. The researcher will begin the focus group by asking the participants to agree to the importance of keeping information discussed in the focus group confidential. She will then ask each participant to verbally agree to keep everything discussed in the room confidential, and will remind them at the end of the group not to discuss the material outside.

Only the researcher will have access to the data collected. Any tapes and transcripts of the focus group will be destroyed after one year or at the end of the study.

**Benefits**

There are no specific benefits to the volunteer subjects, but, if this experience is beneficial to helping students become more media savvy and culturally aware, that in itself is a benefit to U.S. society. As this research is shared with other educators, who then attempt similar experiences with their students, the benefits will be multiplied. If this is not a successful experience, that information would also be beneficial to educators attempting to teach literature in a similar project, helping them to avoid ineffective teaching methods. This benefits society as a whole as students are educated by more effective and efficient teachers, using methods appealing to students—new media.

**Confidentiality**

All information provided will remain confidential. If background information, interview material, or student work are used in the research report, volunteers will be identified with a false name. All data, including questionnaires and tapes/transcriptions from the focus group, will be kept in a locked storage cabinet and only those directly involved with the research will have access to them. After the research is completed, the questionnaires and tapes will be destroyed.

**Compensation**

There will be no compensation for participating in this study.

**Participation**

Participation in this research study is voluntary. Although students will be expected to complete normal class assignments, refusing to participate or withdrawing from the research project will not affect their grades in the class or standing at school.

**Questions about the Research**

If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Timbre J. Newby Greenwood at 801-760-7000, [tgreenwood@alpine.k12.ut.us](mailto:tgreenwood@alpine.k12.ut.us) or Amy P. Jensen at 801-422-1886, [amy\\_p\\_jensen@byu.edu](mailto:amy_p_jensen@byu.edu)

**Questions about your Rights as Research Participants**

If you have questions you do not feel comfortable asking the researcher, you may contact IRB administration, A-285 ASB, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602, (801) 422-1461, [irb@byu.edu](mailto:irb@byu.edu)

I have read, understood, and received a copy of the above consent and desire of my own free will to allow my child or ward to participate in this study.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Student Participating in the Study: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX B**  
**Focus Group Survey**

## My Media Experience

Directions: Please respond honestly to the questions below.

1. What media do you interact with the most? (EXCLUDING texting or talking on your cellular phone)

2. Do you feel as though you are able to easily interpret the media with which you interact?

3. What is your favorite new media technology?

4. How comfortable are you with new media technologies?

(1= "I can barely turn on my computer.")

5= "Give me something new and I'll figure it out in a few hours.")

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

5. How much experience do you have with media production (the creation of media)?

(1= "I've never created anything.")

5= "I create and publish/post things online all the time.")

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

\*\* Would you like to be considered for Mrs. Greenwood's Research "Focus Group"?  
(You may ONLY say yes if you have submitted consent documents signed by your parents.)\*\*

Yes                      No

**APPENDIX C**  
**Focus Group Invitation Letter**

November 11, 2010

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Based on your acknowledged interest, you have been randomly selected to participate in Mrs. Greenwood's focus group for her research project. This will consist of three group meetings with her during FLEX Time/Lunch where we will discuss various aspects of the curriculum as well as your perceptions of and interactions with various types of media. During these sessions, Mrs. Greenwood will record the sessions for her research purposes, and she will later transcribe the discussions so you do not have to worry about your voice being heard or your face being seen by anyone other than her. Mrs. Greenwood will also provide for your lunch during these meetings in order to enable to you stay during the lunch hour.

In addition, Mrs. Greenwood will set up individual interview times where she will speak to you individually about aspects of the curriculum as well as your perceptions of and interactions with various types of media. These interviews will coincide with the focus group meetings, but may need to take place at a different time, depending on your availability or the length of the focus group meetings.

Thank you SO very much for being willing to do this. I can't tell you how appreciative I am. Below are the proposed dates for the focus group meetings. They all fall on B-days so that I can go get food during 3<sup>rd</sup> hour. The first meeting is next week, and PLEASE let me know then if the other two dates will not work for you.

**Focus Group Meeting 1: Wednesday, November 17, 2010**  
**Focus Group Meeting 2: Thursday, December 16, 2010**  
**Focus Group Meeting 3: Thursday, January 13, 2011**

Sincerely,



Mrs. Timbre J.N. Greenwood

**APPENDIX D**  
**Lesson Plans and Corresponding Assignments**

**Lesson Plan 1**

*Planning*

**Unit:** New Media and *Cry, the Beloved Country*

**Title:** Day 1—What is Media? What is New Media?

**Objectives:**

- Students will be able to connect the idea of “media” with the idea of “text.”
- Students will be able to address what media is, why we use media, and how we use media.
- Students will be able to identify various new media sources.

**Materials Needed:**

- Student Copies: Research Consent Forms
- Overhead: Media Definition
- Overhead: New Media Definition
- Student Copies: Media Madness

*Performing*

**Lesson Presentation:**

I. Preparing for Learning

A. 20 Minutes: *What is Media?*

1. Divide the class into groups of 4-5, and give each group butcher paper and markers.
2. In groups of 4-5, students will be given five minutes to answer this question “What is Media?” They are free to write words or draw pictures, as long as every member of the group participates.
3. Each group will come up to the front and share 1-2 of their answers, explaining how and why they think that answer defines media.
4. Display Media Definition Overhead—*How close were we?*
  - An intervening substance through which something else is transmitted or carried on
  - A specific kind of artistic technique or means of expression as determined by the materials used or the creative methods involved
  - The main means of mass communication
5. *Does knowing this formal definition changes your previous views as to what defines “media”? Does this sound like another definition that you know? (Text) The concept of “literacy” is expanding...it used to mean simply the ability to read and write printed text; now it also encompasses so much more.*

II. Directing the Learning

A. 20 Minutes: Purpose of the Media



1. In the same groups, students will turn their paper over and answer the question, “Why do we use the media to document things?” Students will again have five minutes to discuss their answers.
2. Groups will present their responses.
3. Summarize student responses on the board.
4. Center for Media Literacy has identified three common purposes why people communicate.
  - Inform
  - Persuade
  - Entertain
5. Write these purposes up on the board, and have the class help you organize their answers to the previous question (“Why do we use the media to document things?”) into the applicable category. Discuss their results.

B. 20 Minutes: The Media and Me

1. Each student will attempt to estimate how many hours per week they spend interacting with the media in any of these categories. Discuss “Media Time” as a class.
2. On a ¼ sheet of paper, students are to complete the statement “The media affects me in the following ways:” with at least five responses.
3. Discuss students’ perceptions of how the media affects them.

C. 10 Minutes: New Media

1. *Any guesses as to what the term New Media might mean?*
2. Display New Media Definition Overhead—*How close were we?*
3. For this term, we are going to be working in the realm of new media as well as the more traditional printed text.

III. Reinforcing the Learning

A. 5 Minutes: Tracking Media Usage

1. Distribute Media Madness to students and review the instructions.
2. For homework, students are to track their use of text and the media. As an initial step on the path to media literacy, one must recognize how much media they interact with, as well as what “kind” of media it is.



Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Class Period \_\_\_\_\_

# Media Madness

## TRACKING MY USE OF THE MEDIA

Directions: For the next two days, you are to track your use of all types of media. (Do this to the very best of your ability—I recognize that some small interactions may be forgotten.) Take note of your interactions on the chart below. If you run out of spaces on this sheet, feel free to continue on another page.

Media Type	New Media?	Length of Time	Description/Comments
<i>Television</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>1.5 hours</i>	<i>I watched one episode of <u>Glee</u> and two episodes of <u>How I Met Your Mother</u>.</i>
<i>Video Games</i>	<i>??</i>	<i>30 minutes</i>	<i>I played Super Mario Brothers on the Wii.</i>
<i>Internet</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>2 hours</i>	<i>I began researching South Africa, and I found tons of online newspapers as well as some podcasts and Youtube videos that may be helpful.</i>

## Lesson Plan 2

### *Planning*

**Unit:** New Media and *Cry, the Beloved Country*

**Title:** Day 2—Finding Media Messages

### **Objectives:**

- Students will be able to address what media is, why we use media, and how we use media.
- Students will be able to identify explicit and implicit messages that are being sent through the media, and will be better prepared to analyze them.

