MEDIA LITERACY EDUCATION TO PROMOTE CULTURAL COMPETENCE AND ADAPTATION AMONG DIVERSE STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY OF NORTH KOREAN REFUGEES IN SOUTH KOREA

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ABSTRACT

Media literacy education to promote cultural competence and adaptation among diverse students: A case study of North Korean refugees in South Korea

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Dr. Renee Hobbs, Doctoral Advisory Committee Chair

This dissertation examines how media literacy education can be implemented and practiced for North Korean refugees to enhance their cultural competency. It is conducted as a form of participatory action research, which pursues knowledge and progressive social change. As a participant researcher, I taught media literacy to North Korean refugees in five different institutions during the summer of 2008 for a period of three months. This dissertation reviews my strategies for gaining permission and access to these educational institutions to teach media literacy education. Since media literacy classes cannot be separated from current events nor from the media environments of the given period, the dissertation also presents the significant role that the issues of importing U.S. beef and the candlelight demonstration played in the design of media literacy lessons during the summer of 2008 and in the process illustrates the value of teachable moments. It is hoped that other media educators will see how I made a connection between current affairs and media literacy lessons.

Since this dissertation aimed to address how media literacy education can be effectively used to enhance North Korean refugees' cultural competence, I as researcher adopted an emergent curriculum approach which incorporates what emerges in the classroom into the

learning. Based on predetermined educational goals, on what emerged in the classroom, on students' reactions, and on my own reflections, I continuously modified lesson plans throughout the summer. While I tried various pedagogies and covered several themes in the class, I selectively presented six different lesson models in this dissertation.

The first lesson model includes drawing and talking about the mapping of students' media experiences. I started the initial class at each institution with this media mapping. As students drew and shared their media maps, they were able to reflect upon their own media usage. I also was able to gain better knowledge and insight about their media experiences. This exercise also allowed me to set the tone of the class as a comfortable venue in which students could honestly share their stories; as a result, the students were able to gain confidence in sharing their thoughts and experiences.

The second lesson model used the film *Crossing*, the fictional film about North Korean refugees. Using this film in the lesson created an atmosphere in which students could talk freely about issues of North Korea and North Korean refugees. While the issues of North Korea refugees and North Korea are very sensitive topics for discussion between native South Koreans and North Korean refugees, the act of discussing this film naturally led students to share their stories about being North Korean refugees. The groups' deconstruction of this film also provided an opportunity to learn how media stories are purposely crafted and represent only a certain part of reality.

The third model incorporated in-class reviews of different media sources related to the film *Crossing* -such as articles in women's magazines, film magazines and newsmagazines, blogs, internet fan cafes, official sites of the film, and the star ratings at the portal site. Critically analyzing these media sources informed students of the various purposes of the media and

offered the possibility of participation in the public discourse. Because North Korean refugees are not familiar with the various possible uses of the media, they found it helpful to see effective ways to utilize the media to accomplish various goals. In addition, this activity was a valuable way by which to teach the concept of target audience, helping the students to see how different target audiences influence the emphasis, format, and style of media content.

The fourth lesson model incorporated comparisons of different news sources about the candlelight demonstration. This helped students to understand the variety of views and tones of different news sources that are influenced by their own history and political affiliations. By closely examining what factors impacted the creation of the news stories and their influence on the public, students started to acknowledge the importance of critically examining media messages and locating a reliable news source that they could trust.

The fifth lesson model was the stereotyping activity. Students reflected upon their own stereotypes that they had toward others and how the prevalent images of certain groups of people are influenced by the media. This lesson encouraged students to think about the importance of conveying a balance of varied images of different groups of people so that these people could not be misunderstood and stereotyped by others.

The six lesson model involved watching and discussing documentaries about North Korean refugees in order to help students to better learn how the same group of people can be differently represented based on the purpose of the film and the knowledge and perspective of the producers. As two of the four documentaries discussed were created by teenage North Korean refugees, students also were inspired and learned how direct participation in producing the stories which they felt were important could make a difference. Ultimately, students who earlier had considered themselves as inadequate and incapable started to see that they themselves

are valuable and that their voices are important, and therefore they can have a meaningful impact on others and on society.

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This dissertation in fact was started eleven years ago when I first went to China in the summer of 1998 to teach Korea-Chinese students. There, my eyes were opened as I learned more about North Korea, the relationship between North and South Korea, and the condition of North Korean refugees. Ever since that trip to China, I wanted to connect my love of media studies to the issues regarding North Korea. After I heard about media literacy education right after graduation from college, I wanted to practice media literacy education with North Korean refugees. This dissertation is the first project that realized my dream. Dreaming about work related to North Korea, learning about media literacy, making the connection between the two, and finally writing my doctoral dissertation about media literacy for North Korean refugees were possible because of God's grace and faithfulness. He gave me the hope and the strength to pursue these dreams. I thank God for giving me what I do not deserve and leading my way.

This dissertation simply would not exist without the generous support from the school leaders, educators, and administrative members in the five institutions in my study that provide educational services for North Korean refugees. I wish I could acknowledge all of their names here, but I am so sad that I cannot do that because of the anonymous nature of this dissertation. But I still want to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to them for opening their doors to me and allowing me to teach media literacy to their students. I am also forever grateful from my heart to my students who participated in this research. Although I was their teacher, I learned so much from them. They were more than just informants for the dissertation projects: they became my friends who continuously inspire me to become a better teacher and researcher. I would like to dedicate this research to all of my students.

I also would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to my committee members for their guidance, encouragement and support. I can never express my appreciation enough to my advisor, Dr. Renee Hobbs, who inspired me by her fascination with the research world and helped me become a better researcher and media educator. It was certainly an honor to learn from and work with the leading authority in the field. Dr. Hobbs has been an amazing mentor and supporter all throughout my doctoral studies and the dissertation journey, offering invaluable wise and practical advice. In particular, she provided very helpful tips and emotional support while I was going through hardships during my fieldwork. I could have not successfully completed my fieldwork without her advice and guidance.

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NYU, for rightly guiding my first step in the journey of media literacy education. She made me fall in love with media literacy and laid a firm foundation, upon which I was able to build my expertise in the field of media literacy education. She was the one who encouraged me to go to Temple University for my doctoral studies. I really appreciate her guidance and advice, helping me to choose the right direction to be well trained in media literacy.

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Finally, I give my biggest love and thanks to my husband, Dawoomi Hong, who is the best gift from God for me. He provided me with unwavering love and support, laughter through the difficult times, and endless trust and belief even when I did not believe in myself. He always tried his best to create the optimum environment for me in which to focus on my studies. I was able to feel his love and care all the time. I know I can never thank him enough, but I want to acknowledge that my whole life would not be the same without Dawoomi. Dawoomi, thank you very much and I love you so much!

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INTRODUCTION

North Korean Refugees in South Korea

By the end of 2007, around 13,000 North Korean refugees had settled in South Korea. About 1500 to 2000 North Koreans emigrate to South Korea each year and about 13 to 15% of them range in age from nine to eighteen years (Ministry of Unification, 2008). When North Koreans come to South Korea, both adults and young people believe that there will be better opportunities for young North Koreans to be successful in this seemingly promising land as a result of their South Korean education. The hope is that this education will equip these youths with the necessary knowledge and grounding to procure better jobs in South Korea, unlike the experience of their parents who often work for minimum wage. In reality, contrary to their expectations, it does not take these North Korean emigrants long to realize that their dreams to be integrated into South Korea both socially and economically are more difficult to realize than they expected. While many North Korean refugees intend that South Korea will be their second home country due to their same historical and cultural backgrounds, they soon come to learn that North and South Koreans have held different beliefs, ideologies, political systems and cultures for more than half a century (Baek, Gil, Yoon, & Lee, 2006; Jung, 2007; M. Kim, 2005; H.-J. Oh, 2005).

Thus when North Koreans settle down in South Korea, they have to reject many of the beliefs that they have maintained for their entire lives in order to survive in a new society in which discrimination and hatred toward North Koreans prevail. Teenagers in particular experience more difficulties as they have to adjust to a totally different educational system, learn

new subjects, and fit themselves into a different peer culture (S. Choi, 2006). In fact, because of the high rate of school drop-outs among North Korean refugees, only 49.1 percent of middle school-aged teenagers and 6.6 percent of high school-aged teenagers attend schools where they will attain a diploma (Chun & Cho, 2006). Such challenges existing in the social context affect young North Korean refugees' personal circumstances by leaving them educationally, culturally, and socially unprepared to survive in a competitive South Korean society. Therefore, several educational institutions have been established exclusively for North Korean refugees to address their unique problems. Most of these institutions focus on two educational goals: preparing young North Korean to pass school diploma certificate examinations (which are similar to the General Educational Development/GED tests in the U.S) and helping them to adjust successfully to South Korean society (Chun & Cho, 2006; Y.-K. Jo & Kim, 2009; Jung, 2007)

There is the belief among South Korea educators that having a school diploma and getting into college can open many possibilities for North Korean refugees; therefore many alternative schools in South Korea tend to focus on preparation for the school diploma exams. Moreover, the number of students who pass the exam is often considered as an achievement of the school itself by funders and sponsors, and hence determines their funding based on the number of students who passed the exam and were admitted into college. However, at the same time, these institutions try to provide other extracurricular activities so that students can better learn about South Korean society and better deal with the emotional turmoil of adjusting to a new culture.

North Korean Refugees and Mass Media in South Korea

Some of these educational institutions' efforts to promote sound cultural adaptation include computer education, because most jobs in South Korea require some kind of computer knowledge; moreover the computer plays a crucial role in communication. Although students quickly acquire computer skills, like searching information from the web, using email, managing their own blog or being skilled at word processing, few of them actually use the computer beyond their leisure pursuits. In fact, for most North Korean students, the mediated environment in South Korea is truly a cultural shock. They have come from a media landscape that has not changed much from Lent's (1981) description of the North Korean press in the early 1980s, when he wrote that the goal of the North Korean press is "the idolization of Kim Il-Sung, the development of class consciousness and revolutionary enthusiasm and the propagation of the national ideology" (p. 147). Today the North Korean government still censors and regulates every media artifact in the country. Although an increasing number of North Koreans watch smuggled television dramas or movies from other countries, their media experiences are still very restricted. Therefore, for North Korean refugees the media environment in South Korea requires a significant adjustment, leading them to undertake an unhealthy consumption of media. In fact, some of them use the Internet, computer games, and television to such an excessive degree that they could be diagnosed as media addicts.

Seeing the limitations of solely teaching media technology, some educators who work with North Korean refugees want to teach *about* the media to North Korean refugees. I visited educators and school administrators from education institutions for young North Korean refugees during the winter of 2007 to discuss this dissertation project, which is teaching media literacy to North Korean refugees to encourage sound acculturation and cultural competence. I met

educators from these institutions individually, and as if they all had met and come to a consensus about this issue previously, they all stressed the importance of teaching *about* the media. These educators observed that because of young North Koreans' difficulties in fitting into South Korean society and in establishing intimate relationships with native South Koreans, young North Koreans often understand South Korea mainly through South Korean mass media, a practice that often leads to misunderstandings and misconceptions of South Korean society. For instance, North Korea refugees tend to view South Korean society as a very violent and dangerous country based on news reports. Also, according to these educators, young North Korean refugees often become disappointed, resentful or cynical about how North Korea or North Korean refugees are portrayed in the media. South Korean media also frequently depict the struggles and challenges that North Korean refugees experience in Korea so that South Koreans can be aware of these problems. However, many North Korean refugees feel uncomfortable about such depictions because they feel that they are made to look deficient. Teachers in the educational institutions for North Korean refugees observed that young North Korean refugees, because of their social isolation, spend much more time with media than do native South Koreans. Yet during such extensive use of the media, young North Korean refugees hardly find positive role models.

In fact, because their awareness of the importance of some form of intervention in young North Korean refugee's media usage, several institutions have tried to make North Korean refugees' media experiences more rich and productive through teaching them about the media. This often included inviting documentary filmmakers to teach about the documentary film process or asking college students who major in mass media or communication to teach about the mass media in general or how to make a film by using the digital video camera and editing

software. However, many of these programs have experienced difficulty in implementing curricula or programs that demand consistent and long-term effort because of the quick turn-over of their teachers as well as their heavy dependence on volunteers. Within these institutional contexts, education about media has not been incorporated into most of these schools.

Media Literacy Education

The importance of teaching *about* media, which is media literacy education, has been stressed worldwide because the mass media are becoming the central source of information as well as comprising the dominant leisure activity for most citizens. This media literacy education often includes teaching about the content, formation, and social context in which media are produced and consumed (Buckingham, Grahame, & Sefton-Green., 1995; Hobbs, 1998). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) also has emphasized media literacy education because of the importance of developing individuals' abilities for "critical reception, assessment and use of information in their professional and personal lives" and to equip them with necessary skills in knowledge societies (UNESCO, 1995, 2003). According to the media education training kit by UNESCO, *Media Education: A Kit for Teachers, Students, Parents and Professionals* (Frau-Meigs, 2006), media education "aims to develop a broad-based competence, not just in relation to print, but also in these other symbolic systems of images and sounds" (p. 20).

South Korea has not been isolated from this worldwide media literacy movement and the field of media literacy education is growing rapidly in this country. Not only have numerous scholars and educators studied and practiced media literacy in South Korea, but an increasing number of government institutions, educational organizations, non-profit organizations, and

media institutions also are expending money and effort to develop media education programs. Even though the benefits from such efforts encompass both K-12 and alternative educational institutions, most refugees and immigrant populations ironically are excluded from this media literacy movement because of their unusual position in separate institutional, social and personal contexts. Therefore their unique, isolated situation makes media literacy education even more necessary. Even though direct, interpersonal communication enables immigrants to recognize the cultural differences between their native and host cultures as well as to negotiate between them through real experience, mass communication sometimes plays a more vital part in the adaptation process, especially during their early period of migration. Immigrants and refugees often feel uncomfortable about developing interpersonal relationships when they do not have an adequate level of intercultural communication competency. This discomfort tends to lead them to choose less stressed ways of learning about a culture that take the form of mass media usage (Y. Y. Kim, 1977, 1991). Mass communication allows for safer communication activities by providing indirect interaction with socio-cultural environments, and therefore expands "… the immigrant's experiences in the host society beyond the immediate environment" by providing diverse aspects of the host culture (Y. Y. Kim, 1991, p.386).

Media Literacy Education for North Korean Refugees

Since the mass media play a crucial role in the lives of young immigrants and refugees, this dissertation aims to explore the effective ways of practicing media literacy education for immigrants/refugees to strengthen their cultural competence and to promote their successful adaptation to a host culture, with a focus on North Korean refugees in South Korea. The reason that I set these educational goals is because cultural competence and sound adaptation are two of

the most prominent issues regarding the media experiences of young immigrants and refugees. Because young people construct their identities from cultural experiences, young immigrants/refugees often go through a period of confusion as they have to negotiate their identity with both their culture of origin and the foreign culture. Research shows that media consumption is one way to utilize cultural experiences for identity construction (Block & Buckingham, 2007). Often in the host society, immigrants and refugees are portrayed as deficient in the mass media, which influences their competence in the host culture. Some educators in South Korea recognize this dynamic and see the mass media as negatively influencing young people in terms of development of cultural competence and/or sound adjustment. This negative impact may be due, on the one hand, to the immigrants' excessive use of mass media resulting from their social isolation or, on the other hand, to the discouragement of positive identity construction resulting from the negative portrayals of their own cultural group. Therefore, when I suggested the possibility of promoting young North Korean refugees' cultural competence and sound adaptation through media literacy education during the meeting in January 2008, educators welcomed my ideas and allowed me teach media literacy to their students during the summer of 2008.