### **Materials Needed:**

- Projector Pictures: *I'm Glad I'm a Boy, I'm Glad I'm a Girl*
- DVD: *The Devil Wears Prada*
- DVD: *Napoleon Dynamite*
- DVD: *Pixar Short Films*
- Student Copies: NAMLE's Key Questions to Ask When Analyzing Media Messages
- Student Copies: Analyzing Media Messages
- Student Copies: Media Experience Surveys

### *Performing*

### **Lesson Presentation:**

- I. Preparing for Learning
  - A. 10 Minutes: Media Madness
    1. *What is Media? What is New Media?*
    2. *What are the purposes of media?*
    3. *What did you discover about your media interactions while doing this assignment? What is the most commonly used type of media? What is the most common use for media?*
- II. Directing the Learning
  - A. 15 Minutes: Messages in the Media
    1. Show the class the book *I'm Glad I'm a Boy, I'm Glad I'm a Girl*, by Whitney Darrow, Jr. (1970). Have a boy to read the boy pages, and a girl to read the girl pages.
      - a. *How do you feel about the things this book is saying? Are they true?*
      - b. *What do you think the author meant to say as he was writing the book?* (That boys and girls are different.)
      - c. *What are some other meanings that you see in the text?* (At times, girls are portrayed as being dependent upon/subservient to/ less qualified than boys.)
    2. Texts have messages. Media has messages.
  - B. 15 Minutes: Explicit vs. Implicit Messages (CHOOSE/LIMIT CLIPS BASED ON TIME)

1. *What does it mean if something is explicit?* (Fully and clearly expressed)
  2. *What does it mean if something is implicit?* (Implied or understood though not directly expressed. Sometimes this meaning is intended by the author, sometimes it is not.)
  3. When we discuss messages within a text, an explicit message is something that is fairly obvious to all viewers. An implicit message isn't as readily apparent.
  4. Little Red Riding Hood
    - a. Explicit Messages:
      - Girls shouldn't go wandering through the woods alone.
    - b. Implicit Messages:
      - Women are incapable of saving themselves. (Both women must be saved by the Woodsman.)
      - Grandmas shouldn't live alone
  5. *The Devil Wears Prada*—the scene showing the transformation of the main character from normal to fashion conscious.
    - a. *What are the explicit messages here?*
    - b. *What are the implicit messages here?*
      - *What does this say about body image?*
      - *What does this say about the importance of the clothes we wear?*
- C. 30 Minutes: Explicit vs. Implicit Messages (CHOOSE/LIMIT CLIPS BASED ON TIME)
1. NAMLE's Key Questions to Ask When Analyzing Media Messages
    - a. Distribute Key Questions sheets to students
    - b. Review Questions with students—use Sun Chips commercial to walk through the questions.
      - Often we think of these types of things when we're looking at advertisements, but what about *other* types of media?
  2. *Napoleon Dynamite*—chapter 18
    - a. *What are the explicit messages here?*
    - b. *What are the implicit messages here?*
      - Self-sacrifice is the only way to forge real bonds for friendship.
      - Happiness comes from embracing your own identity.
      - By reaching out to other cultures (helping Pedro, adopting DeQwan's Dance moves), Napoleon has found new talents.
    - c. NAMLE's Key Questions
  3. *Pixar Short Films*—Give students choice of options.
    - a. *What are the explicit messages here?*
    - b. *What are the implicit messages here?*
    - c. NAMLE's Key Questions
  4. Do you think that the filmmakers intended all these messages to be in these films?

### III. Reinforcing the Learning

#### A. 5 Minutes: Analyzing the Media

## CRY, THE BELOVED MEDIA

1. Distribute Analyzing Media Messages to students and review the instructions.
2. For homework, students are to analyze the explicit and implicit messages in some of their media. A second step on the path to media literacy is to recognize and identify these messages and how they are being conveyed within the medium.

### B. 5 Minutes: Media Experience Surveys

1. Distribute Student Surveys.
2. Students will complete the surveys and submit them before leaving class.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Class Period \_\_\_\_\_

# Analyzing Media Messages

Directions: For this assignment, you will interact with two different types of media and analyze their contents. Using NAMLE’s Key Questions to Ask When Analyzing Media Messages, respond to *all* of the questions asked in each category in the chart below. Also think carefully about *how* messages are conveyed within each particular type of media.

**ANY Media (Books, Magazines, Television, Film, etc.)**

Title:		Type of Media:
Summary:		
AUDIENCE & AUTHORSHIP	AUTHORSHIP PURPOSE ECONOMICS IMPACT RESPONSE	
MESSAGES & MEANINGS	CONTENT TECHNIQUES INTERPRETATIONS	
REPRESENTATIONS & REALITY	CONTEXT CREDIBILITY	

**NEW Media (Websites, Blogs, Podcasts, Online Videos, etc.)**

Title:		Type of Media:
Summary:		
AUDIENCE & AUTHORSHIP	AUTHORSHIP PURPOSE ECONOMICS IMPACT RESPONSE	
MESSAGES & MEANINGS	CONTENT TECHNIQUES INTERPRETATIONS	
REPRESENTATIONS & REALITY	CONTEXT CREDIBILITY	

### Lesson Plan 3

#### *Planning*

**Unit:** New Media and *Cry, the Beloved Country*

**Title:** Day 3—Media and Perceptions

#### **Objectives:**

- Students will be able to recognize how various types of media can affect perceptions.
- Students will begin to examine how the media has affected their own perceptions of South Africa.

#### **Materials Needed:**

- Student Copies: Media, Perception, and South Africa
- Student Copies: *Cry, the Beloved Country*—Photocopies of Introduction
- Student Copies: *Cry, the Beloved Country*—Introduction Questions

#### *Performing*

#### **Lesson Presentation:**

##### I. Preparing for Learning

###### A. 15-20 Minutes: Analyzing the Media

1. *What did you discover about media messages interactions while doing this assignment? Did the core questions help you to get to the “heart” of the messages being conveyed? What are some of the modes for transmitting messages within your texts?*

##### II. Directing the Learning

###### A. 25 Minutes: Media and Perception

1. Students are to take out a piece of paper and fold it in half long-ways, creating two columns.
2. On the left hand side, students are to take five minutes to write down everything that they know or believe about Santa Claus.
3. Students are to then use the right side of the page to list how they learned each of these things. (For example—parents, teachers, television, movies, websites, etc.)
4. As a class, review some of the “truths” about Santa Claus at the Saint Nicholas Center’s website: <http://www.stnicholascenter.org/>
5. *Why is it that the “truth” of Saint Nicholas isn’t what’s celebrated each year? How have some of these misguided beliefs been perpetuated?*

###### B. 25 Minutes: Media, Perception, and South Africa

1. Explain that we will be looking at the very same process with the subject of our next unit: South Africa.
2. Distribute Media, Perception, and South Africa sheets to students.
3. On the left hand side, students are to take eight minutes to write down everything that they know or believe about South Africa—not worrying about whether or not they are correct.



4. Students are to then use the right side of the page to list how they learned each of these things. (For example—parents, teachers, television, movies, websites, etc.)
5. *What do you already know about South Africa? How have you come to this knowledge?*
6. Explain to students that we will be addressing some of these very things as we move through our unit.
7. *If I were to go out and ask you to find out more information about South Africa, what would be your process for completing that task? WHY?*

### III. Reinforcing the Learning

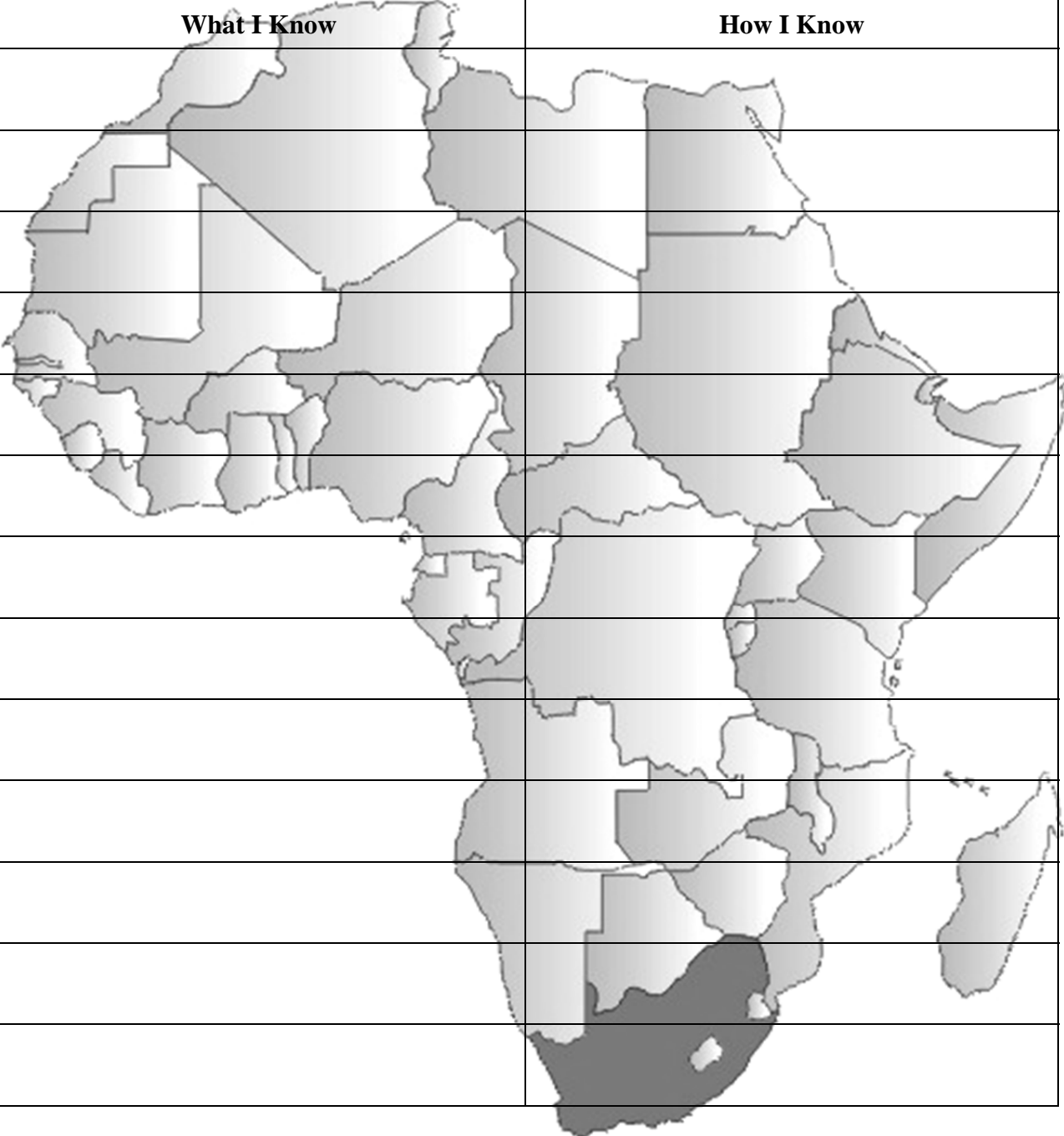
#### A. 5 Minutes: Introduction, *Cry, the Beloved Country*