This dissertation project started from a large research question: Can media literacy education be useful in promoting sound adaptation and cultural competence among North Korean refugees in their host society, South Korea? For a more thorough examination of young North Korean refugee's mediated environment and effective teaching methods, I also set up more specific research questions that would guide my research: (1) What topics and themes should be covered in the media education settings for North Korean refugees? What do they need to learn about? (2) How does the cultural context of North Korean youth influence their media

experiences, as well as their participation in media literacy education? (3) What factors need to be considered when designing media education programs for North Korean refugees? (4) What are the best instructional practices of media literacy education for this population? (5) What are the influences of media literacy education on television and Internet usage among North Korean refugees? and 6) How do young North Korean refugees respond to media literacy education? An examination of these six vital questions will lay a solid foundation from which to investigate the core research question for the proposed dissertation: What are most the effective ways that media literacy education can intervene in North Korean refugees' adaptation to South Korean society and enhance their cultural competence?

In order to lay such a foundation to answer these questions, the literature review in Chapter Two examines three areas: (1) the sociocultural contexts and experiences of young North Korean refugees, (2) the development of cultural competence in a foreign environment, and (3) the history, theories, and instructional practices of media literacy education. The research methodology is elaborated in detail in Chapter Three. This dissertation is conducted as a form of participatory action research, which allows educators to analyze the effectiveness and qualities of the learning process as well as of the materials used during the teaching process itself (McLean, 1995; McNiff, Lomaz, & Whitehead, 2003; Schmuck, 1997). As part of the study, I myself taught media literacy to North Korean teenagers in an alternative education setting during the summer of 2008 and conducted follow up interviews in January of 2009.

Chapter Four describes the socio-cultural contexts of South Korea during the summer of 2008, the institutional contexts of each organization, and the process of obtaining permission to teach media literacy in these institutions. Chapter Four specifically elaborates upon how the issue of access is a complicated dance between the researcher and the educator in the institution.

As a still emerging field, media literacy education is often practiced not by school teachers, but by scholars who conduct research in media literacy. Although an increasing number of professional training programs for teachers along with a widespread concern about and interest in young people's media experiences motivated many school teachers to adopt media literacy into their existing curriculum, media literacy still is often practiced by outsiders who do not have an institutional affiliation with the school. Therefore, many media educators have to knock on the doors of educational institutions and get their administrators' permission in order to gain access. Because of the different educational goals, understandings of young people's media experiences, and schools' educational priorities, media educators often experience difficulties in gaining entrance into these institutions. Nonetheless, previous research in media literacy has not focused on this issue of access to such institutions.

Because the issue of access has not received scholarly attention in the field of media literacy, this dissertation describes the process of procuring access to five different institutions and the researcher's characteristics that can be helpful in the process. In order to get my foot in the doors of the five distinctive educational institutions that varied in terms of educators' attitudes and expectations as well as learning environments, I tried to flexibly respond to their different understandings about and expectations toward media literacy education in order to gain admission into these institutions. Because I was an outsider to them, it was important for me to respect their educational priorities and help my media literacy classes to better achieve their goals. Therefore, this chapter shows other researchers and educators not only the complicated nature of this process of gaining access, but also the importance of understanding the existing educational goals and needs of the schools and of respecting their objectives. It is ideal if media literacy education can ultimately help to achieve these goals.

Chapters Four and Five demonstrate how media educators can pluck a teachable moment from current events or media resources that come one's way, and use it as an educational tool. Chapter Four describes the social context of South Korea during the summer of 2008. Because students' mediated experiences are not isolated from what they experienced in that particular time and place, the events that took place in South Korea during the summer of 2008 influenced not only the students' mediated experiences but also what was covered in the classes, as these contextual aspects created "teachable moments" in my media literacy classes. In Chapter Four, I present my observations of current affairs in South Korea during that time, which were incorporated into the media literacy lesson as described in Chapter Five. Although this dissertation is situation-specific – situated in a particular location and time period – my journey from observing what was going on in the surrounding society, to capturing the educational needs of students through continuous reflection of my teaching practices and interactions with students, to finally integrating these factors into media literacy education can give other media literacy educators valuable ideas about how to innovatively use current affairs to create lessons in their media literacy classes.

Chapter Five presents the six selected lesson plans and the themes that overarched these media literacy classes in the summer of 2008: 1.) media environment, 2) issues of representation and stereotyping, and 3) current affairs. These three major themes were taught via six different lessons: 1.) media mapping for students to be aware of their media environment and reflect upon their media usage; 2) application of the film *Crossing*, the fictional film about one North Korean family, to encourage students to share their personal stories; 3) additional usage of *Crossing* to examine distinctive framing, tones, views, style, and formatting of different media content, including news sources and internet sites; 4) examination of varied news sources to analyze how

the candlelight demonstration was reported by different news agencies; 5) stereotyping activity that helps students to become aware of their own stereotypes and the prevalent stereotypes in the society; and 6) the employment of documentaries about North Korean refugees to discuss media representation influenced by the documentaries' producers, motives, and objectives, and the importance of participating in the process of media content production for civic action.

The first lesson mode, which included drawing and talking about the mapping of their media experiences, helped students to reflect upon their own media usage and gave me better knowledge and insights about students' media experiences. This exercise also allowed me to set the tone of the class as a comfortable venue in which students can honestly share their stories; as a result, the students were able to gain confidence in sharing their thoughts and experiences. The second lesson model, which used a fictional film about people with whom students could identify, created an atmosphere in which they were able to talk freely about issues of North Korea and North Korean refugees. Most North Korean refugees usually try to hide their identities because of the prevalent hatred toward North Korea and prejudice toward North Korea. Therefore, even though I was their teacher, I was careful not to overtly address certain issues about North Korea and North Korean refugees in class. However, discussing this film naturally led students to share their stories about being North Korean refugees. The groups' deconstruction of this film also provided an opportunity to learn how media stories are purposely crafted and represent only a certain part of reality.

The third model, which incorporated in-class reviews of different media sources related to the film *Crossing* – such as articles in women's magazines, film magazines and newsmagazines, blogs, internet fan cafés, official sites of the film, and the star ratings at the portal site – informed students of the various purposes of the media and offered the possibility of

participation in the public discourse. Because North Korean refugees are not familiar with the various possible uses of the media, they found it helpful to see effective ways to utilize the media to accomplish various goals. In addition, this activity was a valuable way by which to teach the concept of target audience, helping the students to see how different target audiences influence the emphasis, format, and style of media content.

The fourth lesson model, in which students had opportunities to compare different news sources about the candlelight demonstration, helped students to understand the variety of views and tones of different news sources that are influenced by their own history and political affiliations. By closely examining what factors influence the creation of the news stories and their influence on the public, students started to acknowledge the importance of critically examining media messages and locating a good news sources that they could trust.

In the fifth lesson model, which was the stereotype activity, students reflected upon their own stereotypes that they had toward others and how the prevalent images of certain groups of people are influenced by the media. This lesson encouraged students to think about the importance of conveying a balance of varied images of different groups of people so that these people could not be misunderstood and stereotyped by others. This activity naturally led to the sixth lesson model, in which students watched and discussed documentaries about North Korean refugees. These films were helpful in learning about how the same group of people can be differently represented based on the purpose of the film and the knowledge and perspective of the producers. As two of the four documentaries discussed were created by teenage North Korean refugees, students also were inspired and learned how participation in producing the stories which they feel are important can make a difference. Ultimately, students who used to consider themselves as inadequate and incapable started to see that they are valuable and that

their voices are important, and therefore they can have a meaningful impact on others and on society.

Furthermore, Chapter Five shows how media educators first should understand students' awareness of the media and media analysis, in order to effectively address their pupils' educational needs and interests. Because media use is closely integrated into students' lives, it is important to start from what students already know. Therefore an emergent curriculum approach – which incorporates what emerges in the classroom into the learning – can be a helpful tool to accomplish these goals. In this dissertation, I utilized the early stages of my teaching to find out what emerged from students in and out of the classroom, by continuously reflecting upon my own teaching, the students' learning, their interactions among themselves, and the communication between the students and myself. I continually reflected upon these inputs until I finished teaching in the summer of 2008 and then responded to what I learned from my teaching. In particular, interactions with students enhanced my understanding and insights about their media experiences, helping me to better capture what to teach and how to teach. Therefore, I used various channels to communicate with students and to better learn their experiences, views, and needs: firstly I created a comfortable environment so that students could comfortably express their thoughts; secondly I used the in-class journal so that students could share their thoughts and read my thorough comments responding to their writing; and thirdly I hung out with students before and after class so that I could observe their media usage and casually communicate with them. This informal communication in fact provided me with several opportunities to learn about students' media experiences. This chapter depicts how my observations and learning about my students' media experiences and educational needs were applied to my teaching practices.

Chapter Five also shows the importance of creating a safe environment in which students feel comfortable in expressing themselves freely and thus become confident from this process of sharing their own culture, background and experiences. Becoming confident with sharing who they are may ultimately lead students to be proud of themselves, including what they have experienced in the past, their unique cultural and ethnic characteristics, and their individual attributes. This study indeed demonstrated that such confidence among students, coupled with their awareness of the lack of diversity in media representations of their cultural and ethnic group, were able to lead students to see the importance of sharing their stories with members of the larger society.

This dissertation hence makes a significant contribution to the field of media literacy education by expanding the existing findings and beliefs in this discipline. These contributions include the study's emphasis on: 1) motivating students and educators about media literacy, 2) demonstrating the complicated nature and difficulties when the researcher tries to access educational affiliations for the purpose of teaching media literacy, and 3) using cultural competence to address the unique educational needs for minority students in media literacy education, and 4) carrying out media literacy education among North Korean refugees, a group which no other research study in the field has examined before.

More specifically, the first contribution of this study places much value on getting the participants 'on board.' While we media educators need to convey the importance of media literacy education as a standalone subject, it is also imperative to show the leaders in the schools, the educators, as well as the students how their existing needs and goals can be achieved through media literacy education. This dissertation illustrates how I was able to make connections to their

existing educational objectives and demands while accomplishing my own goals, which were to enhance North Korean refugees' cultural competency.

Secondly, this research demonstrates the complicated nature of initiating a partnership for media literacy education, a process which is often skipped over in most studies on media literacy education. Media literacy education in the field is often initiated by researchers and media educators who do not have any institutional affiliations with the educational institution. This relationship may be able to be initiated by an existing partnership between the university and the school. Or, the school could contact the media educator or scholar first to help them start the media literacy program. Yet what frequently occurs is that researchers and educators have to knock on the door of the school to obtain consent themselves. This process can be very complicated and difficult, and thus often discourages researchers and media educators from pursuing media literacy work. Moreover, when they do go to look for any guidance from case studies in the literature that might describe how others went through this process, they cannot locate any relevant studies. This project, by specifically describing how I was able to gain access to five different institutions and obtain permission to teach media literacy there, heaves out the issue of access and deconstructs it, providing much needed information in an area of research that previously had not received much attention from scholars and educators in media literacy education.

Thirdly, this study uses the concept of "cultural competency" to capture the unique educational and cultural needs of minority students. There are a handful of existing studies in media literacy education that were conducted with students in marginalized groups, such as Latinas (Vargas, 2006), immigrants and refugees in European countries (Block & Buckingham, 2007; De Block, Buckingham, & Banaji, 2005), and Muslim women (Bing-Canar & Zerkel,

1998; Bullock & Jafri, 2000). However, the specific needs of these students were never collectively framed. Therefore, in this dissertation, I suggest the development of students' cultural competency to collectively address such distinct educational goals. For that purpose, this study borrows concepts and theories from other fields to provide a theoretical framework of cultural competency, because the field of communication has focused primarily on "communication" competency rather than on holistically addressing the concept of cultural competency.

Lastly, this study is the first one, both in Korean and English, that examines media literacy education for North Korean refugees. As participatory action research that aims to evoke differences and improvement, this research already has been translated into action; that is, my attention to media literacy for North Korean refugees has inspired actual implementation beyond my own direct control. When I was in Korea for my field work with North Korean refugees during the summer of 2008, I had several opportunities to meet with media literacy scholars and educators in Korea. When I shared my dissertation project, they were amazed to learn about the potential educational effects of media literacy instruction and asked if this framework could be used for other marginalized, minority groups of students in South Korea. As a result, Sogang University, which is the only university in Korea that has a Master's Degree program in media literacy, will offer a graduate-level class in the fall of 2010 about media literacy for underrepresented groups. In addition, the Korean Communications Commission will soon publish a book about media literacy education for students from multicultural families in which at least one of the parents is not a native South Korean. I contributed a chapter to this book. Finally, The Korean Press Foundation, which has played a major role in the development of media literacy in South Korea, launched a research project to explore how to use media literacy

for minority students. Dongwoo Lee, who initiated the research project in the Korean Press Foundation, informed me that he got the idea for this project from learning about my dissertation topic.

As shown by these examples, my participatory action research already has shown its 'snowballing' ability to inspire and be translated into other actions. Although I cannot claim to take all the credit for inspiring these other media literacy endeavors, my sharing of this dissertation project certainly has provided several other educators with ideas and insights regarding the use of media literacy for marginalized groups of students. In South Korea, the number of young North Korean refugees and children from multicultural families, meaning that at least one of their parents is not a native South Korean, increases every year; as a result, many activists and educators are advocating for more educational supports for these students since they are not well supported by the current public educational system (K.-S. Oh, 2007). Therefore, despite leaving several issues for future research and more research questions than answers, this study's ability to weave together theories in media literacy and cultural competency, along with the actions described within this dissertation, have inspired projects by several scholars and practitioners of media literacy education in South Korea, thereby having the significance of serving as a pilot study for research of its kind.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Since this research focuses on how media literacy education can enhance cultural competency and sound adjustment among North Korean refugees, the literature review starts with the distinctive socio-cultural background of North Korean refugees. Then, the concept of cultural competency is explained by means of the theoretical frameworks of communication patterning and cultural competency among immigrants and refugees. Next, different views and theories in media literacy education are introduced, followed by an overview of previous media literacy research that examines students in various minority groups and their exposure to diverse instructional practices in media literacy education. Lastly, I review the theories upon which my lesson models and direction of the education are based. These theoretical frameworks include inquiry-based learning, emergent curriculum, and the teachable moment.

The Sociocultural Contexts and Experiences of Young North Korean Refugees

Why North Koreans Emigrate to South Korea

Since North and South Korea have the same historical and cultural backgrounds, some might think that these two should have many commonalities. However, North and South Korea have carried different beliefs, ideologies, as well as political and economic systems and cultures for more than half a century, creating large discrepancies between the two countries. During this time of separation, South Korea has achieved more economic success than has North Korea. As the number of North Korean refugees has increased each year, many South Koreans often assume that North Korean refugees come to South Korea because of the poor economic

conditions in North Korea. Yet there are more than economic factors that motivate North Korean refugees to risk their lives to leave their home country.

In the article "Causalities of North Korea Defectors and International Issues," Chung (2006) categorized the reasons for escape by North Korean refugees into four categories. First, these refugees escape from North Korea for political reasons. Kim Il-Sung, the first leader of North Korea after Japanese Imperialism ended in 1945, developed the Juche ideology, a very unique socialism that was influenced by Marxism-Leninism and Confucianism. Juche ideology, which strongly united the North Korean people, had become the solid ideological foundation of this country. However, after the death of Kim Il-Sung in 1994, increasing numbers of people questioned and distrusted North Korea's ideological, political and social systems. Such dissatisfaction encouraged many North Koreans to leave their homeland.

The second reason for this exodus is tied to economic problems. Due to many natural disasters, such as the deluge in 1995-1996 and a long drought in 1997, numerous people have lost their means of livelihood. Food distribution by the government has not been extensive enough for people to survive, and the salaries that people have obtained from their work have not been sufficient to satisfy their basic needs. The worse the food situation has become, the more people's health conditions have deteriorated. People have not been able to obtain medicine for diseases that in many other countries are not even dangerous, such as tuberculosis; therefore some people have crossed the borders of North Korea to procure medicine and food for themselves or for their family members.

The third motivating factor for North Koreans to escape their home country has been a socio-cultural issue. Increasingly, North Koreans are being exposed to knowledge from other socio-cultural systems, and such knowledge challenges their confidence and trust in what they

view and experience about North Korea. Recently, highly educated people with professional careers also have emigrated from North Korea due to their pursuit of other socio-cultural and political systems through which they can experience and achieve what they believe.