1. Distribute copies of the introduction from *Cry, the Beloved Country* to students as well as the Introduction questions sheet.
2. Students are to *carefully* read the introduction and thoughtfully respond to the questions for the reading, preparing to discuss their findings next time.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Class Period \_\_\_\_\_

# Media, Perception, and South Africa

Directions: Following the model done in class regarding our perceptions of Santa Claus, you are to write down all that you know, or even simply *believe*, about South Africa. Once the timer goes off, write down how you learned each piece of knowledge—ex. parents, teachers, the internet, television, movies, etc. Please be as specific as possible, but don't worry about getting answers "right" or "wrong." Remember—it's all about *your* perceptions.

What I Know	How I Know
	

## Lesson Plan 4

### *Planning*

**Unit:** New Media and *Cry, the Beloved Country*

**Title:** Day 4—South African History in New Media

### **Objectives:**

- Students will begin to examine how the media has affected their own perceptions of South Africa.
- Students will begin to interact with new media as they learn more about South African History.

### **Materials Needed:**

- Prezi Presentation: South Africa in New Media
- Teacher Copy: “A Short History of South Africa”
- Student Copies: South African Media Search

### *Performing*

### **Lesson Presentation:**

#### I. Preparing for Learning

##### A. 15 Minutes: Introduction, *Cry, the Beloved Country*

1. Introduce the history of South Africa by discussing students’ homework assignment.
2. Walking through several of the questions on the homework sheet, address students’ questions to the readings.

#### II. Directing the Learning

##### A. 55 Minutes: South African History in New Media

1. Recognize that it’s impossible to cover the entire history of a country in one class period.
2. Using elements of new media, we will be looking at a *brief* history of South Africa, especially during the era of apartheid.
3. Students will simply listen and then discuss as a class the various historical artifacts presented here.

#### III. Reinforcing the Learning

##### A. 5 Minutes: South African Media Search

1. Distribute copies of the South African Media Search to students.
2. Students are to go and explore the offerings of South African new media in an effort to familiarize themselves with the types of sources available.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Class Period \_\_\_\_\_

## South African Media Search

**Directions:** For this assignment, you are to jump online and explore some of the offerings of South African Media. The google site for South Africa is: [www.google.co.za](http://www.google.co.za). Find at least two South African websites that feature new media elements such as video, podcasts, photo essays, etc. (Make sure to double check that your site is actually developed and supported in South Africa!) Using NAMLE's Key questions, examine the site and talk about what you learned in the charts below.

### WEBSITE #1:

Title:
Web Address:
New Media Elements:
Summary of Information Presented:
What you learned about South African Media:
Responses to NAMLE's Questions (Summarize your analysis of the text, based on the questions):

**WEBSITE #2:**

Title:
Web Address:
New Media Elements:
Summary of Information Presented:
What you learned about South African Media:
Responses to NAMLE's Questions (Summarize your analysis of the text, based on the questions):

## Lesson Plan 5

### *Planning*

**Unit:** New Media and *Cry, the Beloved Country*

**Title:** Day 5—Topics of Focus and New Media

### **Objectives:**

- Students will begin to interact with new media as they learn more about South Africa in preparation for reading *Cry, the Beloved Country*.

### **Materials Needed:**

- Prezi Presentation: South Africa in New Media
- Student Copies: New Media Project Overview
- Student Copies: New Media Project Assignment 1

### *Performing*

### **Lesson Presentation:**

- I. Preparing for Learning
  - A. 15 Minutes: South African History in New Media
    1. Finish up Prezi presentation on South African History.
- II. Directing the Learning
  - A. 25 Minutes: *Cry, the Beloved Country*, New Media, and our Areas of Focus
    1. As we prepare for reading the novel *Cry, the Beloved Country*, recognize that there are many themes and topics that can be addressed with regards to the novel.
    2. In addition, you are going to be asked to interact with current media from South Africa, in an effort to further inform your reading of the novel.
    3. Distribute New Media Project Overview assignment sheets to students.
    4. Review the requirements with students.
      - a. Studying a novel published in 1946 in relationship to new media that is being published in 2010 creates a difference in time as well as medium. Yet, we have discussed the universality of texts.
      - b. Therefore, as we look into the novel as well as new media, we will be focusing on four specific, universal ideas/topics:
        - Importance of Land
        - Effect of Fear
        - Unifying Power of Love
        - Cycle of Inequality/Injustice
      - c. As we go through the novel, we will be discussing your media interactions and how those interactions are informing your reading of the novel.
  - B. 10 Minutes: New Media Project Assignment 1
    1. Distribute New Media Project Assignment 1 sheets to students.
    2. Review instructions.

3. The rest of the class period will be given to them to begin this search.

### III. Reinforcing the Learning

#### A. 30 Minutes: Writing Lab

1. Students will go to the writing lab in order to begin their exploration of South African New Media.



# South Africa: New Media Project



Instead of doing Paradigm Projects this term, you will be interacting with South African Media on a regular basis. As you interact with the media, you will be connecting what you learn back to the novel *Cry, the Beloved Country* through our four topics of focus:

- The Importance of the Land
- The Effect of Fear
- The Unifying Power of Love
- The Cycle of Inequality/Injustice

This assignment will make up a large portion of your grade for the term, so you will want to be thoughtful in all aspects of the project.

## **Assignment One: Personal Media Choice**

Due: 11/18 (A-day) or 11/19 (B-day)

For this assignment, you will be required to choose a particular new media source that is directly related to South Africa or South African culture; you can choose anything from published blogs to online newspapers, video repositories, podcasts, or others to which you can find online access. As a part of this assignment, you must also have your parents sign an acknowledgement form, recognizing that they are aware of and have approved your choice of media interaction. You will also need to receive approval from Mrs. Teacher as well. (This approval may be obtained in class on 11/18 or 11/19.)

## **Assignment Two: Weekly Wiki Posting**

Due: Each Week by **Friday** at Midnight—11/19, 11/26, 12/3, 12/10, 12/17, **ONE** over the winter break due by 12/31, and 1/7.

For this assignment, you will be required read/view/interact with your chosen media and then to analyze and respond to that media electronically through the English 11 Honors Class Wiki. Mrs. Greenwood will post guiding questions to guide your analysis and to provide possible connections to in-class discussion, though the most important part of the assignment is for you to demonstrate your connection to the media and how your own personal perceptions of South Africa and South African culture have been affected by these interactions. Your responses should be approximately 300-400 words in length and must be posted by Saturday at midnight each week.

## **Assignment Three: Weekly Wiki Responses**

Due: Each Week by **Saturday** at Midnight—11/20, 11/27, 12/4, 12/11, 12/18, **ONE** over the winter break due by 1/1, and 1/8.

This assignment is simply to respond to your peers' analyses of their media. Each week, you must respond (on the wiki) to at least one other student's media analysis post. These shorter responses should include further comments, questions, or ideas that are generated while reading the original post. These responses need to be approximately 100 words. The purpose of this is to expose you to the media that others are interacting with, as well as promote a discussion of the media.





# South Africa: New Media Project

## Assignment One: Personal Media Choice



For this assignment, you will be required to choose a particular new media source that is directly related to South Africa or South African culture; you can choose anything from published blogs to online newspapers, video repositories, podcasts, or others to which you can find online access. As a part of this assignment, you must also have your parents sign the acknowledgement form on the back, recognizing that they are aware of and have approved your choice of media interaction. You will also need to have Mrs. Teacher sign the approval section as well. (This approval will be obtained in class on 11/18 or 11/19.)

**Instructions:**

1. You now have a bit of experience with searching for South African media, so jump online and start looking for new media that is produced in South Africa. (Don't forget: [www.google.co.za](http://www.google.co.za)) For the sake of this assignment, and the weekly postings that will be required of you, you may want to look for new media sources that are published on a regular basis, like blogs, podcasts, or video news reports, though you may obtain permission to search for a different media source each week.
2. When choosing your media source, keep in mind our four topics of focus for this term—don't go looking for a source about the South African Rap scene unless you can connect it back to the four topics. ☺
3. Find five potential new media sources for this project. For each of them, complete the charts below.
4. Show these sources to your parents. Make sure that they are aware of your choice of new media sources, and have them sign the acknowledgement form on the back of this sheet.
5. Bring this sheet to class on 11/18 or 11/19 and get approval for your sources from Mrs. Greenwood in the writing lab during class. (Keep in mind that many Youtube type websites are blocked at the school, so be prepared simply to describe those sources for approval.)

**Source #1**

Name of Source:	
Web Address:	
Type of Media:	How often will this media source publish <i>new</i> information with which you may interact? (Daily, weekly, etc.)
Justify your assertion that this is a new media source. (Why should this be considered <i>new</i> media?):	
How are you going to be able to connect this media source to (at least) one of the four topics of focus for this unit?	

**Source #2**

Name of Source:	
Web Address:	
Type of Media:	How often will this media source publish <i>new</i> information with which you may interact? (Daily, weekly, etc.)
Justify your assertion that this is a new media source. (Why should this be considered <i>new</i> media?):	
How are you going to be able to connect this media source to (at least) one of the four topics of focus for this unit?	

CRY, THE BELOVED MEDIA

**Source #3**

Name of Source:	
Web Address:	
Type of Media:	How often will this media source publish <i>new</i> information with which you may interact? (Daily, weekly, etc.)
Justify your assertion that this is a new media source. (Why should this be considered <i>new</i> media?):	
How are you going to be able to connect this media source to (at least) one of the four topics of focus for this unit?	

**Source #4**

Name of Source:	
Web Address:	
Type of Media:	How often will this media source publish <i>new</i> information with which you may interact? (Daily, weekly, etc.)
Justify your assertion that this is a new media source. (Why should this be considered <i>new</i> media?):	
How are you going to be able to connect this media source to (at least) one of the four topics of focus for this unit?	

**Source #5**

Name of Source:	
Web Address:	
Type of Media:	How often will this media source publish <i>new</i> information with which you may interact? (Daily, weekly, etc.)
Justify your assertion that this is a new media source. (Why should this be considered <i>new</i> media?):	
How are you going to be able to connect this media source to (at least) one of the four topics of focus for this unit?	

**Parental Acknowledgement**

I have spoken with my child, and I am aware of and have approved their choice of media interaction for this project.

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Teacher Approval:**

Mrs. Greenwood has given her approval for me to use any of the following sources for this project:

- 1      2      3      4      5

## Lesson Plan 6

### *Planning*

**Unit:** New Media and *Cry, the Beloved Country*

**Title:** Day 6—New Media and *Cry, the Beloved Country*

### **Objectives:**

- Students will continue to interact with new media as they learn more about South Africa in preparation for reading *Cry, the Beloved Country*.
- Students will receive approval for their choice of media sources for this unit.
- Students will begin to read the novel, *Cry, the Beloved Country*.

### **Materials Needed:**

- Extra Copies: New Media Project Overview
- Extra Copies: New Media Project Assignment 1
- Student Copies: New Media Project Assignment 2-3
- Student Copies: *Cry, the Beloved Country* Reading Schedule

### *Performing*

### **Lesson Presentation:**

- I. Preparing for Learning
  - A. 10 Minutes: New Media Project Overview Assignment 1
    1. *How'd it go?*
    2. Respond to student questions regarding their search for media.
    3. Explain that approval for their media will be obtained as the teacher circulates in the writing lab.
- II. Directing the Learning
  - A. 15 Minutes: Book Check-Out and Reading Schedule
    1. Students will check out *Cry, the Beloved Country* from the library.
    2. Distribute and review the reading schedule as well as reading expectations.
  - B. 10 Minutes: New Media Project Assignment 2-3
    1. Distribute New Media Project Assignment 2-3 sheets to students.
    2. Review instructions, and demonstrate how to post and respond online using the projector and the examples provided on the wiki.
    3. The rest of the class period will be held in the lab so that students can receive approval for their media sources as well as practice the posting and responding procedure for the term.
- III. Reinforcing the Learning
  - A. 45 Minutes: Writing Lab
    1. Students will go to the writing lab in order to begin their exploration of South African New Media.



# South Africa: New Media Project

## Assignment Two and Three: Wiki Posts



### Assignment Two: Weekly Wiki Posting

Due: Each Week by **Friday** at Midnight

WEEK #	DATE DUE
Week 1	November 19
Week 2	November 26
Week 3	December 3
Week 4	December 10
Week 5	December 17
Week 6	December 31 (You only have to post once over the Winter Break.)
Week 7	January 7

For this assignment, you will be required read/view/interact with your chosen media and then to analyze and respond to that media electronically through the English 11 Honors Class Wiki.

### Instructions:

1. At the beginning of the week, log on to the Honors 11 Class Wiki and click on the appropriate page for the week (ex. Week 1, Week 2, Week 3, etc.). On the main page, Mrs. Greenwood will have posted specific instructions/guiding questions for that week's media post.
2. Each week, look up and read, view, or interact in some way with your approved media source, focusing on the instructions and guiding questions for the week.
3. On the discussion board for the appropriate week, click on the "New Post" button, add an appropriate subject, and then post your Weekly Wiki Post, which will consist of your analysis of your media based on the instructions and guiding questions for the week. Be sure to click the "Monitor this Topic" box so that you can be notified when someone responds to your post.

The most important part of this assignment is for you to demonstrate your connection to the media and how your own personal perceptions of South Africa and South African culture and the connections between your media and our four topics of focus. Your responses should be approximately 300-400 words in length and must be posted by Friday at midnight each week. (The posts are due so that your classmates may have something to respond to by Saturday!)

### Assignment Three: Weekly Wiki Responses

Due: Each Week by **Saturday** at Midnight

WEEK #	DATE DUE
Week 1	November 20
Week 2	November 27
Week 3	December 4
Week 4	December 11
Week 5	December 18
Week 6	January 1 (You only have to post once over the Winter Break.)
Week 7	January 8

This assignment is simply to respond to your peers' analyses of their media. Unlike the Weekly Wiki Posting that will be guided by Mrs. Greenwood's instructions and questions, these responses will remain about the same each week.

Instructions:

1. After posting your own media analysis on the Wiki, search through the other posts to find an analysis that you find intriguing; choose an entry that has not yet received a response.
2. Using the url address or the link provided, view the media analyzed by your peer.
3. Go back to the discussion board, reread the analysis of the media and respond to that analysis. What did *you* think of the media? What did *you* learn from it? Is there anything you think that the author of the post missed? Did you have any other interesting questions regarding the media that perhaps he/she hadn't thought of?

These shorter responses should include further comments, questions, or ideas that are generated while reading the original post. These responses need to be approximately 100 words. The purpose of this is to expose you to the media that others are interacting with, as well as promote a discussion of the media.

## Lesson Plan 7

### *Planning*

**Unit:** New Media and *Cry, the Beloved Country*

**Title:** Day 7—*Cry, the Beloved Country*, Chapter 1

### **Objectives:**

- Students will be able to recognize the symbolism contained within “the land” of South Africa and how that is presented in chapter 1.

### **Materials Needed:**

- Overhead: Reading Quiz: Chapter 1 and Forewords

### *Performing*

### **Lesson Presentation:**

- I. Preparing for Learning
  - A. 10 Minutes: Reading Time
    1. Students will read individually.
  - B. 15 Minutes: Reading Quiz
    1. Administer quiz.
    2. Trade and grade the quizzes.
- II. Directing the Learning
  - A. 20 Minutes: Novel Discussion
    1. As a class, discuss the first chapter of the novel.
    2. *Why do you think that the author chose to begin his novel this way?*
    3. *Why is this chapter significant?*
  - B. 20 Minutes: South Africa—Week 1 Posts
    1. As a class, discuss how students’ first posts of the term went.
    2. *What did you learn in the process? What did you learn about the process?*
    3. *How was it responding to other people’s posts? How did you feel about the responses you received?*
    4. Project a couple particularly insightful wiki posts on the board and discuss the positive elements.
- III. Reinforcing the Learning
  - A. 10 Minutes: South Africa—Week 2 Posts
    1. Display and review this week’s requirements with students.