Lastly, the fourth reason for the emigration has been North Koreans' increasing opportunities to experience other cultures. North Korea has been sending workers and students to other countries in order to earn more money or to learn from these countries. However, after experiencing different parts of the world, many of their citizens decide to emigrate to South Korea. In addition, geographic factors play an important role since North Koreans can reach China by simply crossing a river. Moreover, many Korean-Chinese reside near the border between North Korea and China. Because the Chinese government sends North Korean refugees back to North Korea, these refugees leave China to go to Mongolia, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia or Myanmar (Burma), and then come to South Korea from these countries.

These four factors often are at work simultaneously as they impact why North Koreans leave their country of origin. However, most South Koreans do not have a clear understanding of the reasons why these North Korean refugees have come to South Korea and instead make conjectures that they escaped their country because they were hungry or did not have certain political rights (Chung, 2006; K.-N. Kim, 2006).

The Lives of Young North Korean Refugees in South Korea

The North Korean refugees in South Korea experience many layers of difficulties. When North Koreans settle down in South Korea and face survival in a new society, many end up rejecting much of the beliefs that they have sustained them for their entire lives. Many South Koreans tend to view North Korea as a poor and underdeveloped country where people are

brainwashed into communism. Such negative views held by South Koreans appear to have created discrimination and hatred toward the North Korean immigrants. North Korean teenagers in particular experience more difficulties as many of them have to go through this process without family support. While some North Korean youth come to South Korea with their family members, many young North Koreans come to South Korea by themselves, often because they have crossed the border between North Korea and China on their own or they have become separated from their parents during the long journey from North to South Korea (Shin, 2008; Yi, Cho, Kim, & Chin, 2007).

Even though North Korea adjoins South Korea, North Koreans hardly come to South Korea directly because the border between North and South Korea is very tightly guarded. Therefore, most of them detour around other countries, like China, Laos, Myanmar and Thailand. As they cross these countries, they often part from their family members in order to hide or survive efficiently. Many North Koreans also get imprisoned in these countries as most governments do not consider them as refugees, but rather as illegal aliens. Because of their unstable status, many North Koreans risk their lives when escaping North Korea, and, in fact, many people die before they could reach South Korea. Therefore, many North Korean youth come to South Korea without parents. Even the teenagers who come with guardians often feel insecure and are not supported by their other family members, because their parents are overwhelmed in the new society and have difficulties in taking care of their children (M.-S. Choi, Choi, & Kang, 2006; Jeon, 2005).

During their journey to South Korea, what these immigrants lose is not only their beloved social and familial supports, but also their opportunities to learn. While teenagers both in North and South Korea are receiving formal and informal education designed for their own age cohort,

these young refugees hardly get a chance to receive any form of education during their exodus until they come to South Korea, as their primary purpose is to arrive and survive in South Korea safely. During their escape, they live like nomads and work at whatever comes their way so that they can earn money. Because of the fact that they have not received any education for several years and of the differences existing between the educational systems in North and South Korea, most North Korean teenagers have difficulties in adjusting to the public educational system in South Korea. Some of these young North Korean refugees take shorter periods of time in coming to South Korea, but these students still go through difficulties in public schools as they have to adjust to a totally different educational system, learn new subjects, and fit themselves into a dramatically different peer culture. They also have a hard time in understanding what their South Korean peers are talking about because the two youth cultures are so distinct. More specifically, young North Koreans do not have much knowledge about South Korean teenagers' interests, such as computer games, celebrities, and famous television programs. Moreover, young South Koreans' widely-used slang is another challenge (M.-S. Choi, Choi, & Kang, 2006; S. Choi, 2006; Jeon, 2000; H. Lee, 2006). In fact, because of the high rate of school drop-out among North Korean refugees, only half of middle school-aged teenagers and a much lower 6.6 percent of high school-aged teenagers attend schools where they will attain a diploma (Chun & Cho, 2006). Such challenges existing in the social context affect young North Korean refugees' personal circumstances by leaving them educationally, culturally, and socially unprepared to survive in a competitive South Korean society (Sang-Soo Im, Jung, & Seo, 2008; Jung, 2007; Yoon, 2003).

To accommodate their special educational needs and to address the unique challenges that they face, a number of educational institutions have been established by non-profit

organizations, religious organizations and government affiliated institutions exclusively for North Korean refugees. Most of these institutions focus on two educational goals: (1) preparing young North Koreans to pass the school diploma certificate examinations and (2) helping them to adjust successfully to South Korean society. While these institutions focus on these refugees' personal issues of adjustment and survival, these North Koreans have relatively few opportunities to communicate with native South Koreans (M.-S. Choi et al., 2006; Gil, Gong, & Moon, 2003; Sang-Soo Im et al., 2008; J.-K. Jeong, Jeong, & Yang, 2006).

This section indicates that North Korean refugees experience many difficulties when they come to South Korea: they suffer from discrimination, hatred and bias stemming from beliefs that they have been brainwashed into accepting communism. Although young North Korean refugees are expected to exhibit more flexibility and better adjustment than their adult counterparts because they are "young," their adaptation process in reality is not easier than that of their parents; in addition to what grown-up North Korean refugees experience, many young North Korean refugees tend to have weak support systems since some do not live with their parents or if they do, their parents are too busy to take care of them (H. Lee, 2006). They also have to adjust to a new school academic system after not receiving any education – formal or informal – for several years. Moreover, they have trouble fitting into the South Korean peer culture. Because of these many layers of difficulties, these young people start to lose confidence and cower before others, leading them to hide their identities (Sang-Soo Im et al., 2008; J. Lee, 2006).

Refugees Hiding Their North Korean Identity

When North Koreans first arrive in South Korea, they all have to stay in Hanawon, the educational institute that helps North Korean refugees to learn not only about South Korean society, but also about possible educational and vocational opportunities. After staying in Hanawon for three months, the government connects them with public welfare facilities to better facilitate their sound adjustment. These North Koreans meet experts in Hanawon and other welfare facilitators who have much knowledge of North Korean refugees and understand their unique situation. However, as North Korean refugees expand their radii of life and meet native South Koreans, many sense inhospitality and prejudice emanating from the host society members, many of whom still view North Koreans in terms of such longstanding stereotypical images of them as poor, brainwashed, and uneducated (J.-A. Jo, Im, & Jeong, 2006; Y.-M. Kim, 2005).

When North Korean refugees are with South Koreans, they realize that they are being treated as a "special group" of people. This categorization of North Korean refugees has been institutionally carried out with their national identification number. Every South Korean citizen has a unique identification number that is used for every action in South Korea, such as opening a bank account; buying, selling, or renting real estate; getting a driver's license; or even joining a website. Until 2007, every North Korean received an identification number that started with the number "25." Because this number is required to be included on their resumes, including for both part-time and full-time jobs, North Korean refugees have argued that they have been discriminated against during the screening stage by employers who have negative perceptions toward North Koreans. They even have been afraid of whether people whom they meet online, such as on social networking, online community or game sites, would find out that their identity is a North Korean refugee, because according to the Information-Communication Law in South

Korea, every website that has more than a daily average of 100,000 visitors must collect national identification numbers when people join the website. Although this number is not shown to other users of the website, North Korean refugees are in fear that other native South Koreans who are technology savvy might be able to see their national identification number and learn that they are a North Korean refugee. In addition, because of the national identification number that starts with "25" that is written in the passport, these North Korean refugees – even after attaining South Korean passports – have difficulties in travelling to China because of their identification numbers. After many petitions and media reports about the absurd nature of North Korean refugees' national identification number, a new law was instituted in February, 2007 so that North Korean refugees finally could obtain an identification number by which other people cannot determine whether they are originally from North Korea. From 2009, those who have a number starting with "25" can change this identification number (B.-N. Kim, 2008; S.-Y. Kim, 2009; Shin, 2008).

Even though North Korean refugees now are able to have an ID card that does not indicate that they are from North Korea, their physical appearance often tells others where they are from, as the journey of these North Korean refugees to South Korea is tied in with other hardships as well. When North Koreans come to South Korea, they cannot simply cross the border between North and South Korea; rather they first have to go to China, the country adjacent to North Korea, where they are wanted by the Chinese police. Because Chinese police put North Koreans in prison or send them back to their homeland, these North Koreans look for opportunities to go to other countries that exhibit less hostility, such as Mongolia, Myanmar, Thailand, or Vietnam. In these countries, they obtain help from the South Korean Embassy and NGOs to cross over to South Korea. This process often takes North Koreans from two months to

ten years to reach South Korea from the time that they leave their homeland. Because their nutritional conditions are poor during this time, North Korean refugees, especially those who have experienced these hardships during a growth period, are often smaller than native South Koreans. Thus, many of these refugees lose confidence in their physical appearance and feel that the majority of South Koreans look at them scornfully. Due to such factors, many North Korean refugees avoid socializing with native South Koreans or often hide their North Korean identity (M.-S. Choi et al., 2006; Jeon, 2005).

As young North Korean refugees spend more time with other North Korean refugees and less with South Koreans, they experience even more situations in which they consider themselves as outsiders or aliens in South Korea, even though they all receive South Korean citizenship. Since they find it difficult to transform their accents, many pretend that they are from the South Korean countryside or from China (M.-S. Choi et al., 2006; J.-A. Jo et al., 2006). In fact, most North Korean refugees experience hardships in communicating with native South Koreans because of their different communication style and use of vocabulary. Moreover, unlike in North Korea where neighbors tend to socialize together as a community, North Korean refugees must live in the isolating apartment culture of South Korea, another factor which makes communicating among neighbors even more challenging. Most of them view South Koreans as individualists who are very exclusive. Therefore, North Koreans' social intercourse is limited to those who are directly related to themselves or to those who want to support them, such as government officials, social workers, NGO people, religious people, educators and volunteers. They often view such treatment as insinuating the message that that “are inferior to native South Koreans," making them feel even more fretful, anxious, and hopeless (J.-M. Chae & Yhi, 2004; Jeon, 2000; J.-A. Jo et al., 2006).

The Cross-Cultural Adaptation Process

What North Korean refugees experience in South Korea can be seen as part of the cross-cultural adaptation process, the process in which immigrants/refugees become familiar with various cultural aspects in their host country and finally become effectively functional in their daily activities. The term "cross-cultural adaptation" implies "the complex process through which an individual acquires an increasing level of 'fitness' or 'compatibility' in the new cultural environment" (Y. Y. Kim & Gudykunst, 1988, p. 9). Yoshikawa (1988) categorized the process of cross-cultural adaptation into five stages: contact, disintegration, reintegration, autonomy, and double-swing.

According to Yoshikawa (1988), when immigrants and refugees first come to their new living environments, which is during the contact stage, they get either hopeful with high expectations or intimidated by the unfamiliarity of the new situation. Whether they were excited or threatened during this contact stage, they then become disintegrated due to their different views, values and attitudes, leading them to have culture shock. After this disintegration stage, immigrants and refugees try to discover how to handle these challenges during the reintegration stage. Some common characteristics that are observed during the reintegration stage are generalization of the host culture and self-examination of their identity between the two cultures. During the autonomy stage, individuals are able to view and experience their host culture more positively, but the conflicts in identity crisis sometimes get compromised for some individuals. During the double-swing stage, individuals can "accept and draw nourishment from both cultural similarities and differences" and "explore the paradox of human diversity and unity" (Yoshikawa, 1988, p. 142). Yoshikawa also points out that these stages are not always linear and sometimes

move back and forth as individuals go through depression, home sickness, identity crisis, or other unexpected difficulties.

In the cross-cultural adaptation process, the double-swing stage is seen as the most optimal one, because individuals can benefit from both cultures: the culture in which they were born and the culture to which they now are exposed in the host culture. This stage shows that acculturation does not necessarily require the denial of their culture of origin. However, previous research shows that young minority group members who strongly hold onto their native cultural heritage are often depreciated and isolated from the dominant culture. Therefore, young immigrants often find themselves under pressure to deny or at least ignore their native culture and to accept norms and practices in the host cultures, so that they can feel that they belong to the host society (Y. Y. Kim, 1977; Lee & Chen, 2000; Maloof, Rubin, & Miller, 2006).

Of course, it is not only young immigrants and refugees who have to strive to fit into the host society. Immigrants and refugees in general endeavor to be familiar with various cultural aspects of their host country so that they can obtain a certain degree of fitness or compatibility in the new cultural environment and become effectively functional in their daily activities (Gunykunst & Kim, 1997; Y. Y. Kim, 1977, 1996). In this stage, immigrants/refugees who pursue interpersonal communication opportunities acquire a high degree of acculturation and intercultural communication competence by experiencing more direct and relevant information and practices (Gundykunst & Hammer, 1988; Gunykunst & Kim, 1997; Y. Y. Kim, 1996). Direct, interpersonal communication enables immigrants to recognize the cultural differences between their native cultures and host culture, as well as to negotiate between the two through real, direct experience. However, immigrants and refugees often feel uncomfortable about developing interpersonal relationships until they gain an adequate level of intercultural

communication competency. Therefore, mediated communication sometimes plays a more vital part in the adaptation process than do more direct means of interaction, until individuals develop their cultural competency (Y. Y. Kim, 1977, 1991).

In conclusion, as noted by the five stages of the cross-cultural adaptation process of immigrants and refugees (Yoshikawa, 1988), it is important to understand that the adjustment to the host society is not a linear process that automatically happens after a certain period of time; rather it is a very complicated experience with unexpected variables. While there are several decisive factors that impact this cross-cultural adaptation process, media often play very important roles as they provide comfortable channels for students by which to experience indirectly the host society. Since their adjustment to the new society is heavily associated with their development of cultural competency, the next section discusses the theoretical framework of this process.

Cultural Competency

Since the rise of cultural diversity and global interaction in many countries during the 1930s and 1940s, the notion of cultural competence that describes the ability to interact with people from different cultural origins or to function in foreign culture, has been emphasized in various disciplines. In non-communication disciplines – like education, social work, nursing, counseling or business – cultural competence has begun to be a crucial topic, as scholars in these fields reflect upon the limitations of their training in the monocultural tradition in terms of dealing with their clients and students from various cultural backgrounds (Cattani, 2002; Chang, 2004; Colvin-Burgue, Davis-Maye, & Zugazaga, 2007; Cross, Bazron, Dennis, & Issacs, 1989; Cushner & Brennan, 2007; Leigh, 1997; Quezada & Alfaro, 2007; Saldana, 2001; Sue, 1998;

Taylor, 1994; Vonk, 2001). These disciplines focus not only on developing awareness and appreciation of other cultural groups, but also on skills in order to effectively work within their pluralistic academic environments.

While "cultural competency" has become a commonly used term in various other non-communication fields, it is hard to find theoretical discussions or research regarding "cultural competence" in the communication discipline. "Competence" or "effectiveness" has been measured by intercultural communication scholars when they examine the outcomes of intercultural interaction (Koester, Wiseman, & Sanders, 1993, p. 5). These results have been conceptualized as "intercultural communication competence" or "interpersonal communication competence." Other terms that have been used to identify similar concepts include "cross-cultural adjustment, cross-cultural adaptation, cross-cultural success, cross-cultural effectiveness, cross-cultural failure, personal adjustment, personal success, or personal failure" (Koester et al., 1993, p.5).

In communication discipline, two vital aspects of the concept "competence" are "effectiveness" and "appropriateness." Effectiveness refers to "a judgment about the ability of the interactants in the intercultural exchange to achieve their goals" while appropriateness implies being "proper and suitable in a given situation within a particular culture" (Koester et al., 1993, p.6). "Ability (knowledge), skill (performance), and clarity (understanding)" are also regarded as important elements of cultural competence (Koester et al., 1993, p.6). However, rather than holistically examining these different variables, studies in cultural/intercultural and communication competence have been focusing on interpersonal communication ability, emphasizing individuals' capability to decode and encode information based on the host culture's communication practices (Y. Y. Kim, 1988; Lee & Chen, 2000).