## Lesson Plan 8

### *Planning*

**Unit:** New Media and *Cry, the Beloved Country*

**Title:** Day 8—*Cry, the Beloved Country*, Chapters 2-5

### **Objectives:**

- Students will begin to think about fear and love in relationship to the South Africa inside and outside of the novel.

### **Materials Needed:**

- Overhead: Reading Quiz, Chapters 2-5
- Overhead: Thought Journal, Chapters 2-5

### *Performing*

### **Lesson Presentation:**

- I. Preparing for Learning
  - A. 5 Minutes: Reading Time
    1. Students will read individually.
  - B. 15 Minutes: Reading Quiz
    1. Administer quiz.
    2. Trade and grade the quizzes.
- II. Directing the Learning
  - A. 10 Minutes: Thought Journal
    1. In preparation for class discussion, students will freewrite in response to the quotation placed on the overhead.
  - B. 20 Minutes: Novel Discussion
    1. As a class, discuss the novel.
    2. *Why do you think that the author chose to begin his novel this way?*
    3. *Why is this chapter significant?*
  - C. 20 Minutes: South Africa—Week 2 Posts
    1. As a class, discuss how students' posts went.
    2. *What did you learn in the process? What did you learn about the process?*
    3. *How was it responding to other people's posts? How did you feel about the responses you received?*
    4. Project a couple particularly insightful wiki posts on the board and discuss the positive elements.
- III. Reinforcing the Learning
  - A. 5 Minutes: South Africa—Week 3 Posts
    1. Display and review this week's requirements with students.

## Lesson Plan 9

### *Planning*

**Unit:** New Media and *Cry, the Beloved Country*

**Title:** Day 9—*Cry, the Beloved Country*, Chapters 6-9

### **Objectives:**

- Students will continue to think about the four areas of focus in relationship to the South Africa inside and outside of the novel.

### **Materials Needed:**

- Overhead: Reading Quiz, Chapters 6-9
- Overhead: Thought Journal, Chapters 6-9

### *Performing*

### **Lesson Presentation:**

- I. Preparing for Learning
  - A. 5 Minutes: Reading Time
    1. Students will read individually.
  - B. 15 Minutes: Reading Quiz
    1. Administer quiz.
    2. Trade and grade the quizzes.
- II. Directing the Learning
  - A. 10 Minutes: Thought Journal
    1. In preparation for class discussion, students will freewrite in response to the quotation placed on the overhead.
  - B. 20 Minutes: Novel Discussion
    1. As a class, discuss the novel.
    2. *Why do you think that the author chose to begin his novel this way?*
    3. *Why is this chapter significant?*
  - C. 20 Minutes: South Africa—Chapter 9 Illustrations
    1. In small groups, students will create a visual representation of chapter 9, incorporating the more powerful passages from the text into their images.
    2. Groups will present their pictures to the class.
- III. Reinforcing the Learning
  - A. 5 Minutes: South Africa—Week 3 Posts
    1. Display and review this week's requirements with students.



## Lesson Plan 10

### *Planning*

**Unit:** New Media and *Cry, the Beloved Country*

**Title:** Day 10—*Cry, the Beloved Country*, Chapters 10-12

### **Objectives:**

- Students will continue to think about the four areas of focus in relationship to the South Africa inside and outside of the novel.

### **Materials Needed:**

- Overhead: Reading Quiz, Chapters 10-12
- Overhead: Thought Journal, Chapters 10-12
- Books: 6-Word Memoirs

### *Performing*

### **Lesson Presentation:**

- I. Preparing for Learning
  - A. 5 Minutes: Reading Time
    1. Students will read individually.
  - B. 15 Minutes: Reading Quiz
    1. Administer quiz.
    2. Trade and grade the quizzes.
- II. Directing the Learning
  - A. 10 Minutes: Thought Journal
    1. In preparation for class discussion, students will freewrite in response to the quotation placed on the overhead.
  - B. 20 Minutes: Novel Discussion
    1. As a class, discuss the novel.
    2. *Why do you think that the author chose to begin his novel this way?*
    3. *Why is this chapter significant?*
  - C. 20 Minutes: South Africa—Chapter 12 6-Word Stories
    1. Describe and discuss the concept of a 6-Word Story.
    2. For the 11 vignettes at the beginning, students will create a 6-word story that conveys the general feeling of the vignette.
    3. Discuss the purpose of chapter 12.
- III. Reinforcing the Learning
  - A. 5 Minutes: South Africa—Week 3 Posts
    1. Display and review this week's requirements with students.

**Lesson Plan 11**

*Planning*

**Unit:** New Media and *Cry, the Beloved Country*

**Title:** Day 11—*Cry, the Beloved Country*, Chapters 13-17

**Objectives:**

- Students will continue to think about the four areas of focus in relationship to the South Africa inside and outside of the novel.

**Materials Needed:**

- Overhead: Reading Quiz, Chapters 13-17

*Performing*

**Lesson Presentation:**

- I. Preparing for Learning
  - A. 15 Minutes: Reading Quiz
    1. Administer quiz.
    2. Trade and grade the quizzes.
- II. Directing the Learning
  - A. 5 Minutes: South Africa—Week 4 Posts
    1. Display and review this week's requirements with students.
- III. Reinforcing the Learning
  - A. Students will spend the rest of the class period with the counselors in the writing lab.

## Lesson Plan 12

### *Planning*

**Unit:** New Media and *Cry, the Beloved Country*

**Title:** Day 12—*Cry, the Beloved Country*, Chapters 18-23

### **Objectives:**

- Students will continue to think about the four areas of focus in relationship to the South Africa inside and outside of the novel.

### **Materials Needed:**

- Overhead: Reading Quiz, Chapters 18-23
- Overhead: Thought Journal, Chapters 18-23
- Student Copies: Gettysburg Address

### *Performing*

### **Lesson Presentation:**

- I. Preparing for Learning
  - A. 15 Minutes: Reading Quiz
    1. Administer quiz.
    2. Trade and grade the quizzes.
  
- II. Directing the Learning
  - A. 10 Minutes: Thought Journal
    1. In preparation for class discussion, students will freewrite in response to the quotation placed on the overhead.
  
  - B. 10 Minutes: Novel Discussion
    1. As a class, discuss the novel.
    2. *Why do you think that the author chose to begin his novel this way?*
    3. *Why is this chapter significant?*
  
  - C. 25 Minutes: The Gettysburg Address
    1. Distribute The Gettysburg Address assignments to students.
    2. Review instructions with students.
    3. Students may begin completing the assignment in small groups. What doesn't get done is to be completed for homework
  
- III. Reinforcing the Learning
  - A. 15 Minutes: New Media and the Novel
    1. *How has your exploration of the media informed your reading of the novel?*

## Cry, the Beloved Country

### AND THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

In Chapter 20 of *Cry, the Beloved Country*, James Jarvis goes through his son's library and finds that, while alive, his son was an admirer of Abraham Lincoln. Jarvis, interested in learning more about his son, takes a copy of the Gettysburg Address from the office.

**READ** the Gettysburg Address as follows:

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate—we can not consecrate—we can not hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Knowing what you do about Arthur Jarvis (the son), **ANALYZE** the Gettysburg Address by doing the following:

1. Re-read the text.
2. Underline five (5) sections of the Gettysburg Address that would have influenced or had a profound effect on Arthur Jarvis.
3. Number each of the five sections you have underlined.

Now, **SYNTHESIZE** the Gettysburg Address by telling me why and how each of these individual sections would have affected Arthur Jarvis (the son). I don't want a summary of events from the novel; I already know what happens. I want you to tell me why and how you think Arthur Jarvis was affected by Lincoln's speech. Use examples from the text for support. (You may need to use a separate sheet of paper.)

- 1.

CRY, THE BELOVED MEDIA

2.

3.

4.

5.

Finally, **ANSWER** the following questions:

1. Why does Arthur Jarvis have a copy of this in his office?
  
2. How do you think James Jarvis (the father) will be affected by the Gettysburg Address? Why? Use examples from the text for support.

### Lesson Plan 13

#### *Planning*

**Unit:** New Media and *Cry, the Beloved Country*

**Title:** Day 13—*Cry, the Beloved Country*, Chapters 24-29

#### **Objectives:**

- Students will continue to think about the four areas of focus in relationship to the South Africa inside and outside of the novel.

#### **Materials Needed:**

- Overhead: Reading Quiz, Chapters 24-29
- Overhead: Thought Journal, Chapters 24-29

#### *Performing*

#### **Lesson Presentation:**

- I. Preparing for Learning
  - A. 15 Minutes: Reading Quiz
    1. Administer quiz.
    2. Trade and grade the quizzes.
  
- II. Directing the Learning
  - A. 10 Minutes: Thought Journal
    1. In preparation for class discussion, students will freewrite in response to the quotation placed on the overhead.
  
  - B. 30 Minutes: Novel Discussion
    1. As a class, discuss the novel.
    2. *Why do you think that the author chose to begin his novel this way?*
    3. *Why is this chapter significant?*
  
- III. Reinforcing the Learning
  - A. 25 Minutes: New Media and the Novel
    1. *How has your exploration of the media informed your reading of the novel?*

## Lesson Plan 14

### *Planning*

**Unit:** New Media and *Cry, the Beloved Country*

**Title:** Day 14—*Cry, the Beloved Country*, Chapters 30-36

### **Objectives:**

- Students will continue to think about the four areas of focus in relationship to the South Africa inside and outside of the novel.

### **Materials Needed:**

- Overhead: Reading Quiz, Chapters 30-36
- Overhead: Thought Journal, Chapters 30-36
- Student Copies: Final Assessment

### *Performing*

### **Lesson Presentation:**

- I. Preparing for Learning
  - A. 15 Minutes: Reading Quiz
    1. Administer quiz.
    2. Trade and grade the quizzes.
  
- II. Directing the Learning
  - A. 10 Minutes: Thought Journal
    1. In preparation for class discussion, students will freewrite in response to the quotation placed on the overhead.
  
  - B. 30 Minutes: Novel Discussion
    1. As a class, discuss the novel.
    2. *Why do you think that the author chose to end his novel this way?*
  
- III. Reinforcing the Learning
  - A. 25 Minutes: Final Assessment
    1. Distribute Final Assessment sheets to students.
    2. Review assignment and expectations with students.
    3. It is recommended that students begin working on their final assessments now.



## South Africa: New Media and Cry, the Beloved Country Final Assessment



For your final assessment over the unit, you will be required to use your experience with new media in order to create a new media project that showcases the things that you have learned regarding the novel, the four topics of focus, and South Africa's situation today. You will incorporate personal connections as well as the factual information that you have collected as you have interacted with the novel and the media throughout our unit.

### Things to Keep In Mind:

1. Recognize that for this assignment you must think outside of the box, because you will have complete control over your destiny. (Translation: You have almost FREE REIGN with this thing and can do pretty much whatever you would like, as long as you meet the requirements of the project.)
2. Choose a type of new media that you would like, and have the means, to produce *and* publish. (Yes, your work WILL be going online.)
3. "Elements" can include anything from characters to images, to direct quotations.
4. Any information that does not come directly from your own head must be cited.
5. After much thought, it has been determined that this *can* be a group project--no more than 3 people per group. The more people involved, the more elaborate the project is expected to be.
6. This project will constitute **40%** of your grade for the term, so I *highly* recommend spending a substantial amount of time on its production.

### Requirements:

1. Your project must demonstrate thoughtful consideration of at least three of the four topics of focus.
  - The Importance of the Land
  - The Effect of Fear
  - The Unifying Power of Love
  - The Cycle of Inequality/Injustice
2. Your project must fall into the category of New Media.
3. Your project must demonstrate a solid comprehension of the novel through the incorporation of 5 specific elements from *Cry, the Beloved Country*, with connections to the media as well as your chosen topics of focus.
4. Your project must demonstrate thoughtful consideration of the new media with which you've interacted over the course of the term through the incorporation of 5 specific elements from your media, with connections to the novel as well as your chosen topics of focus.
5. Your project must be published online in some form, and the link to your project must be posted on the wiki on the South Africa—Week 8 page.
6. Once completed, you must analyze your own production according to NAMLE's key questions. Post your analysis on the South Africa—Week 8 discussion board in the same post as the link to your project.
7. You will be presenting your projects in class. (If you choose to create a video/series of videos and post them on YouTube, you will need to bring the videos to class in another form, as Youtube is inaccessible from the school.)



CRY, THE BELOVED MEDIA

**Schedule:**

A-DAY	B-DAY	IN CLASS	DUE
12/15/10	12/16/10	Assessment Explanation	Chapters 30-36
12/17/10	1/3/11	Film— <i>Cry, the Beloved Country</i>	Nothing Due—Think about Project
1/4 /11	1/5/11	Film— <i>Cry, the Beloved Country</i>	The Novel as Media (End of Class) <b>Project Proposal</b>
1/6/11	1/7/11	Writing Lab Media Check done in class	Wiki Week 7 (Due on Friday the 7 <sup>th</sup> at midnight)
1/10/11	1/11/11	Writing Lab Media Check done in class	Nothing Due—Work on Project
1/12/11	1/13/11	Project Presentations	<b>Final Projects Posted to Wiki</b>

**Grading Rubric:**

<b>4</b> (98-100%)	In addition to score 3 performance, I make in-depth inferences, applications, and outside connections that delve deeply into all texts involved. I present unique and creative syntheses. My media is entertaining as well as informative, and it looks fabulous.
<b>3.5</b> (93-98%)	In addition to score 3 performance, I make in-depth inferences, applications, and outside connections with partial success.
<b>3</b> (90-93%)	No major errors or omissions regarding the more complex details and processes such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project demonstrates comprehension of the novel through the use of at least 5 elements from the novel.</li> <li>• Project demonstrates thoughtful consideration of weekly media interactions through the use of at least 5 elements from other media sources.</li> <li>• Project demonstrates thoughtful consideration of at least three of the four topics of focus.</li> <li>• Analysis and synthesis of novel, outside media, and the topics of focus are clear, fully-developed, and thoughtful, and the project demonstrates a solid relationship between all things.</li> <li>• Media is clear and meaningful.</li> <li>• My analysis of my media according to NAMLE’s key questions is posted on the wiki, and it is insightful.</li> </ul>
<b>2.5</b> (85-90%)	I am successful with score 1 and score 2 elements and partially successful with score 3 elements
<b>2</b> (75-85%)	I am successful with score 1 and score 2 elements regarding the simpler details and processes, but not with score 3 elements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project demonstrates comprehension of the novel through the use of at least 4 elements from the novel, with connections to the media and topics of focus.</li> <li>• Project demonstrates thoughtful consideration of weekly media interactions through the use of at least 4 elements from other media sources, with connections to the novel and topics of focus.</li> <li>• Project demonstrates thoughtful consideration of at least three of the four topics of focus.</li> </ul>
<b>1.5</b> (70-75%)	I am successful with score 1 elements. I am partially successful with score 2 and score 3 elements.
<b>1</b> (60-70%)	I am successful with score 1 elements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My project falls into “New Media” category and has been published online with a link posted on the class wiki.</li> <li>• My project demonstrates comprehension of the novel through the use of at least 3 elements from the novel.</li> <li>• My project demonstrates thoughtful consideration of weekly media interactions through the use of at least 3 elements from other media sources.</li> <li>• My project demonstrates thoughtful consideration of at least two of the four topics of focus.</li> </ul>
<b>0</b> (0-60%)	No understanding demonstrated. The project was obviously rushed and does not meet minimal requirements.

## Lesson Plan 15 and 16

### *Planning*

**Unit:** New Media and *Cry, the Beloved Country*

**Title:** Day 15-16—*Cry, the Beloved Country*, Film

### **Objectives:**

- Students will analyze, *Cry, the Beloved Country* through an alternate media format: Film.

### **Materials Needed:**

- Extra Copies: Final Assessment
- Film: *Cry, the Beloved Country*
- Student Copies: The Novel as Media

### *Performing*

### **Lesson Presentation:**

- I. Preparing for Learning
  - A. 5 Minutes: Final Assessment
    1. Respond to student questions regarding the assessment.
- II. Directing the Learning
  - A. 75 Minutes: Film
    1. Distribute “The Novel as Media” assignment to students.
    2. Review instructions with the students.
    3. Students will begin watching *Cry, the Beloved Country*.
- III. Reinforcing the Learning
  - A. 25 Minutes: Final Assessment
    1. Distribute Final Assessment sheets to students.
    2. Review assignment and expectations with students.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Class Period \_\_\_\_\_

# The Novel as Media

Directions: As we've gone through the novel, you have been required to analyze various media sources and connect them to the novel *Cry, the Beloved Country*. Now it's time to examine a media rendition of the novel itself, the 1995 version of *Cry, the Beloved Country*, starring James Earl Jones and Richard Harris. Using NAMLE's key questions as well as your extensive knowledge of the novel, analyze the film. Then respond to the question on the back.

## KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN ANALYZING MEDIA MESSAGES

<p>AUDIENCE &amp; AUTHORSHIP</p>	<p>AUTHORSHIP PURPOSE ECONOMICS IMPACT RESPONSE</p>	
<p>MESSAGES &amp; MEANINGS</p>	<p>CONTENT TECHNIQUES INTERPRETATIONS</p>	
<p>REPRESENTATIONS &amp; REALITY</p>	<p>CONTEXT CREDIBILITY</p>	

While watching the film *Cry, the Beloved Country*, look for three significant differences between it and the novel. Why do you think that the filmmakers made these adaptations? Do you think the choices were effective? Why or Why not?