This emphasis on interpersonal communication has been criticized for ignoring "the cultural constraints of their findings" (Martin, 1993, p. 16; see also Koester et al., 1993). Spitzberg (1989) also suggests an examination of other variables, such as motivation, knowledge, skills, and context, to predict cultural competency. Such arguments come from the different orientations of these scholars. Martin's (1993) literature review on intercultural communication competence shows that a clear distinction has been observed when approaching the issue between scholars in interpersonal versus intercultural communication in the 1970s and 1980s.

Scholars have held different positions about whether studies in intercultural communication competence can be "culture general" or "culture specific" (Koester et al., 1993, p.12). Some scholars view intercultural competence as traits which can be generalized and applied across the culture, while other scholars do not use their findings to generalize intercultural competence and instead argue that competence is situation specific. For instance, scholars like Martin (1993) and Witteborn (2003) point out the difficulties and inappropriateness of applying studies on interpersonal communication competence that are conducted in western countries to other cultural backgrounds. Therefore, to investigate the issue, Witteborn (2003) uses an "emic approach," which is "culture-specific and that focuses on the meanings that communicative concepts have for members of specific speech communities…the assumption of emic research…is that people have their own theories about cultural competence, knowledge, and communication that can and should be used to construct an account of communicative competence" (pp. 187-188).

There are also different methodological approaches in the studies in intercultural communication competency. Historically, studies on intercultural communication competence have relied on a positivistic research paradigm, as indicated by Martin (1993) and Spitzberg

(1989). However, scholars, like Collier (1989) and Witteborn (2003) view that an adaptation of the ethnographic method for building representational and cultural validity should precede in order to generalize findings from intercultural communication competence. The review of previous research on intercultural communication competence shows that individuals' competency has not been assessed within natural settings, but rather researchers have given students questionnaires to fill out based on an imaginary situation (Witteborn, 2003).

As indicated by several scholars, studies in cultural and communication competency in the field of intercultural communication have focused on overt communication behaviors. Because communication competencies and cultural competencies often have been used to predict the success of cross-cultural adaptation (Koester et al., 1993) and communication ability is one of the key factors in learning the attitudes, worldviews and culture of the host society (Fogel, 1993; Y. Y. Kim, 1977, 1991; Lee & Chen, 2000), it makes sense for these scholars to emphasize interpersonal communication skills. In fact, studies show that immigrants/refugees who pursue interpersonal communication opportunities acquire a high degree of acculturation and intercultural communication competence by providing more direct and relevant information and experiences. Interpersonal communication thus enables immigrants not only to recognize the cultural differences between their native and host cultures, but also to negotiate between them through real experiences. Nonetheless, mass communication sometimes plays a more crucial part in the adaptation process, especially during the early period of migration. Immigrants and refugees often feel uncomfortable in developing interpersonal relationships when they do not have an adequate level of intercultural communication competency. This leads them to choose a less stressed way of learning about culture through the mass media (Y. Y. Kim, 1977, 1991). Mass communication therefore "expand(s)… the immigrant's experiences in the host society

beyond the immediate environment" by providing diverse aspects of host culture through indirect interaction with socio-cultural environments. (Y. Y. Kim, 1991, p.386).

Based on these previous studies that show how mass media can be useful in enhancing immigrants/refugees' cultural competency by providing a safe context by which to expand their knowledge and experiences beyond their direct environment, this dissertation suggests that media literacy education has the potential to intervene in this process and provide more systematic, guided media experiences among young North Korean refugees. In order to evaluate how media literacy education helps students develop their cultural competency, this dissertation aims to observe beyond their communication competency. Although communication skill is a vital element in cultural competency, it is also important to observe additional skills that are required for holistic development of cultural competency.

In order to take a broader approach in understanding cultural competency, adapting scholarship from other fields can be useful due to their more comprehensive approaches. When defining cultural competency, the word "culture" indicates "integrated patterns of human behavior that includes thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values and institutions of racial ethnic, religious, or social groups" while "competency" indicates "having the capacity to function in a particular way: the capacity to function within the context of culturally integrated patterns of human behavior defined by a group" (King, Sims, & Osher, n.d). Culturally competent individuals are therefore able to acquire values, lifestyles and behaviors of other cultures and to practice them in the appropriate environments (King et al., n.d)

Cultural competence often focuses on developing awareness and appreciation of other cultural groups and skills to effectively work in their pluralistic working environment (Cross et al., 1989; Saldana, 2001; Sue, 1998; Taylor, 1994; Vonk, 2001). For instance, cultural

competence in social work emphasizes knowledge, attitude, and skills to enhance cultural competence: “knowledge” implies having an understanding of other cultures; “attitude” means having self-awareness about assumptions, biases, and views about one’s own culture as well as an understanding and appreciation of dynamics and differences; and “skill” implies having appropriate skills to function fully with people from other backgrounds, such as cross-cultural communication skills. Overall, cultural competent individuals and groups have an understanding and appreciation of other cultures and are able to establish networks through communication (Cross et al., 1989; Kennedy, Bronte-Tinkew, & Matthews, 2007; Taylor, 1994).

Despite the lack of research regarding cultural competency in media literacy education, only a few scholars in education have suggested the use of media literacy to enhance students’ cultural competency. For instance, Arida (2007) suggested that media literacy skills can lead students to increase their cultural knowledge. As students develop their ability to distinguish among reliable sources and to evaluate this information, they were found to gain more cultural knowledge, leading them to have a “comprehensive approach to the culture” (p. 12). In addition, Potter and Byrne (2007) argue that media literacy skills help individuals to expand their understanding about the real world by guiding them not only to differentiate real-world patterns from media world patterns, but also to reflect about themselves by contemplating their desires, thoughts, and happiness to see if what they want is conditioned by the media. Although Potter and Byrne (2007) did not use the word “cultural competency” to describe the kind of knowledge that they observed that results from media literacy education, this knowledge and opportunity to contemplate on how they perceive the world and their inner-selves can lead young refugees and immigrants to an enhancement of their cultural competency. Furthermore, the study of the mass media can be a part of a more general, holistic approach to the study of a particular society, since

the mass media themselves are about and part of the larger culture. Therefore, as media literate individuals develop an awareness of their media environment, which comprises a major part of their cultural environment, and then come to a critical understanding of the media messages rather than simply absorbing what they see and hear from the media, media literacy education can be useful in enhancing their knowledge about their host society and, ultimately, in developing their cultural competency. The next section of this chapter provides a more systematic explanation of media literacy education, including its history, practices and known educational outcomes.

Media Literacy Education

History of Different Views in Media Literacy Education

Media literacy is, as collaboratively defined by attendees in the 1992 Aspen Media Literacy Leadership Institute, "the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and communicate messages in a wide variety of forms" (Thoman & Jolls, 2005, p. 190). Media literacy education thus involves teaching *about* media, including its content, formation, and the social contexts of its production and consumption (Buckingham et al., 1995). In this dissertation, I will use the definition that was used in the media education training kit by UNESCO, *Media Education: A Kit for Teachers, Students, Parents and Professionals* (Frau-Meigs, 2006):

> Media texts often combine several “languages” or forms of communication–visual images (still or moving), audio (sound, music or speech) and written language. Media education aims to develop a broad-based competence, not just in relation to print, but also in these other symbolic systems of images and sounds. Many people refer to this competence as a form of *literacy*…Media *education*, then, is the process of teaching and

> learning about media; media *literacy* is the outcome the knowledge and skills learners acquire. Media "literacy" necessarily involves "reading" and "writing" media. Media education therefore aims to develop *both* critical understanding *and* active participation (p. 20).

The importance of media literacy education has been stressed because the mass media are becoming the central source of information and a dominant leisure activity for most citizens. Previously, media were seen as parts of our culture, creating and influencing the lifestyles, beliefs, and attitudes of individuals. However, as media became so dominant and influenced every aspect of people's lives, people started to see that media are the culture itself of this society. This statement that media are our culture becomes more apparent when observing the lives of young people, as what they do and what they think are all influenced by the media. Nonetheless, students often have limited opportunities to get instructional support in learning about the mass media (Hobbs, 1997; Pailliotet, Semali, Rodenberg, Giles, & Macaul, 2000; Thoman, 1999; Tufte & Enghel, 2009).

While most scholars believe the inseparable nature of mass media in young people's lives, different rationales have motivated scholars and educators to practice media literacy education. Also, the perspectives and educational goal of media literacy have changed over time, as more research on young people's mediated experiences and media literacy have accumulated.

The focus of early media education in the United States and United Kingdom has been to protect young people from the negative effects of media, responding to parents and educators' concerns about the sexual and violent content of mass media. Media literacy therefore has been seen as an intervention or inoculation that can save vulnerable young people from harmful or problematic media (Dyson, 1998; Kubey, 1998; Scharrer, 2002). However, research that

attempted to “inoculate” children from the influence of violent media through media literacy education showed that media literacy education had a very limited influence in terms of mitigating students’ aggressiveness and being less influenced by violent media content. For instance, in his doctoral dissertation, Doolittle (1975) designed research to test whether teaching about the media can help children better deal with television violence. For this research project, 103 six-grade students were taught different production techniques that were used to make dramatic scenes on television. Unexpectedly, this research indicated that instructional intervention did not influence, or had a very minor influence on, students’ perceived reality, arousal, and aggression. Doolittle (1975) thus concluded that one of the reasons for the failure of this instructional intervention may be that he taught about what children already knew.

Moreover, a two-year study that was conducted with first and third grade students showed similar results (Huesmann, Eron, Klein, Brice, & Fischer, 1983). After a pretest to select students who liked to watch violent television shows, students in this study’s experimental group were enrolled in three classes that covered the fictional and unrealistic nature of television shows. They learned that television characters’ behaviors are different from reality, that special effects and camera techniques are used to exaggerate characters’ aggressiveness and unrealistic achievements, and that in real life most people have different ways of solving problems other than violence. Interestingly, there were no significant differences between the experimental and control groups.

Although these two studies by Doolittle (1975) and Huesmann et al. (1983) did not use the words “media literacy” to describe their instructional intervention (and they might have not even known the term back then), what they did undertake can be viewed as “media literacy education” because students learned the issues of media representation and the various

techniques used in television production. The reasons that these two studies failed to show a relationship between media literacy education and a reduction in the influence of violent media content may be numerous. First, it may be that the instructional methods and content of the lessons influenced the results. The characteristics and learning outcomes of media literacy education depend on program structure, classroom environment, educational beliefs and qualifications of the teacher (Hobbs, 2007b; Kist, 2005). The results of these two studies may have been different if the classes were taught by a different teacher or with differential instructional methods or in a different setting.

Furthermore, research indicates that when the goal of media literacy education is to help students become less influenced by violent media content, factual analysis – in which students learn production techniques such as special effects or editing techniques – is less effective compared to an evaluative approach by which students get an opportunity to negatively evaluate violence in the media (Amy I. Nathanson, 2006; Potter & Byrne, 2007). Another reason, as argued by Scharrer (2002), may lie with the complicated nature of how people respond to media messages. Taking a cultivation approach, one might also argue that "the influences of a pervasive medium upon the composition and structure of the symbolic environment are subtle, complex, and intermingled with other influences" (Morgan & Shanahan, 2008, p. 37). Therefore, since each person has a unique way of understanding and experiencing the media, influenced by many factors, exposure to only several media literacy classes can be inadequate to expect significant change.

Despite the findings above, many educators nonetheless initiate media literacy instruction with the aim of protecting students from the potentially harmful effects of the media. Others, by contrast, adopt media literacy education not because they want to inoculate their students from

negative media influences, but to help young people acquire a better understanding of, and active participation in, the media culture surrounding them; their aim is to "empower" students in this media-immersed world rather than "protect" them from its messages. Their educational goal is thus not to encourage students to be "sophisticated consumers," but rather "sophisticated citizens" (Lewis & Jhally, 1998, p.1). Therefore, rather than simply deconstructing media texts, some scholars and educators have proposed diverse pedagogies – such as media production, critical media text analysis, discourse on the media, and learning about the media industry – so that young people can be prepared for democratic citizenship as well as for inclusive forms of media production (Buckingham, 2003; Lewis & Jhally, 1998; Tyner, 1998). Such perspectives in media literacy education have been influenced by the shifts in views toward young people's relationships with the media: from vulnerable viewers to an autonomous and critical audience (Buckingham, 2003). Given that the history of academic discourse on the influence of the media has been described as "an ongoing process of action and reaction, as a pendulum constantly swinging between 'powerful media' and 'powerful audiences'" (Buckingham, 2000, p. 106), some proponents of media literacy education have accepted the idea of "powerful media" while other proponents lean more toward the idea of a "powerful audience."

The view of "powerful media" have generated worries among adults that young people are innocents compared to the powerful media texts, and thus will eventually become the victims of popular culture (Buckingham, 1993b, 2008; Sternheimer, 2003). While anxieties about young people's relationship with media have a long history and still exist these days, audience studies in cultural studies have cast light on how young people are a socially active audience that can construct meanings based on cultural codes available within their cultural groups (Masterman,

2001). In his recent articles regarding a cultural studies approach to researching children and media, David Buckingham (2008) defined this approach as follows:

> Cultural Studies is defined by its concern with the relationships between particular cultural practices and broader processes of social power. It looks at how cultural meanings and pleasures are produced and circulated within society, at how individuals and social groups use and interpret cultural texts and at the role or cultural practices in the construction of people's social identities. (p. 220)

Within cultural studies, relationships between media texts and audiences are analyzed within specific cultural contexts. Therefore, these studies have been seen to be structural-functional by nature because the way in which audiences understand and react to the mass media messages is determined by their social characteristics (Buckingham, 1993a, 2008; Morley, 1992). From the 1970s, the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in the University of Birmingham in the Great Britain started to take a leading role in cultural studies in Europe (Piette & Giroux, 2001; Seiter, 2004). Evolving from the field of ethnography, studies in CCCS accounted for the complicated aspects of television text and audience activities (Seiter, 2004). Their theories were informed by "semiotics" (Eco, 1976), "reader-response literature" (Iser, 1978) and "Marxist and feminist theories" (Seiter, 2004, p. 463).

One of the most famous writings from the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies is "Encoding/Decoding" by Stuart Hall. Following Hall's conceptualization, this idea of encoding and decoding has been discussed and developed by several scholars. Morley (1992) synthesized the premise of encoding and decoding as follows:

(a) the same event can be encoded in more than one way;

(b) the message always contains more than one potential ‘reading.’ Messages propose and prefer certain readings over others, but they can never become wholly closed one reading: they remain polysemic;

(c) understanding the message is also a problematic practice, however transparent and ‘natural’ it may seem. Message encoded one way can always be read in a different way. (p. 85)

In this perspective, a media text is understood within “its historical conditions of production and consumption” (Morley, 1992, p. 86). This encoding and decoding approach is not in keeping with the effects paradigm when dealing with audience’s media experiences because firstly “decoding” should happen before there are any “effects” on audience, and secondly this decoding process is not always parallel to encoding. Rather, an individual’s decoding is influenced by “the range of different decoding strategies and competences in the audience” (Morley, 1992, p. 86). Specifically, audiences’ relationships and experiences with the media are understood and categorized based on an individuals’ subgroups which clusters audiences based on their common media experiences and understandings (Piette & Giroux, 2001). Individuals’ subgroups are seen as affecting their knowledge, access, bias, and resistance, influencing the ways that they decode media texts (Morley, 1992). Therefore, people from the same subgroups often may possess a “cultural orientation towards decoding messages in particular ways” because their cultural backgrounds and practices construct the ways by which they understand messages (Morley, 1992, p. 87).

A significant contribution of cultural studies has been made through its decoding/ encoding framework, which has allowed scholars and educators to examine how young people distinctly “decode” the media message in particular ways based on their cultural backgrounds,

social characteristics, knowledge, access, bias, and resistance (Lemish, 2007). Before the influence of cultural studies, students' interpretations of media texts had been considered as problematic if they did not agree with the "correct" analyses by their teachers. Students' differential analyses and understanding were considered as wrong answers that resulted from their misunderstanding or from individual taste that was dissimilar to the majority or to the norm. Therefore, one of the goals of media education in schools has been to teach "correct" interpretations through discussion and learning (Masterman, 2001). However, under the influence of cultural studies, differential decoding by teachers and students as well as by students among themselves began to be acknowledged as distinctions resulting from different cultural groups and shared cultural codes within the group affiliations of students and teachers (Masterman, 2001). Teachers began not only to recognize their students as meaning makers, but also to appreciate what the students were bringing into the classroom from their lived experiences and social relations. Students' diverse responses and opinions thus were welcomed inside the classroom (Fisherkeller, 2002; Masterman, 2001). Here, the goal of media literacy education becomes not protecting young people from the negative influences of the media, but instead assisting them to make informed decisions based on what they already know. Ultimately, media literacy education aims to help students to have a better understanding of and active participation in the media culture around them (Buckingham, 2003; Fisherkeller, 2000)

Yet because scholars in cultural studies understood an audience's media experiences based on their different cultural groups and shared cultural codes, this field also has been criticized for homogenizing the audience and the media, such as through the dichotomization of media experiences based on gender and social class. Their understanding of audience group

based on “interpretive communities” and “subcultural readings” can be seen as another way to standardize audiences’ media experiences based on their backgrounds (Kubey, 1998).

Morley (1992) also acknowledged the problems of the cultural studies approach for “the attempt immediately to convert social categories (e.g. class) into meanings (e.g. ideological positions) without paying due attention to the specific factors involved in this ‘conversion’” (Morley, 1992, p. 90). Morley argues that this conception should not be understood as a mechanic, predetermined relationship because people have different levels of understanding and meaning systems, based on the degree of their involvement, experience, and position in their sub-culture. Individuals’ subgroups should be examined to understand their decoding of the media message because they influence the communication process. These cultural factors are manifested in the audience’s decoding process through symbols and discourses (Morley, 1992). Therefore, some scholars who have attacked the idea that the audience is vulnerable in terms of media’s impact also have opposed this idea of categorizing audiences based on certain aspects of their backgrounds (Buckingham & Sefton-Green, 1994).

Recently, mass media effects on children, especially in regard to the issues of violence and sexual content, have been discussed frequently in medical studies. While these studies still examine the direct effects from the media on children, there seems to be a tendency among media and communication scholars to consider a study out-of-date if it does not define children as an active and playful audience who negotiate and construct meaning from program content. Within the media and communication discipline, a number of recent studies on children’s relationship with the media and their experiences within the mediated environments begin with the assumption that children are active viewers (Wilson, 2004). However, the public debates still tend to conceive children as vulnerable to the immoral, corrupt and violent content as argued by

people on the right, or to racist, sexist, or commercialized content as argued by people on the left. Due to these concerns regarding the influential power of the mass media, certain types of mass media are labeled as inappropriate for young people (Buckingham, 2003).

As explained in this section, divergent beliefs and attitudes of scholars and educators in terms of young people's mediated experiences have influenced the direction of media literacy education. While some scholars initiate media literacy education to protect young people from the harmful effects of the media, others practice media literacy education to empower young people to be active citizens in a mediated society. The development of media literacy education has been influenced by public discourse regarding the power of the media versus the power of the audience, promoting different pedagogy and educational practices. Whereas these various rationales have motivated educators to incorporate media literacy education in the first place, differential educational settings and goals in turn have created distinctive foci and outcomes of media literacy education. The next section of this chapter discusses how media literacy education has been adopted within such diverse educational environments.

Different Settings of Media Literacy Education

Media literacy education has been incorporated into curricula and practiced in public educational settings, alternative educational settings and after-school settings. When practiced in public educational settings, media literacy has been incorporated into various school subjects. For instance, in the United States, Hobbs and Frost (1999) conducted qualitative and quantitative research on how integrating media literacy into a general education program can impact students' learning. Ninth grade teachers integrated media literacy concepts into language arts, history, math and science. The results were that students with media analysis and production

experiences demonstrated better skills when processing information. A more recent study by Hobbs (Hobbs, 2007a) also shows how media literacy education can be successfully incorporated into a high school English class. In Australia, in public education from grades one to ten, media education is integrated into the arts, English, social science, and the technologies. In Great Britain, media education often has been practiced with English, mathematics, science, history, art and geography. For example, history classes have focused on evaluating past history as reproduced in the media while a geography class has enabled students to develop their visual literacy abilities by means of photography, charts and maps (Ahn & Jun, 1999). In Ontario, Canada, the province's Language Arts for first to ninth grades has integrated media literacy into the curriculum by means of "viewing and representing" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1995, quoted from Tyner, 1998, p. 203).

When practiced outside public educational settings, such as in alternative schools or youth media centers, media literacy education sometimes has specific groups of students that the program is targeting, such as school drop-outs, immigrants, or people with specific national or cultural affiliations. Influenced by Gerbner's findings, which claim that underprivileged children from poor, uneducated parents are more vulnerable to media's impact, some attention of media education has been focused on disadvantaged children and youths. Minority students, who have been seen as underrepresented groups, therefore have been the target of media literacy education in many educational settings.

For instance, in their media literacy program with Muslim women in Canada, Bullock and Jafri (2000) found that the Muslim women whom they interviewed were uncomfortable with how Islam and Muslim women were portrayed in Canadian media. Interviewees thought that the Muslim countries were misrepresented with inaccurate information and that the media focused

too much on dramatic and violent events in Muslim countries, creating negative images of these countries and the Muslim people. Some interviewees thought it was important to have accurate media representations of Muslim women. However, being aware of the difficulties of immediate transformation in the media coverage, other Muslim women expressed their beliefs that while the Muslim community should work hard to express their discomfort with these negative media images and to improve them for the better, they believed that young Muslims should develop their media literacy skills in order to develop competencies, skills and knowledge to analyze and to act in response to negative and misrepresented stereotypes.

In a year-long critical media literacy program that included media analysis and video production with young Arab-American women in Chicago, Bing-Canar and Zerkel (1998) found out that Arab-American girls who used to be "victimized by stereotypical media images" (p.735) are capable of creating powerful visual representations of their lives. In the media education program with emigrated children in six European countries, De Block, Buckingham and Banaji (2005) observed that some children were able to gain a better understanding of their host society and creatively express their experiences as migrants. This process of making visual representations of their lives and experiences allowed students to locate their position within the emigrated society. Vargas' (2006) critical media literacy program with young Latinas who were from working-class families in the U.S. demonstrated that media literacy education was effective in enhancing young immigrants' language competence.

In spite of these research findings that indicate the effectiveness of media literacy education in educating emigrated children, educators working with young immigrants and refugees have had difficulty in incorporating this instruction into their educational settings because of a lack of appropriate resources that can guide its implementation for a specialized

group. All these previous research projects that were conducted with students from different cultural affiliations were undertaken as a form of exploratory study for which researchers had to start from scratch. These researchers were the first to practice media literacy education or to document these educational practices with Muslim women in Canada (Bullock & Jafri, 2000), Arab-Americans (Bing-Canar & Zerkel, 1998), young immigrants and refugees in six European countries (De Block et al., 2005), and young Latinas in the U.S. (Vargas, 2006). Therefore, more research with diverse groups of students needs to be conducted in order to advance the field of media literacy education and to encourage more educators to adopt media literacy education with students from various cultural backgrounds.

Instructional Practices in Media Literacy Education

Based on different beliefs about young people's relationship with media and different educational goals, media literacy education has been developed and practiced accordingly. The three common areas of media literacy education are as follows: (1) textual analysis, (2) media production, and (3) the nature and characteristics of media industries within a social context. Textual analysis, which allows for a close reading and critical analysis of mass media texts, is a common way to integrate media literacy education within K-12 educational settings. Media production is used both in public and alternative educational settings for various goals, like job training, encouraging the expression of students' creativity and voices, providing venues for students to work collaboratively, and teaching the grammar of the media message construction. Education on the nature and characteristics of media industries is often incorporated as a part of critical media literacy education to show how media construction is influenced by diverse forces.

However, issues regarding media industries are also frequently taught as an independent topic as they are becoming critical elements in understanding the society at large.

Media textual analysis is a decoding process involving all possible aspects of the media, such as content, texts, formation, technologies, as well as social contexts of the production and consumption. This approach asks learners to examine closely the medium itself, its message, other social influences on media, and social phenomena influenced by the media. Analyzing popular texts, that is, "sophisticated readings of familiar texts," (Tyner, 1998, p.166), can greatly enhance students' critical thinking skills.

One of the early proponents of using media textual analysis for media literacy education is Len Masterman. According to Masterman (1980), a textual analysis of television programs was able to bring about students' understandings of core concepts, such as ideology. He argued that this form of analysis would enable the development of "general critical abilities and an understanding of general principles." Influenced by Brazilian theologian Freire's conscientization that "an awareness of one's own political situation and a recognition that far from being a given which must be accommodated to, reality is negotiable, the result of human choices and decisions which should be subject to scrutiny, criticisms, intervention and change" (Masterman, 1980, p. 25), Masterman believed that demystification is the primary goal of media text analysis. This approach is similar to Giroux's 'critical pedagogy.' Critical pedagogy examines how meanings are produced and deconstructed, specifically in cultural processes, such as schooling, popular culture and students' lived experiences (Giroux, 1992, 1997).

Various educational goals and rationales have encouraged educators to adopt media production as a way to practice media literacy education. The rationale of using media production for media literacy education is often explained by Freire and Dewey. According to

Paulo Freire, the act of speaking and expressing what one wants to say, both individually and collectively, is the right of all humankind:

> This is not the privilege of some few men, but the right of every man. Consequently, no one can say a true word alone –nor can he say it for another, in a prescriptive act which robs others of their words. (Freire, 1970, p. 76)

Dewey also believed that experiential learning is a way to bridge 'acting and doing' with 'knowing and understanding.' In keeping with Dewey's belief that the primary objective of education is for students to become more engaged and active participating citizens (1966), media production provides an effective hands-on practice for students to learn directly from their experiences. Depending on the available resources and educational goals, educators choose medium, such as print media (such as newspapers or magazines), visual media (such as video, television or film), or digital media (such as webzines or podcasting, or music production by using relevant computer software). Because of the development of digital media and their prevalence, incorporating media production using digital media is becoming more accessible (Tyner, 2003).

Steven Goodman, the Director of the Educational Video Center (EVC), one of the most recognized youth media programs in the United States, argued that "among the most effective strategies for teaching critical literacy is for students to create their own media" because it allows them to comprehend "the multiple layers of data that make up the television or videos they watch and the magazines they read" (Goodman, 2003, p. 6). Moreover, media production is seen not only as a useful tool to help students better understand media texts as constructions as well as the characteristics of diverse media genres (Masterman, 1985; Tyner, 1998), but also as a way to practice how to evaluate, integrate, and utilize information and to enhance students' problem-

solving skills (Tyner, 2003). Furthermore, it is seen as empowering students by allowing them to participate in the public discourse since the mass media play a crucial role in setting the agenda and in creating the public sphere. Media production is considered important because it is already a significant part of our lives, as the ability to read and "write" media texts, including images, through various media is becoming essential for employment, for the enjoyment of leisure time, and for cultural expression and participation (Buckingham et al., 1995). Media production also acts to complement the limitations of media text analysis alone, a process which may generate cynical attitudes among students regarding the commercial media (Masterman, 1985; Tyner, 1998).

However, some scholars argue that it is difficult to achieve such positive outcomes within real educational settings. Regardless of the educational goals of incorporating media production aspects into a media literacy class, some studies found that students tend to show more interest in the technical aspects of the production and end up doing "technical exercises" only (Buckingham, 2003, p. 199). Selwood (1997) also argued that the media production program that she observed "essentially functioned as a temporary social service for young people who were disadvantaged or 'excluded'" rather than providing a comprehensive understanding about the media or enabling students to express their creativity or thoughts (p. 337). One of the popular techniques to overcome such a limitation of media production is simulation. Simulation involves role-play: having students be in the position of media producers. Without the hands-on production that often requires monetary and time commitments, students experience the production process by acting as media producers. They make relevant decisions in the process of their virtual media production, in keeping with the actions of media industries and their accompanying institutional,

technological and financial constraints. This role playing can yield a thorough understanding and insight into the media industry and its production systems (Buckingham, 2003).

Scholars and educators have stressed the importance of students learning about the nature and characteristics of media industries within a social context in order to promote a more holistic understanding of the mass media (Tyner, 1998). It is believed that students can be more active as democratic citizens by learning about the system in which the mass media were created and how the mass media function today. Examining and analyzing the mass media industry, such as the structure of media organizations, commercials, rating systems, consumer institutions, and ways that the media make a profit, will give students a much clearer idea about today's corporate-dominated culture. Education about media systems and symbolism also will enable students to view critically how the media are an inseparable part of their lives and society, and how social changes can occur (Fisherkeller, 1999, 2000).

Masterman (1980), however, criticized this approach because he considered learning about the nature and characteristics of media industries to be "information-laden rather than question-oriented," thus resulting in students losing interest. He thought that it is more important to be a "consciousness industry," and this consciousness cannot be achieved from the mere learning of knowledge *about* the media industry. Still, this teaching about the nature and characteristics of media industries within a social context has been adopted in many media literacy programs and has helped students to critically and holistically analyze media texts and understand the politics and economy bases that impact the mass media (Lewis & Jhally, 1998; Potter & Byrne, 2007).

Even though the importance of media education has been stressed because mass media are becoming a central source of information and a dominant leisure activity for most citizens,

learning about the mass media has not been emphasized within the context of elementary or secondary education; rather, this type of learning is more prominent in afterschool and non-school settings (Hobbs, 1998). While critical media analysis is increasingly integrated into K-12 education (Hobbs, 2007a), media production, especially related to non-print media, has been less popular in these settings. Nonetheless, media production often has been adopted as an educational tool in numerous youth institutions, including nongovernmental organizations for school dropouts and after-school programs.

In this chapter, I reviewed existing studies to explore how and why North Korean refugees come to South Korea, how they live in their new country, and how refugees and immigrants in general adjust to their host society. Then I reviewed the concept of cultural competency as a determining factor in a refugee's adjustment to a new society. The examination of the lives of North Korean refugees, the process of cross-cultural adaptation, and the concept of cultural competency have demonstrated the critical roles of the mass media in the lives of North Korean refugees. As this dissertation suggests, media literacy is an intervention to promote a better acculturation process for North Korean refugees; therefore I reviewed media literacy education: its history, the various perspectives regarding media literacy, and the different contexts within which media literacy education is practiced. These explorations laid a firm foundation for this study's design of media literacy classes for North Korean refugees. The next chapter will discuss the methodologies that I applied for this dissertation project.

Educational Goals and Lesson Plans

Themes for the class

Before I started to teach, I had the concrete educational goal to enhance young North Korean refugees' cultural competence. Based on my own experiences with North Korean refugees and feedback from current educators who have worked with North Korean refugees, I also had pre-planned the themes of the topics that would be covered in class, which were about the media industry as well as about representations and stereotypes in the media. I also planned to provide opportunities for students to reflect upon their own media usage and to acquire more knowledge about the internet and television, since their media experiences tend to lean strongly toward these two media outlets. These themes were taught by the methods of textual and contextual analysis.

Learning about media industry and contextual information includes being informed about how media content is produced from the planning to the marketing and distribution stages, and involves asking questions like: "who owns the companies that buy and sell media?" and "how do they make a profit?" (Buckingham, 2003, p.54). Students get to examine factors that influence media production, the role of marketing and promotion in distributing the media content, examples of failures and successes of marketing, and how media industries produce revenue. Ultimately, the goal is for students to see the big picture of the ordinary media that they experience every day, leading them to contemplate these messages' political and economic bases as well as other influential factors which contribute to their creation (Buckingham, 2003; Lewis & Jhally, 1998; Potter & Byrne, 2007).