CHANGES	WHY DID THE FILMMAKERS DO THIS?	EFFECTIVE CHOICE?	WHY OR WHY NOT?

1. Compare and contrast the novel’s Stephen Kumalo and the film’s Stephen Kumalo. How are they similar? How are they different?
  
2. Compare and contrast the novel’s James Jarvis and the film’s James Jarvis. How are they similar? How are they different?
  
3. Although the film has made many obvious changes, do you feel that it stays true to the “heart” of the novel? Why or why not?
  
4. Do you feel as though film is an effective media source for portraying this story? Why/why not?
  
5. What other media sources do you feel would be effective for fully conveying the power of *Cry, the Beloved Country*? Why?

**Lesson Plan 17 and 18**

*Planning*

**Unit:** New Media and *Cry, the Beloved Country*

**Title:** Day 17-18—Final Assessment Work Day

**Objectives:**

- Students will take time to work on their final projects.

**Materials Needed:**

- Film: *Cry, the Beloved Country*
- WRITING LAB TIME

*Performing*

**Lesson Presentation:**

I. Preparing for Learning

A. 15 Minutes: Film (If Necessary)

1. If the class has not already, finish watching the film, *Cry, the Beloved Country*.
2. Students need to complete the Novel as Media assignment for next time.

II. Directing the Learning

A. Rest of Time: Final Assessment

1. Students are to use this time wisely in order to complete their final assessment.
2. They may go to the writing lab to work, stay in the classroom to work, or use the time as a study hall, but they *must* be productive with this time.

III. Reinforcing the Learning

A. 5 Minutes: Final Assessment Reminders

1. Remind students of expectations and when assessments are due.

## Lesson Plan 19 and 20

### *Planning*

**Unit:** New Media and *Cry, the Beloved Country*

**Title:** Day 19-20—Final Assessment Presentations

### **Objectives:**

- Students will show off what they've done.

### **Materials Needed:**

- Computer, Projector, and Wireless Connection
- WRITING LAB TIME (Day 20)

### *Performing*

### **Lesson Presentation:**

#### I. Preparing for Learning

##### A. 15 Minutes: Final Assessment Prep

1. In their groups, students will write out a paper, explaining where to find the required elements of the project within their final product. (This is a chance for them to make sure that get all of the points that they deserve.)
2. Students will staple their explanation sheets to one rubric per group.

#### II. Directing the Learning

##### A. Rest of Time: Final Assessment Presentations

1. Students will show off what they've done.

#### III. Reinforcing the Learning

##### A. Extra Time: Giving Compliments

1. Once presentations are finished, students will go to the writing lab, log on to the Wiki, and look at other people's projects.
2. Students are to then make positive comments, on the Wiki, about the projects they view.

**APPENDIX E**  
**Weekly Wiki Post Assignment Prompts**

**Week 1 Wiki Post Assignment**

DUE: Friday, November 19

For this week, because you have very little time (24 hours or less) to analyze and respond to your chosen media, you will simply be posting a link/web address to your media source and then you will analyze your media based on a few of NAMLE's key questions. You need to discuss your analysis of the **Authorship**, **Content**, and **Context** of your media source. (Look at the key questions that go along with these things if you need help.) In addition, I would like you to make at least one connection between this particular source and our four topics of focus:

- The Importance of the Land
- The Effect of Fear
- The Unifying Power of Love
- The Cycle of Inequality/Injustice.

Be sure to click the “Monitor this Topic” box at the end of your post so that you will receive an email when someone responds.

**Week 1 Wiki Response Assignment**

DUE: Saturday, November 20

This week, here's what you do:

1. Log on to the wiki.
2. Go to the Week 1 Discussion Board
3. Click through your classmates' posts, scanning the media for something that seems to be of interest to you. Choose one that has not yet received a response.
4. Using the url address or the link provided, view the media analyzed.
5. Go back to the discussion board, reread the analysis of the media and respond to that analysis. What did you think of the media? What did *you* learn from it? Is there anything you think that the author of the post missed? Did you have any other interesting questions regarding the media that perhaps he/she hadn't thought of?

A Recommendation Based on Experience: I would suggest constructing your posts in a word document and then posting them online—remember that there are no editing capabilities in the discussion board!

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**Week 2 Wiki Post Assignment**

DUE: Friday, November 26

For this week you are to focus on the topic of focus “The Importance of the Land.” Think back to

chapter 1 of *Cry, the Beloved Country* and the discussion that we had regarding the importance of the land within the novel. Now, find a media source that addresses or relates to this concept of the land. (Don't forget to include the url in your post!) Is the South African land still as important as it once was? Compare and contrast the portrayal of the land in chapter one to the portrayal of the land in your media source. Your analysis of the chapter as well as the media source must show significant thought on your part. (Remember 300-400 words!)

Be sure to click the "Monitor this Topic" box at the end of your post so that you will receive an email when someone responds.

### **Week 2 Wiki Response Assignment**

DUE: Saturday, November 27

This week, it's the same thing:

1. Log on to the wiki.
2. Go to the Week 2 Discussion Board
3. Click through your classmates' posts, scanning the media for something that seems to be of interest to you. Choose one that has not yet received a response.
4. Using the url address or the link provided, view the media analyzed.
5. Go back to the discussion board, reread the analysis of the media as well as Chapter 1 of *Cry, the Beloved Country*, and respond to that analysis. What did you think of the media? The chapter? What did *you* learn from it? Is there anything you think that the author of the post missed? Did you have any other interesting questions regarding the media that perhaps he/she hadn't thought of?

A Recommendation Based on Experience: I would suggest constructing your posts in a word document and then posting them online—remember that there are no editing capabilities in the discussion board!

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### **Week 3 Wiki Post Assignment**

DUE: Friday, December 3

On page 71 of *Cry, the Beloved Country*, Msimangu states, "But there is only one thing that has power completely, and that is love. Because when a man loves, he seeks no power, and therefore he has power. I see only one hope for our country, and that is when white men and black men, desiring neither power nor money, but desiring only the good of their country, come together to work for it...I have one great fear in my heart, that one day when they are turned to loving, they will find we are turned to hating."

Two of our topics of focus seem to relate to this specific quotation: "The Effect of Fear" and "The Unifying Power of Love."

Now, find a media source that addresses or relates to these two topics and/or the connection



between the two. (Yes, this may take a little more effort on your part. Think outside the box a little if you need to.) Is there evidence of fear and the love necessary to heal the fear in today's South Africa? Compare and contrast the events and evidences of fear and love in the novel to those in your media source. Your analysis of the chapter as well as the media source must show significant thought on your part. (Don't forget to include the url in your post! Remember 300-400 words!)

Be sure to click the "Monitor this Topic" box at the end of your post so that you will receive an email when someone responds.

### **Week 3 Wiki Response Assignment**

DUE: Saturday, December 4

This week, it's the same thing:

1. Log on to the wiki.
2. Go to the Week 3 Discussion Board
3. Click through your classmates' posts, scanning the media for something that seems to be of interest to you. Choose one that has not yet received a response.
4. Using the url address or the link provided, view the media analyzed.
5. Go back to the discussion board, reread the analysis of the media as well as the topic of fear and love within *Cry, the Beloved Country*, and respond to that analysis. What did you think of the media? The reading from the novel? What did *you* learn from it? Is there anything you think that the author of the post missed? Did you have any other interesting questions regarding the media that perhaps he/she hadn't thought of?

A Recommendation Based on Experience: I would suggest constructing your posts in a word document and then posting them online—remember that there are no editing capabilities in the discussion board!

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### **Week 4 Wiki Post Assignment**

DUE: Friday, December 10

Arthur Jarvis, the murdered son of James Jarvis, had some very distinct ideas regarding the situation of South African society. In some ways, his writings touch on all four of our topics of focus:

- The Importance of the Land
- The Effect of Fear
- The Unifying Power of Love
- The Cycle of Inequality/Injustice.

Using NAMLE's key questions (yes, all of them), you are to analyze Arthur Jarvis's writings found on pages 178-180 and 187-188. Then, find a new media source that, in some way, conveys the same overall message that you pulled from Jarvis's writing. Compare and contrast the two

sources, Jarvis's writing and your media, and the ways in which they convey similar messages.

Be sure to include the url to your media source and to click the "Monitor this Topic" box at the end of your post so that you will receive an email when someone responds.

### **Week 4 Wiki Response Assignment**

DUE: Saturday, December 11

This week, it's the same thing:

1. Log on to the wiki.
2. Go to the Week 4 Discussion Board
3. Click through your classmates' posts, scanning the media for something that seems to be of interest to you. Choose one that has not yet received a response.
4. Using the url address or the link provided, view the media analyzed.
5. Go back to the discussion board, reread the analysis of Arthur Jarvis's writing and the connections to the media, and respond to that analysis. What did you think of the reading from the novel? The media? What did you learn from them? Is there anything you think that the author of the post missed? Did you have any other interesting questions regarding the media that perhaps he/she hadn't thought of?

A Recommendation Based on Experience: I would suggest constructing your posts in a word document and then posting them online—remember that there are no editing capabilities in the discussion board!

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### **Week 5 Wiki Post Assignment**

DUE: Friday, December 17

You've now finished the novel. I truly hope that, even if you did not actually enjoy the story, you have come to appreciate all the things that make this novel beautiful, from the poetic writing style to the powerful relationships between the characters.

In the end, there is one quotation that seems, for me, to encompass all that is conveyed in the novel as well as the principles behind our four areas of focus. Found on pages 310-311, it is:

"And now for all the people of Africa, the beloved country. Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika, God save Africa. But he would not see that salvation. It lay afar off, because men were afraid of it...And what was there evil in their desires, in their hunger? That men should walk upright in the land where they were born, and be free to use the fruits of the earth, what was there evil in it? Yet, men were afraid, with a fear that was deep, deep in the heart, a fear so deep that they hid their kindness, or brought it out with fierceness and anger, and hid it behind fierce and frowning eyes. They were afraid because they were so few. And such fear could not be cast out, but by love...I have one great fear in my heart, that one day when they turn to loving they will find we are

turned to hating. Oh, the grave and sombre words.”

This week’s post has several steps; feel free to number them in your responses:

1. Respond to the quotation above. How do you feel that it represents all four of our topics of focus? (100 words)
2. Find one quotation from the novel that, like the one above does for me, speaks to you personally about at least two of the topics of focus. Type the quotation with the page number and then respond to your own quote. (100 words--NO the word count from the quotation doesn’t count.)
3. Find a media source that you feel does the same job as your quotation—it represents the same topics of focus and it does a good job of truly “speaking to you” in some way. Post the link and then respond to the media (feel free to use NAMLE’s questions if you would like). Be sure to connect your media source to the novel as well. (200-300 words--Yes, I recognize that this makes your word count move to 400-500 words this week. Trust me, you’ll survive.)

As always, be sure to include the url to your media source and to click the “Monitor this Topic” box at the end of your post so that you will receive an email when someone responds.

### **Week 5 Wiki Response Assignment**

DUE: Saturday, December 18

This week, it’s the same thing:

1. Log on to the wiki.
2. Go to the Week 5 Discussion Board
3. Click through your classmates’ posts, scanning the media for something that seems to be of interest to you. Choose one that has not yet received a response.
4. Read the analysis of the quotations.
5. Using the url address or the link provided, view the media analyzed.
6. Go back to the discussion board and read the analysis of the media and its connections to the quotations and the novel. What did you think of the chosen quotation and the connections? The media? What did you learn from them? Is there anything you think that the author of the post missed? Did you have any other interesting questions regarding the media that perhaps he/she hadn’t thought of?

A Recommendation Based on Experience: I would suggest constructing your posts in a word document and then posting them online—remember that there are no editing capabilities in the discussion board!

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### **Week 6 Wiki Post Assignment**

DUE: Friday, December 31

I REALLY hope that you had a fabulous vacation and that you had the foresight to do this assignment early so that you are not currently writing this on New Year's Eve.

This week, we have another quotation. Found on pages 256, it is:

“Call and dance, Innocence, call and dance while you may. For this is a prelude, it is only a beginning. Strange things will be woven into it, by men you have never heard of, in places you have never seen. It is life you are going into, you are not afraid because you do not know. Call and dance, call and dance. Now, while you may.”

As I read this, I couldn't help but think of the context of our class and the “new media” focus that we've taken in this unit. Every day, our lives have new and strange things introduced into it, by people that we'll never know in places that we'll never see, and in my experience, a world literature classroom is a perfect forum for doing exactly that.

For this week, you are to find a media source (still a South African source) that illustrates in some way the impact that South Africa has had in your own life, whether it is through specific events, specific people, or something else. As usual, post the link and then respond to the media, illustrating the connection to yourself as well as the content of our class.

As always, be sure to include the url to your media source and to click the “Monitor this Topic” box at the end of your post so that you will receive an email when someone responds.

### **Week 6 Wiki Response Assignment**

DUE: Saturday, January 1

This week, it's the same thing:

Log on to the wiki.

1. Go to the Week 6 Discussion Board
2. Click through your classmates' posts, scanning the media for something that seems to be of interest to you. Choose one that has not yet received a response.
3. Using the url address or the link provided, view the media analyzed.
4. Go back to the discussion board and read the analysis of the media and its connections to the original “poster” and our class. What did you think of the chosen media and the connections? What did you learn from them? Is there anything you think that the author of the post missed? Did you have any other interesting questions regarding the media that perhaps he/she hadn't thought of?

A Recommendation Based on Experience: I would suggest constructing your posts in a word document and then posting them online—remember that there are no editing capabilities in the discussion board!

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### **Week 7 Wiki Post Assignment**

DUE: Friday, January 7

For this week's post, I want you to give us a 250 word description of your final project. Include the medium (the type of media that you're using) as well as your plans to incorporate "elements" from the novel as well as your new media source. Also feel free to post some of the questions you have developed over the course of the process. Perhaps others may be able to help you in finding an answer.

### **Week 7 Wiki Response Assignment**

DUE: Saturday, January 8

This week, it's the same thing:

1. Log on to the wiki.
2. Go to the Week 7 Discussion Board
3. Click through your classmates' posts, scanning the media for something that seems to be of interest to you. Choose one that has not yet received a response.
4. Read through the description of the poster's final project. Give them any feedback or suggestions that you can think of that may help them to make their project better. You **MUST** type a minimum of 100 words of "help."

A Recommendation Based on Experience: I would suggest constructing your posts in a word document and then posting them online—remember that there are no editing capabilities in the discussion board!

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### **Week 8 Wiki Post Assignment**

Remember that this is a part of your Final Assessment.

Your project must be published online in some form, and the link to your project must be posted on the wiki. Use the discussion board if at all possible.

Once completed, you must analyze your own production according to NAMLE's key questions. Post your analysis on the South Africa-Week 8 discussion board in the same post as the link to your project.

**APPENDIX F**  
**Focus Group and Interview Questions**

**Focus Group Discussion Questions—Meeting One**

- What do you know about South Africa and South African Culture?
- How did you come to know these things?
- How effective/accurate do you think your sources of knowledge are?
- What other ways are there to gain knowledge and perceptions of other cultures?
- How effective/accurate are these sources of knowledge?
- Which sources do/would you trust the most? Why?
- Which sources do you find to be the most popular? Why?
- Are the popular ones the most reliable ones?
- How would you define media?
- What experience do you have, personally, with interacting with media?
- What experience do you have with the creation of media?

**Focus Group Discussion Questions—Meeting Two**

- What have you been learning about South Africa and South African Culture? What do you know now that you didn't before?
- How have you come to know these things?
- What is your chosen new media genre?
- How has it been interacting with this media on a weekly basis?
- Has it been helpful in gaining knowledge about South Africa or South African Culture? Why or why not?
- Do you feel as though you are connecting with this unfamiliar culture, or is it still as foreign to you as it was in the beginning?
- How has the media helped/hindered your connection with this unfamiliar culture?
- How are you feeling about the class wiki? Is it helpful to interact with your peers electronically and have a written record of feedback?
- How has interacting with the media informed your reading of the novel?
- How has it affected how you've read the novel?
- How have the four areas of focus affected how you read the novel?
- What has your experience been like thus far?

**Focus Group Discussion Questions—Meeting Three**

- What have learned about South Africa and South African Culture? What do you know now that you didn't in the beginning?
- What has been the most influential aspect of or the most influential resource in teaching you the things that you've learned over the course of this term?
- What, to you, has brought you to this new knowledge that you've gained, whatever that knowledge is?

- How has it been interacting with the media on a weekly basis? Do you think that in order for this to be effective once a week was enough?
- How has the wiki been helpful in gaining knowledge about South Africa or South African culture?
- Do you feel as though you have connected with this unfamiliar culture, or is it still as foreign to you as it was in the beginning?
- What are your feelings about the entire unit on South Africa and South African culture?
- Did the combination of the book, *Cry the Beloved Country*, and the media help you, or did you feel like the media was a distraction from the book? What did you get out of the book versus the media, what did you get out of both of them?
- In general, how did you feel about the unit, from October until now? Is it worth doing again?

**Individual Interview Questions—Interview One**

- How is the project going? Have you been able to complete everything so far?
- What have you learned about South Africa over the course of the project thus far?
- How has this information informed or helped in your reading of the novel?
- How about the four areas of focus? Have you been able to find the media that you need to regarding those topics? Has it affected how you read the novel?

**Individual Interview Questions—Interview Two**

- How is the project going? How are you feeling about your final assessment as it comes together?
- What have you learned about South Africa over the course of this unit?
- What did you think of the novel? What did you learn through your reading of it?
- What are some of the connections that you've made between the novel and the media?
- What has this entire process done for your feelings and your perspectives regarding South Africa?