In terms of representation, David Buckingham (2003) suggests that media representation is "one of the founding principles of media education" (p. 57). Having a clear understanding of

media representation is crucial because, according to Renee Hobbs (2007a), “media representations extend our perception of reality, giving us symbolic access to people, ideas, and information that are beyond the limitations of our direct real-world experience” (p. 75). Although media representations contribute to people seeing the world in biased rather than objective ways, audiences are not simply deceived by such slanted representations but rather make judgments based on their socio-cultural backgrounds and previous experiences. Studying media representations involves determining whether the text aims to be realistic, how the media try to be seen as being authentic, what is present and what is absent, whether the media texts support certain values and views, how the media texts stereotype certain social groups, why audiences take certain representations as authentic or inauthentic, and whether the media representations influence the views of audiences regarding certain social groups or issues. Therefore, media representations are unavoidably involved with questions about ideologies and values. It is especially important for immigrants and refugees to learn about such images because they tend to rely on the mass media to interpret and understand their host culture (Y. Y. Kim, 1977, 1991). Media literacy education thus can help students to understand how media shape social and cultural realities and values, and how media messages are purposely created and represent only “some” aspects of reality (Hobbs, 2007a; Pailliotet et al., 2000).

As an extension of the issue of representation, students have the opportunity to extensively examine stereotypes in the media, as they are often victimized themselves by stereotypical media images and therefore become resentful toward these images. According to Silverblatt and Zlobin, stereotyping is “an oversimplified conception of a person, group, or event” (2004, p.76). The learning of stereotypes does not come simply from interacting with the mass media, although these factors have a dominant influence on creating stereotypes of or

marginalizing specific groups of people. People's own experiences, education, and social position also contribute to individuals' own stereotyping toward others. According to Lippmann (1922/1991), stereotyping is "so obdurate to education or to criticism" (p. 98) and "tends to preserve us from all the bewildering effect of trying to see the world steadily and see it whole" (p.114). However, learning about the process of stereotyping can help students understand that media are not value-neutral. When they learn to analyze how different groups of people are represented and stereotyped in the media, students not only become aware of public attitudes toward different groups of people, but they also learn to reflect upon their own attitudes toward other people (Pailliotet et al., 2000).

Before I taught the class over the summer of 2008, I had planned to give students the opportunity to reflect upon their media usage, since many of these students were diagnosed as internet/TV addicts, resulting from their social isolation. Because the internet and television are the most commonly used media by North Korean refugees, these two media were discussed more often in the class. Issues regarding the internet and television as well as three themes regarding media industry, representation and stereotypes were integrated into the two teaching techniques of media literacy: textual analysis and contextual analysis. Textual analysis involves a close reading and analysis of the media text while contextual analysis focuses on the context of the media by closely examining production, industry, audience and culture (Buckingham, 2003).

Inquiry-Based Learning

Throughout the course, I adapted an inquiry-based approach for my teaching. Inquiry-based approach is one of the most proposed paradigms in media literacy education (Alvermann & Hagood, 2000; Goodman, 2003; Hobbs, 2001; Hobbs & Frost, 2003; Pailliotet et al., 2000;

Thoman, 1999; Thoman & Jolls, 2005; Tyner, 1998). Inquiry-based learning is inspired by Dewey, who believed that "perturbations of the individual's understanding" can stimulate the learning (Duffy & Cunningham, 1996, p.176). In his article "Democracy and Inquiry," Charles Anderson recapitulates Dewey's ideas as follows:

> Dewey thought that democratic citizenship could be understood as the unifying aim of education. But Dewey thought of democracy as but one manifestation of a power that was vested in and distinctive in humanity. That power was inquiry. . . Inquiry, Dewey taught, was the method of democracy. It was also the method of science. And as the century wore on, it in fact became the method of management, of the law, of education itself. (Anderson, 1997, cited in Harkavy, 1998, p. 32)

By taking an inquiry-based approach, students are able to develop critical thinking abilities and to become actors in the process of knowledge creation, rather than passively absorbing the information that educators present. Ultimately, it is hoped that students transfer their ability to ask questions to outside the classroom and inquire in their daily lives about the symbols and messages that they consume so that they can become independent, lifelong learners (Hobbs & Frost, 2003; Tyner, 1998). In fact, one of the most acknowledged educational goals of media literacy is to develop everyday habits of inquiry.

An inquiry-based approach is used not only for the analysis of media texts or the examination of the producers, regulators and other institutional figures in the media industry. This approach also can be successfully incorporated into media production lessons, as demonstrated by a documentary production program at the Educational Video Center (EVC) (Goodman, 2003). EVC students, who previous to this film project were pessimistic and seen as not having the ability to recognize reliable sources, learned to develop the skills needed to ask

questions throughout the process of making a documentary. From the very beginning stages when the students collectively decided the topic of the documentary and gathered the information to develop their topics using visual symbols, facts, and people's opinions, they practiced not only how to ask questions but also how to find answers to their queries. Goodman even framed the documentary workshop as "a sustained video-based inquiry into a social issue in their community" (Goodman, 2003, p.37)

It is important to note that inquiry-based learning does not mean the neglect of the core principles or the basic content of media literacy. Rather, it is suggested to use media literacy core principles to create inquiry-based media literacy education (Rogow, 2009). In order to create an environment in which students feel safe to ask questions about media texts, industry, culture, and their own perceptions, the educators' role is crucial. However, the tension between how much the educator plans the lesson and how much students construct their own learning is an on-going struggle in any educational setting that incorporates inquiry-based or constructivist approaches (Duffy & Cunningham, 1996).

While I had developed general instructional guidelines before I started to teach, I purposely did not have specific lesson plans for each class. I followed the approach by Freire (1970, 1998) in which the educator decides what to teach based on what students know and experience in their daily lives. In order to create a culturally sensitive media literacy education program that met the unique educational needs of North Korean refugees, it was imperative that I had a good understanding of their reality, knowledge and specific media experiences. Emergent curriculum, therefore, was the appropriate framework for this dissertation project. The next section includes a theoretical framework for this approach.

Emergent Curriculum

Most of the time, school education is structured learning, designed by specific educational goals. If the education does not satisfy these predetermined purposes and goals, that education is considered as a failure (Osberg & Biesta, 2008). However, a great deal of learning still can happen even when students do not meet the standards of what the educator has planned ahead of time. In fact, preparing all the course materials ahead of time can be inappropriate in capturing what emerges from students' activities and interactions (Wellhousen & Crowther, 2004). Therefore, numerous educators and scholars have proposed emergent curriculum in various educational settings, such as early childhood education, k-12 education, and teachers' education, for different subjects, such as English, science, and math, or arts (Davilla & Koenig, 1998; Eunsook Hyun & J. Dan Marshall, 2003; Koester et al., 1993; Osberg & Biesta, 2008; Riley & Roach, 2006; Wellhousen & Crowther, 2004).

Emergent curriculum was inspired by Italian preschool educator, Louis Malaguzzi. After World War II, he started a school in Reggio Emilia, known for being a progressive and prosperous city in northern Italy (Davilla & Koenig, 1998; Wien, 2008). The following quotation shows the educational philosophy of Malaguzzi: "Stand aside for a while and leave room for learning, observe carefully what children do, and then, if you have understood well, perhaps teaching will be different from before" (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1993, p. 77, cited in Davilla & Koenig, 1998, p. 24).

According to the emergent approach, knowledge emerges as people partake in the world (Osberg & Biesta, 2008). In the classroom setting, it implies that meaning "emerges" as students interact with each other, with the teacher, and with educational materials that have been prepared by the teacher. It is argued that emerged meaning is relevant and specific to the environment and

to the uniqueness of the people who participate in the learning process (Wellhousen & Crowther, 2004). Here, the role of the educator is not to impose what to think about, but to facilitate students' learning experiences to better explore their environment and express themselves. Rather than encouraging students to speak the "answer" that the teacher was looking for, the educator carefully observes and listens to students and then flexibly responds to what emerges in the curriculum (Reeder, 2005; Riley & Roach, 2006).

Still, it is controversial whether purely relying on emergent curriculum is possible in real educational settings. Educators who claimed to incorporate emergent approaches have had their own preconceived ideas of subjects, goals and direction (Osberg & Biesta, 2008). Because emergence of meaning is still happening within the educational system that has specific goals and standards, educators cannot ignore these goals when teaching students. Therefore, the educator must strike a balance between conversations driven by the textbook and the teacher on the hand and conversations initiated by students' interests and meaning on the other (Osberg & Biesta, 2008; Reeder, 2005).

In order to encourage emergence of meaning, the educator's role in stimulating students' thinking and in structuring class activity that can foster emergence of thinking is important. Here, teachers are co-learners who challenge, question, validate, and apply meanings with students whom in turn are respected as co-creators of the curriculum. In fact, the success of emergent curriculum often depends on the relationship between the educator and the students. When the educator creates a safe space for conversation, students tend to contribute more actively to the learning process (Reeder, 2005; Riley & Roach, 2006; Stacey, 2009; Wien, 2008). Creating the right environment is essential, as the environment is even seen as the "third teacher" in emergent curriculum (Davilla & Koenig, 1998, p. 24).

Emergent curriculum is an appropriate approach in action research because action research is not a pre-determined program or intervention, but rather a process of knowing and verifying what works better (Elliott, 1991; McLean, 1995). Emergent curriculum also can be effective in promoting inquiry-based learning, because the emergence of meaning often evolves from the inquiries by students and teachers, and leads them to other inquiries (Wien, 2008). Emergent approach has demonstrated its potential in promoting more inquiries along with students' own meaning-making about a given topic (Eunsook Hyun & J. Dan Marshall, 2003; Savin-Baden, 2007).

For this dissertation project, I incorporated an emergent approach, because during the planning phase, I did not have clear insights into North Korean teens' current media environment, experiences and their degree of understanding about South Korean media. Although I taught young North Korean refugees in 2002 and 20003 and I have kept in touch with these students until the present, I speculated that North Korean refugees' mediated environment and experiences back then may be different from those in 2008. Moreover, my previous students are attending college now and thus live amidst a different culture from that of current teenagers. I expected that such limitations would present me with challenges in designing effective media literacy curriculum for North Korean refugees. Therefore, with the lesson plans that I prepared based on the pre-selected themes and pedagogy, I continually modified the curriculum based on what emerged in class in terms of what was evident through students' feedback, understanding, reactions, and interactions. I also tried to capture teachable moments by relating what happened in South Korea during the summer of 2008. This process is described in more detail in Chapters Four and Five.

Teachable Moment

"Teachable moment" has been described and noted by various scholars and educators based on their own teaching experiences. While "teachable moment" does not have a single authoritative definition yet (Hyun, 2006; E. Hyun & J. D. Marshall, 2003), diverse explanations and observations can be found in the literature, reflecting teachers' differential educational contexts, philosophies, and experiences. For instance, citing her students' words, Hyun (2006) explained the teachable moment as "fortuitous opportunities provided by the learners that are recognized, interpreted, evaluated, and acted upon by the teacher" (Hyun, 2006, p. 70). Pacifici and Garrison (2004) identified the teachable moment as the moments that "involve shared inquiry into a subject matter of common concern" (p. 120). The common discourse about such a teaching moment discusses the times within the real teaching situation that often involves the teaching of current affairs or significant incidents in the society at large. For instance, 9/11 is often indicated as a teachable moment by many U.S. educators because since 1960 young Americans had never shown that much interest in what was going on in the world (Hauss, Miller, & Samuel, 2002; Hess & Stoddard, 2007; Spiezio, 2002). Hurricane Katrina (Glantz, 2008), earthquakes (Kafka, Barnett, Ebel, Bellegarde, & Campbell, 2004), and the conflicts in Kosovo (Leary Jr, 2000) have been suggested as meaningful teachable moments by educators, as several relevant topics and concepts can be taught by examining these incidents.

One of the reasons that such incidents which have a great impact on society can create teachable moments is that they have the potential to arouse a common interest and concern between teachers and students, by allowing "shared inquiry into a subject matter of common concern" (Pacifici & Garrison, 2004, p. 120). During the summer of 2008 in South Korea, the issues of mad cow disease and the candlelight protests, which are described in Chapter Four,

were the topics that everybody talked about, whether they were supporting the candlelight movement or not. Therefore, after this study's methodology is discussed in Chapter Three, Chapter Four will further explain these incidents of mad cow disease and the candlelight protests and why I thought that they provided valuable opportunities for teachable moments.

In summary, this section explains why I chose the media industry, media representations, and stereotyping as topics in my media literacy classes for North Korean refugees. I expected that these students' learning about the media industry would contribute toward a holistic understanding of not only the media themselves but also the society in which they live, as almost every aspect of South Korean society is related to media. Such learning about media representation and stereotypes has the potential to lead students to become aware of ideologies and values that are implicit in the symbolic representation of different groups of their society. Students also become conscious of how certain groups and realities are represented while others are ignored. While I planned to use textual as well as contextual analysis to cover these topics in class, I also decided to incorporate inquiry-based learning, emergent curriculum, and the teachable moment approach so that I could successfully capture what students needed to learn in the media literacy class and effectively design the lessons based on my observations.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This dissertation research aims at exploring ways to improve media literacy education practices for North Korean refugees so that this instruction can improve their lives, especially in terms of the development of their cultural competence. Since this dissertation is not simply reviewing the current media literacy practices, but also suggesting how to practice media literacy for North Korean refugees, I adopted a participatory action research approach. During this study, I was a teacher who was instructing media literacy education with North Korean refugees at the same time that I was a researcher who was examining my own teaching practices. Therefore this chapter elaborates the theoretical frameworks of such participatory action research and the pedagogical documentation which I employed to document my teaching practices, observations, and reflections. Then, this chapter will include an explanation of the follow-up interview and data analysis processes.

Participatory Action Research

The participatory action research approach combines ethnography and action research in order to empower the institutions and individuals under study (Barab, Thomas, Dodge, Dodge, & Newell, 2004). This approach also has been used on a large scale to make improvements at the societal level. Because the projects that involved participatory action research have shown a positive influence on economic, political or other social issues, this approach has been adopted for various purposes in different countries (Fals-Borda, 1987).

Since the participatory action research borrows ideas from both ethnography and action research, it is important to understand these two different research methodologies. The goal of

ethnographic studies is to produce holistic, detailed accounts of particular cultures or social groups. This approach involves the researcher's immersion within the culture through the use of participant observation for extended periods of time. Unlike quantitative research approaches, what ethnographic researchers need is "the ability to converse intimately," not hypotheses which can "unnaturally close a study down, obscuring the integrity of the other" (Glassie, 1982, p. 14). From field notes and other records, ethnographers elaborate in detail what they have naturally and holistically observed and experienced (Marcus & Fischer, 1986; Tudor, 1999). Ethnographic approaches in many cultural studies have been viewed as providing a "model of structure that is used to (re)interpret patterns of activity in a larger socio-cultural context" (Tudor, 1999, p. 172).

Action research is "a process-oriented methodology that pursues knowledge and progressive social change" (Vargas, 2006, p.268). Therefore, it connects research and practice, since research is initiated by a real problem and conducted not only to observe this problem but to make improvements in that area (Avison, Lau, Myers, & Nielsen, 1999; Turnbull, Friesen, & Ramirez, 1998). Action research is a common methodology in educational settings when the aim is to make improvements in the quality of instruction. It allows educators to gain a clearer insight into their own teaching process through continuous self-reflection (Elliott, 1991; McLean, 1995). Educational practices are examined "not from a position of detachment, but from one of a commitment to effect worthwhile change" (Elliott, 1991, p. 55). Because it is believed that action research can develop educators' knowledge and teaching practices, action research is adopted not only for research purposes, but also for professional development for teachers. Action research encourages teachers to reflect and scrutinize their own teaching and how students learn, by providing an opportunity to have "systematic, intentional inquiry by teachers" (Levin & Rock,

2003; Lytle & Cochran-Smith, 1990, p. 83; Noffke, 1997; Ponte, Ax, Beijaard, & Wubbels, 2004; Turnbull et al., 1998).

In participatory action research, situations are not considered as "given," but rather as constructed over time by individuals who have goals and objectives (McNiff et al., 2003). Achievement of these goals cannot be learned solely by the outcomes of the practice, but rather by the thorough description and reflection of the procedure. Therefore, participatory action research is seen as a process of knowing and verifying what works the best. Researchers seek for what are the most effective ways of accomplishing their goals, and continuously reflect and evaluate this process (Elliott, 1991; McLean, 1995).

Researchers often work with practitioners and insiders from the site under study in order to analyze the current situation, often the problem itself, in order to decide the direction of the changes and intervention, and to discuss the process as the research proceeds (Avison et al., 1999). Therefore, it is referred to as a "collaborative process" (Turnbull et al., 1998, p. 178). However, many action research projects are conducted also by practitioners who work *inside* a particular social situation, especially in an educational setting. Therefore, the researchers themselves are at the center of the inquiry process and thus have a direct influence on what is happening. Also, their affiliation with the institution under study may affect the data analysis and interpretations, and may change the tone of the research findings as well, all of which might have been different if conducted by outsiders. Therefore, some proponents of participatory action research accept the involvement of external researchers to allow more diverse and holistic views on the topic under study (Barab et al., 2004; McNiff et al., 2003). When external researchers are involved, they should be engaged with local dynamics and relationships, so that they are able to understand and interpret the insiders' position (Barab et al., 2004).

In order to better assess the influence of media literacy education on students, I adopted a qualitative rather than quantitative approach. Although participatory action research takes an ethnographic approach by pursuing holistic, detailed accounts to make an improvement (Barab et al., 2004), educators can choose either a quantitative or qualitative approach when evaluating educational outcomes. When taking a quantitative approach, the researcher is able to measure students' accomplishments through questionnaires or multiple choice exams; by contrast, when taking a qualitative approach, the researcher is able to measure students' attitudes and demonstrations of more specific skills or interview students so that they can talk about their learning experiences in more detail. Because qualitative studies do not divide students' learning experiences into variables, this approach is useful when seeking a holistic, comprehensive understanding of students' learning outcomes. This approach allows the researcher to observe at a more micro level how students understand and make meaning in the classroom and through their activities (Christians & Carey, 1989; Johnson & Christensen, 2007).

Compared to other qualitative studies which aim to generate knowledge and theory and then apply them to other contexts, the goal of action research is to make changes within the institutions that are being studied (Barab et al., 2004; Elliott, 1991). It is very goal-oriented, with specific target areas to improve. For instance, the providing of better education is a common goal in action research within educational settings while the improvement of patient care is an often recognized goal in medicine (Elliott, 1991). Because of researchers' commitment to these goals, they often are less passionate when it comes to producing knowledge (Baskerville & Wood-Harper, 1996). Moreover, because action research is often conducted by practitioners who do not have familiarity with basic methodological techniques, many research projects have been seen as not rigorous enough to be considered as valid research (Baskerville & Wood-Harper, 1996).

Because participatory action research is “a process of living in a way that practitioners feel is right,” their findings are often accused of lack of justification and validation (McNiff et al., 2003p. 16).

Another limitation of action research is that the researcher may have difficulty in controlling the direction of the research (Vargas, 2006). Furthermore, because it is always conducted within a particular setting and suggests changes within that particular setting, participatory action research is thus context-bound. Their findings tend to offer narrow learning improvements and thus are not generalized reliably to other settings, but rather have to be reinterpreted and reapplied based on the characteristics of applied settings (Barab et al., 2004). Therefore, the value of these studies outside the studied institutions is sometimes questioned.

The issue of researchers’ position is another controversial issue in participatory action research, as with other qualitative research such as insider vs. outsider or the hierarchical relationship between researcher and participants. While some scholars have argued that research by insiders may have greater influence and the research itself may have a more direct impact, being more relevant and practical (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994), others point out researchers’ dilemmas as insiders of a studied place, based on a conflict of interests that may arise from holding two positions (Elliott, 1991). In other qualitative studies, the hierarchical relationship between researcher and participants is seen as a disadvantage of qualitative research, because “it is the former who makes the decisions about what to study and how to study it, and how voice is represented in the written ethnography (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994). This problem of hierarchical relationship is deemed more serious in participatory action research. When the research is conducted by authoritative figures in the institution, such as teachers in the classroom, the researchers’ authority in the institutions has the potential to directly influence other

participants. This issue of researchers' authority needs to be carefully reviewed and reflected upon, especially in education research; in these cases, teachers' expectations are embedded within their interactions with students and within other behaviors as well, and thus can influence students' performance (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). Moreover, students may try to pretend that the new intervention by their teachers is working either to please them or to make the results look successful so that their teachers will not bother them again with new programs or curricula.

Therefore, it is important for the researchers to have "theoretical sensitivity." Strauss and Corbin (1990) define theoretical sensitivity as a quality of the researchers:

> It indicates an awareness of the subtleties of meaning of data. One can come to the research situation with varying degrees of sensitivity depending upon previous reading and experience with or relevant to the data. It can also be developed further during the research process. Theoretical sensitivity refers to the attribute of having insight, the ability to give meaning to data, the capacity to understand, and capability to separate the pertinent from that which isn't. (pp. 41-42)

In order to develop theoretical sensitivity, the researchers' subjectivity, tendencies, and their power over the research subjects have to be more thoroughly examined. The power of the researchers is a particularly sensitive issue in participatory action research, because action research aims at making changes; researchers have to make decisions about what factors need to be changed and how within the current situation. When a study is exploring certain social phenomena or cultures, then the views, attitudes, and values of the researchers may be seen as providing interpretations from their personal stance. In action research, however, the researchers'

views, attitudes, and values are designed to have a direct influence because the main goal of the research itself is to bring about change.

Therefore, proponents of participatory action research often suggest that practitioners who are involved in this kind of approach should try to expand their sources of information. Researchers' dominating diagnoses of the problem, action planning, implementation and analyses have the potential to limit the process and results. Therefore, getting other members of institutions involved – for instance teachers, administrative members, principals and even the students in the educational settings – will create cultures of inquiry that can benefit the whole institution (Baskerville & Wood-Harper, 1996; Caro-Bruce & McCreadie, 1995; Christenson et al., 2002; Elliott, 1991).

Finally, researchers also argue that even though both ethnography and participatory action research are meant to be conducted in naturalistic settings and the collected data may be unstructured, these findings still may be empirical and thus more objective by purposely, carefully and methodically planning all phases of the research process: the data collection, analysis, and coding. Researchers suggest various ways to gather data reliably, including audiotaped observations, interviews, action experiments, participant-written cases, and diaries by researchers and participants (Baskerville & Wood-Harper, 1996; Elliott, 1991).

In summary, participatory action research is a form of action research that utilizes an ethnography approach. Since this methodology engages knowledge and progressive social change, it is used when a research project aims to advance the quality of education. Through ongoing reflection and close observation of instructional practices and students' learning, educators come to determine effective ways of making improvements in education. Because participatory action research is often conducted by insiders of the institution, the researchers'

power and position can be seen as both a strength and a weakness: while the researchers can have more control within the setting and can positively influence the institution with the research findings, the hierarchical relationship between the researchers and subjects, the possibility of biased views as the researchers' position is not free from the other interests of the institutions, and a lack of professional methodological training are often seen as limitations. These factors can hinder researchers from finding and giving meaning to the collected data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Therefore, it is suggested that researchers expand the sources of information and incorporate other research methods. For ongoing reflection of the educational practices and the students' learning process, documentation is an important factor in participatory action research.

This dissertation utilizes the pedagogical documentation approach, which is elaborated upon in the next section along with its process and application to this research. Then I shall describe the follow-up interview conducted four months after the actual media literacy classes, followed by the approaches that I used for the data analysis.

Pedagogical Documentation

Adopting the participatory action research approach, I practiced media literacy education with North Korean refugees to determine effective ways to undertake this form of instruction, with the aim to strengthen young North Korean refugees' cultural competence and to promote their successful adaptation to South Korean society. In order to better observe and reflect my own teaching practices and students' reactions and interactions, I followed Elliot's (1991) techniques for gathering evidence for action research within educational settings, some of which include: "it is useful when observing a pupil or group of pupils working at a task," "do not intervene in the task students are engaged on," "try to write down as literally and concretely as

possible everything that is said and done," "be very descriptive, "and avoid judgments and high-level interpretations from which it is difficult to tell what was actually happening" (p. 81).

I also documented the class processes by the method of pedagogical documentation, which allows transparent records of educational practices through students' work and teachers' recorded observations and their curriculum documents and assignments (MacDonald, 2007; L. Mitchell, 2003; Moss, 2006). Influenced by the documentation of all educational practices in Reggio Emilia in Italy, Alcock (1996) defined the pedagogical documentation as follows:

> Pedagogical documentation is about making practice visible. It may include written observations of what children and adults do and say, samples of children's work, photographs, video and audio tape recordings. Documentation can provide a basis for evaluation, for managing and implementing ongoing curriculum change and for developing quality from several perspectives (p. 17).

Therefore, I wrote down detailed notes of what happened and what students said everyday after class and made copies of students' work. I documented what happened in the class, such as what I taught and what students did and said inside as well as outside the class, such as at lunch time as well as before and after class. The observation charts also included reflective field notes with my interpretations and thoughts about the class. Through such documentation, I observed and evaluated students' understanding of and adjustment to South Korean culture, the development of their cultural competency, and the influence of media literacy intervention through their class work, participation and informal interactions with me and other people over the break. Sometimes, I was not able to find time to write detailed field notes about the class because I was often occupied by preparing class materials for the next classes. When that happened, I used a digital voice recorder to record what happened in class

along with my own thoughts and reflections. Then, over the subsequent weekend or when I had more time, I transcribed what I said. I tried to transcribe these recordings as soon as possible after the class, no later than three days from the observation, so that I could vividly remember what happened and could reflect more accurately. As I listened to what I said on the voice recorder, I sometimes came up with new insights and ideas. Then, I also wrote these down as well.

It was very crucial for me to document what happened in the class as thoroughly and completely as possible, because I was not allowed to use any recording device in the classroom. Some students were afraid that their identity might be revealed by these sources, because they still had their family members in North Korea or China and their presence in South Korea might disadvantage their family. When any family member escapes to South Korea, other members who are left in North Korea are considered as rebels. Because any North Korean refugees that are in China have the possibility of being arrested and sent back to North Korea, students whose families were in China were not free from the fear that their family could be persecuted because of their presence in South Korea. Knowing their fears, I assured students in the first class that I would not record any class materials by using any sound or video recorder. Also, while some of their works would be included in my dissertation, their names would be removed completely. Some students even asked me if they could use a nickname in the notebook so that they would not have to be concerned with these issues. I told them that using the nickname was a great idea, and in fact other students who did not have to worry about these issues also used a nickname in the notebook or in any work that they submitted, because they thought using a nickname or pseudonym was cool, since they are often used by celebrities.

Pedagogical documentation serves as a starting point for teachers to be aware of what students know, helping teachers to better understand what supports children needs, and what aspects need to be strengthened (Davilla & Koenig, 1998; MacDonald, 2007; L. Mitchell, 2003; Moss, 2006). Because I could not record each lesson, I tried my best to be as exhaustive as possible when documenting what happened each day. This documentation allowed me to explore my own construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction of the unique understanding of the reality each day.

Follow-up Interview

In order to examine the influence of media literacy education in students' lives, I held follow-up interviews with students in January of 2009, four months after they had taken my media literacy class. Because most research in media literacy education has examined the educational effects immediately after students have taken the classes, these studies covered only the immediate consequences of these educational practices. While these studies greatly contribute to the field of media literacy education, it is also important to observe the long-term influence of this instruction (Potter & Byrne, 2007). Therefore, I waited for four months to ask students what they remembered from the media literacy classes and how media literacy may have influenced their mediated experiences.

I kept in touch with several students after the media literacy classes through minihompy in Cyworld, which is a social network website in South Korea. I used Cyworld, phone calls, and emails to recruit interviewees. However, while I stayed in South Korea in January of 2009, several students at the Dandelion School and the Azalea Summer Institute, two of the five institutes at which I had taught during the summer of 2008, had participated in a bible camp and

could not leave for the follow-up interview. I contacted their teachers and guardians to determine if I could visit them at their camp locations. Unfortunately, because the teachers wanted their students to focus solely on camp activities, I was not allowed to visit the camp. Because the teachers were holding onto the students' cell phones at the camp and the students did not have access to a computer during the camp period, I was not able to contact these students. Therefore, I interviewed five students only: one from the Dandelion School and four from the Azalea Summer Institute. These interviewees usually selected the place at which they wanted to meet, which tended to be a restaurant near their house. While having lunch or dinner, we talked casually, catching up with each other's lives. Then, we moved to a coffee house near the restaurant and I conducted the interviews. Although the conversations during the meals were not part of the official interviews, I recorded both these talks during the meals as well as the more formal interviews in the coffeehouses. I first had received students' written approval via consent forms to record even the chats over coffee because these casual talks also included their insights, thoughts, and experiences regarding the media along with what they remembered from the summer classes. Fortunately, I was also able to conduct a group interview at Althea House (the shelter for North Korean refugees) with those students who had taken my media literacy class at the Forest Middle School.

During the interviews, I used an open-ended interview protocol. I designed the interviews to be conversational rather than highly structured; informants thus were encouraged to expand on areas that they felt to be relevant. More specifically, students were asked to share their memories, thoughts and learning experiences about the media literacy course that they took during the summer of 2008 as well as about their current media experiences. They also were asked about how they felt and thought about South Korean society as well as how they evaluated the degree

of their confidence in and adaptation to South Korea. Scholars have argued that the researcher still has an influence on the direction, content, and style of the interview even when adopting an unstructured interview style. As a kind of discourse, the interview process is influenced by the culture, the relationship between the interview and interviewee, language competencies, non-verbal communication, and facial expressions (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Mishler, 1991).

Furthermore, while I took an open-ended interview protocol, I also prepared several questions ahead of time in order to determine if the study's intended educational goals were met. I also asked about specific themes and lessons that students had learned over the summer. Therefore, while I had prepared a list of questions to learn about the influence of the media literacy classes on students' lives, I also was following the students' lead. This ability to balance between constructivity and flexibility is deemed as one of the most important qualifications for interviewers (Sunstein & Chiseri-Strater, 2007).

While I was aware of the possibility of the syndrome common in South Korea in which students tend to want to please their teachers, I hoped that my position as their temporary teacher who did not have any continuing authority would lessen this cultural tendency. Also, since this interview was conducted four months after my presence in the classroom, I hoped that students would feel more comfortable sharing their honest thoughts about the class and themselves.

All the interviews were recorded by digital voice recorder and were transcribed in Korean. Then, the transcribed interviews were compared to students' classwork, homework, and my fieldnotes in order to observe the impact of the media literacy class.

Analysis

In the article "The Research Web," Jacqueline Wiseman (1974) describes the process of finding meaning from the data in qualitative research as follows:

> The qualitative researcher is not unlike the detective in the classic murder mystery. Starting with a few clues, the detective questions persons connected with the case, develops hunches, questions further on the basis of these hunches, begins to see a picture of 'what happened' starting to emerge, looks for evidence pro and con, elaborating or modifying that picture – until finally the unknown is known. The murderer is caught; what was once a mystery is now understandable. The facts have been "reorganized" in a way to connect – with as few contradictions as possible – the vast amount of empirical data. (p. 317)

Bogdan and Biklen (1982) also stated that data analysis in qualitative research is not like doing a puzzle for which the researcher knows how the finished one will look. Rather, it is like drawing a picture for which the researcher does not know how it will turn out until completion.

In order to make the unknown known from the data, the researcher must analyze the data. Without analyzing data collected from the field itself, the data are without meaning and relevance. Corbin and Strauss (2008) identified the data analysis as a process of "examining a substance and its components in order to determine their properties and functions, then using the acquired knowledge to make inferences about the whole" (p. 45). According to Bogdan and Biklen (1982), data analysis in qualitative research is "working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others" (p. 145). Intuition often plays an important role when analyzing data, because the researcher needs to have the "right" feeling

about the whether the findings well represent the core ideas of the data. Such feelings should be based on the process of reading and re-reading the data (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982).

This process of data analysis is also "inductive," getting "analytic generalizations" from the details (Hatch, 2002, p. 11), because themes and topics arise from the collected data. In fact, qualitative research is in nature inductive because its goal is not to verify certain theories or hypotheses, but rather to suggest new theories and insights (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Hatch, 2002; Hoepfl, 1997; Patton, 1990). In order to find meanings from the data and to logically categorize them while without losing the big picture, researchers need to be innovative (Hoepfl, 1997).

According to Ball's chapter in the book *Doing Educational Research* (1991), the first step for the education researcher is to be familiar with the data through reading and re-reading; this process can lead to new ideas and theories. This reading and re-reading of the data and establishing units of analysis needs to come *before* the researcher completes the data collection to insure optimum research and teaching (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Winter (1998) also suggests to "use data from one's own inquiry as a starting point for questing, for challenging, for seeking interpretations" (p. 66) when conducting educational action research. This approach helps the researcher to come up with alternative ways to progress, rather than repeating or confirming what has been known before.

In the process of becoming familiar with the data, the researcher identifies the themes and patterns from the data (Hatch, 2002; LeCompte, 1993). Strauss and Corbin (1990) called this identification of the themes "open coding." It is ideal if the researcher can come up with "descriptive, multi-dimensional categories which form a preliminary framework for analysis" during this open coding process (Hoepfl, 1997, p. 55). Then, the researcher categorizes these

emerging themes and starts to develop the definition of each category and the relationship among these categories. The next step is to compare and contrast these units, helping the researcher to learn the role and significance of each group. After that, by recognizing and analyzing the characteristics of these items, the researcher examines if any of these items can be combined with others, Then, the researcher verifies if these categories accurately represent the collected data and endeavors in order to make the connections among these categories and to present the holistic views and findings from the data. However, this is not a linear process that happens chronologically. As the researcher analyzes the data, new ideas may arise, some parts may be expanded, and other parts taken out, before formulating the conclusions (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Hatch, 2002; LeCompte, 1993).

It is suggested to start the data analysis during the data collection phase, because this can help to organize the data. Because qualitative research for education values the process rather than merely searching for the outcome (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982), initiation of the analysis early can be helpful to continuously reflect upon the research process, leading the researcher to be particularly responsive to areas that need improvement. Commencement of the data analysis during the data collection stage also can help the researcher to manage the enormous quantity of the data and to systematically reflect upon his or her teaching practices. Therefore, I read and re-read my own field notes and the students' work as I prepared for each class, and then wrote new field notes after each class. I also included my own reflections of my field notes as a part of the pedagogical documentation. Data analysis for this research therefore was begun during the data collection process, so that the data themselves were influenced by my own analyses and evaluations.

Because becoming culturally competent is not something that can be completely achieved, but rather is an “integrative” and “transformative” process (Chang, 2004, p. 189; Kennedy et al., 2007), it is impossible to disentangle the effects of specific educational practices in the development of students’ cultural competence. Therefore, rather than searching for a specific sign or evidence that students have become competent, I set out to observe an “integrative” and “transformative” process that could account for signs of cultural competence, by observing students’ knowledge and attitudes. On a practical level, an analysis of the students’ work and my own reflective field notes were continuously undertaken to determine which instructional methods and educational materials were working effectively and which ones were not. In education research, it is important that data analysis and assessment evaluate whether the educational goals are accomplished (Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006). Specifically categorizing educational goals can be helpful when the researcher analyzes the data, such as through these classifications:

(1) declarative knowledge – what students should know and understand,

(2) procedural knowledge – what students should be able to do,

(3) dispositions – what attitudes or habits of mind students should display.

(Marzano, 1992, cited inTomlinson & McTighe, 2006, p. 64)

What students shared in class, wrote in the journal, and communicated during informal interactions all helped me to better assess their gaining of declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge and dispositions. Students’ accomplishments, the successes and failures of instructional methods, and the educational materials themselves were sometimes discussed with the educators who observed my classes. The educators’ feedback also allowed me to reflect upon my teaching more objectively.

Because I did not have a predetermined curriculum – but was designing the lesson plan based on the reflections of what I learned and experienced with students – I had to continuously evaluate my own teaching as well as the students' learning process. This continual practice of evaluating what worked and what did not work, based on students' learning experiences and accomplishments, is a common way to analyze data within the field of action research (Baskerville & Wood-Harper, 1996; Christenson et al., 2002; McKernan, 2008).

In addition, informal dialogue with students before and after the class was also documented immediately after each lesson and analyzed with the use of grounded theory so that multi-faceted issues in the students' experiences as well as in the learning process could be examined unconstrained by my own pre-imposed ideas. The transcripts of the post-interviews were first analyzed by discourse analysis, which is "the analysis of topics." Here, the topics are "the main themes or subjects of speech and represent what language users find more relevant" (Dijk, 2000, cited in Munoz-Navarro, 2009, p. 50). Therefore, I first looked for emerging themes from the transcripts and created another document that organized transcripts according to themes. I also created another document that matched the transcripts with themes that already had been identified from the study's educational goals and objectives.

Conclusion

Chapter Three elaborated upon the theoretical frameworks and practical ways of applying research methods that I adopted for this dissertation project: participatory action research, pedagogical documentation, and follow-up interviews. A detailed account of how I collected data through teaching, educational goals, themes, and pedagogies was also presented in this methodology chapter. Since participatory action research in educational settings seeks to make

changes or improve education, such as in teaching practices or in administrating, educators therefore have to wear two hats: one as an educator and the other as a researcher. Their teaching is their source for the research data and their research in turn advances their teaching. In order to better reflect and holistically record the various elements about education, this dissertation adopted the method of pedagogical documentation. While the themes of media industry, media representation, and stereotyping were taught in the form of textual and contextual analysis along with an inquiry-based learning approach, any emergent curriculum was incorporated to flexibly respond to students' interests and educational needs. My application of these methods and pedagogies will be described in Chapter Five. This next chapter illustrates the socio-cultural contexts of South Korea during the summer of 2008 and how I was able to access different institutions in order to teach media literacy education to North Korean refugees.

CHAPTER FOUR

GETTING INTO THE SCHOOLS WITH MEDIA LITEARCY EDUCATION: INSTITUTIONAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXTS

Many published studies in media literacy education portray the process of obtaining access into educational institutions as so effortless by simply excluding this phase. Media literacy studies do not mention this research phase, as if access is easily granted when educators offer to teach media literacy. This absence of discussion can lead educators to have the illusion that they will be welcomed and appreciated when they knock on the doors of schools to bring them media literacy education. In fact, I myself had that same illusion before I actually stepped into the South Korean schools in the summer of 2008. Even though I previously had taught media literacy at different educational institutions, such as youth media programs, afterschool programs, alternative schools, and public schools in South Korea, China and the United States, I never had to go through this process of gaining access since my situation was different back then. In some of these schools, I had been an insider who taught other academic subjects, such as English and Korean. In other cases, the institutions themselves had been actively looking for a media educator, so I was able to start working immediately as a media teacher after they accepted me. Or, I had taught media literacy as part of other collaborative projects between the university and schools. Therefore, I did not have to go through the red tape to get permission to teach this subject. In reality, however, many media educators who try to teach media literacy in educational institutions with which they do not have any institutional affiliation have to jump through many hoops to gain access to these schools. Nonetheless, it is not easy to find any guidance or description in the literature of how these other media educators went through this process.

In the beginning of 2008, six months before my planned media literacy class, I contacted different schools to obtain permission to teach media literacy to North Korean refugees during the following summer. I was able to procure this permission from four different schools in January of 2008, but several unexpected circumstances occurred and so I had to contact one more school during the summer; I thus ended up teaching in five different institutions with quite diverse contexts, educational goals, and teachers' characteristics. This chapter therefore depicts with much detail what I experienced during the process of gaining permission to teach media literacy, with the aim of providing helpful ideas and strategies for media educators who are going through the same journey.

This chapter also includes the social contexts of South Korea in 2008. One of my educational goals for media literacy education for North Korean refugees was to empower students to be able to critically analyze how realities and different groups of people are represented in the media. Therefore, it was important that I was sensitive to current affairs and create "teachable moments." Therefore, this chapter first discusses the socio-cultural contexts in South Korea in the summer of 2008, as these contexts had a significant influence on my media literacy lessons, which are described in Chapter Five. Then, I describe the process of gaining entrance to different institutions to teach media literacy education to North Korean refugees, and in the process I thoroughly reveal the difficulties and sensitive areas associated with the issue of access.

Socio-Cultural Context of South Korea During Summer, 2008

In order to teach media literacy to North Korean refugees, I stayed in Seoul, South Korea from May 30, 2008 to August 25, 2008. This period is considered as an historical moment in

South Korea, with unprecedented candlelight demonstrations and heated debates all over the country. Since what occurred during the summer of 2008 directly influenced my media literacy class by allowing a "teachable moment," the next section provides a detailed account of the incident that is based on my own observations as well as on reports from periodicals and recent scholarly articles.

President Lee Myung-bak and South Koreans' Perception

When I arrived in South Korea on May 30, 2008, what I sensed was great anxiety among the general public about mad cow disease; the disease might have been caused by imported beef from the United States. Hundreds of thousands people were participating in candlelight rallies, expressing their objections to the government's response and questioning the leadership of the President and the Cabinet. In order to provide the context for what happened during this summer of 2008, I first need to give background information on President Lee Myung-bak as well as on how South Koreans perceived him and what he had accomplished in office.

President Lee Myung-bak, who had run as the candidate for the Grand National Party (GNP), was elected as President of South Korea in the December 2007 election. He then launched his government in February 2008, which was the return of conservative rule after ten years of progressive dominance. National support for the Grand National Party was reconfirmed by its massive win in the April 9th general election two months later in 2008. However, the popular support did not last long, as people's dissatisfaction rose over the government's remarks about its views and plans in several areas, such as education, economics, social welfare, commercial policies, and foreign and inter-Korean relations. The public's distrust in fact had started *before* the presidential election, due to Lee's previous involvement in tax fraud, illicit real

estate deals, and with the BBK, a bankrupt investment firm that was being charged with fraud. While a number of South Koreans earlier had questioned Lee's credentials to be president due to these immoral and illegal behaviors, others still voted for him, trusting his promise to "Revitalize the Economy." Many people trusted this pledge, because as a former CEO (Chief Executive Officer) of Hyundai Constructions, Lee Myung-bak's public image was of a person who had helped to rebuild devastated South Korea after the three years of the Korean War from 1950 to 1953. Yet it did not take long for South Koreans to become disappointed and disillusioned with their newly inaugurated president (K.-I. Kim, 2009; Moon, 2009).

More specifically, the public distrust began when President Lee nominated his Cabinet members. Among the fifteen ministerial candidates, thirteen had been indicted for real estate speculation, seven for tax evasion, and one for plagiarism. Eventually the Ministers of Gender Equality, Environment, and Unification withdrew from the cabinet. The public also raged at the fact that Lee's cabinet represented wealthy, upper class people only, as the Cabinet is comprised of wealthy landowners from the Kangnam region that is the wealthy residential and commercial area in Seoul. Moreover, the South Korean press criticized Lee for not having a diversity of candidates, but rather limiting his choices to his personal networks, as most candidates either had graduated from the same university as Lee did, were attending the same church, or were from his hometown (Moon, 2009). In addition to people's discontent with Lee's cabinet, the public actively expressed via the Internet their strong disagreement with Lee Myung-bak government's plan, including issues regarding education, social welfare, health insurance, North Korea, economy, tax reforms, media law reform, and foreign relations. The famous Internet discussion sites, Daum (www.daum.net) and DC inside (www.dcinside.com), were inflamed with netizens'

discussion about Lee's credentials to be president and his rich-oriented policies (K.-I. Kim, 2009)

Additional public unease arose from educational concerns. According to the "4.15 School Autonomy Initiative," school districts now could have their own autonomy to enforce study hours at night, the zero period, and ranked classes, all of which were prohibited previously. Such study hours at night, despite the use of the word "autonomous," mean that attendance at study hours in middle and high school after regular classes are mandatory. The goal of these required study hours is to give students focused time to study the subjects in which they are behind. Students have to participate in this study hour unless they have proof that they will be attending another educational institute or studying with personal tutors. The hours for such extra curricular studying vary depending on the school, but most schools which enforce autonomous study hours keep students up to ten, eleven, or even twelve o'clock at night during the weekdays and five or six o'clock in the evenings during weekends. The "zero period" means that the study hours take place before the first period. Students who attend the school with a zero period come to school either at seven or eight o'clock in the morning, depending on their school's policy. The "ranked classes" refer to the allocation of students into different classes based on their academic accomplishments. While such ranked classes can be seen as a way to satisfy the different educational needs of various kinds of students, numerous scholars and educators in South Korea are concerned that this system may promote too much pressure and stress on students who are already overwhelmed by an excessive workload. They also are concerned that this system will encourage teachers to take care only of better ranked students, as the teachers may believe that these students are the ones who will bring honor to the school by entering prestigious universities. As South Korean educators in public schools are already blamed for ignoring low-achieving

students, the ranked class thus is opposed by educators and scholars who believe that this system will abandon lower achieving students (C.-K. Kim, Kim, & Lee, 2008; H.-j. Lee, 2008).

Furthermore, although never carried out, the Lee administration also expressed their belief in the importance of and the need for English immersion education, which was one of Lee's presidential campaign promises. The Presidential Transition Committee announced that the Lee administration would make the English immersion education happen, meaning that every school subject in public primary and secondary schools would be taught in English. This policy had been criticized heavily by the media and netizens for ignoring the importance of Korean education (C.-K. Kim et al., 2008; H.-j. Lee, 2008; T.-k. Lee, 2008; Min, 2008; The Associated Press, 2008).

South Koreans were initially disappointed and uneasy with President Lee over several issues, including the "4.15 School Autonomy Initiative," English immersion education, and other new policies that benefited the upper income groups while hurting those with lower incomes. Then the South Korean people became even more outraged with Lee's government when one day before the Bush-Lee summit at Camp David on April 15, 2008 a new agreement with the U.S. was announced, declaring that South Korea would import American beef from all cattle and thus bypassing appropriate inspection measures. The next section further explains the concerns about importing this possibly tainted U.S. beef and the issues surrounding mad cow disease.

The Issue of Mad Cow Disease and Candlelight Demonstration

Since 2003, U.S. beef had been banned in South Korea after the detection of mad cow disease in the United States (Moon, 2009; *The Associated Press*, 2008). However, according to the newly signed contract, South Korea promised the full opening of the local beef market to

American products, without any rights to return the meat to America if any of it was found with any disease or problems (Sa, 2009). Compared to other Asian countries like Japan or Taiwan, the new contract gave much less quarantine sovereignty to the South Korea government. These safety issues regarding the new contract and the details about mad cow disease have been examined and reported by a current affairs television program called *PD Notepad* at Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), one of the major broadcasting stations in South Korea. Their episode on April 29th, 2008, titled "U.S. Beef: Is It Free From Mad Cow Disease?," sparked public concern about the lax safety requirements in the new beef deal, leading to the heated debates on the Internet (Hong, 2008; C.-K. Kim et al., 2008; Sa, 2009).

Finally, hundreds of thousands people, in fear of mad cow disease, joined candlelight demonstrations to support the ban of U.S. beef that was older than 30 months (Moon, 2009). The candlelight demonstrations were not organized by any organizations or particular leaders, but rather by various grass-roots and public forum Internet websites, where thousands of people participated from the planning stages – voluntarily and spontaneously. It was the power of the Internet that enabled this "massive mobilization of discontent" (Min, 2008, p. 94; Moon, 2009). The Agora (http://agora.media.daum.net), the section of the Daum portal website (www.daum.net), functioned as an organizing tool for the protesters. Agora, which was a space for the forum, was used by netizens for various purposes: high school students, who used the Internet ID "Andante," initiated a petition for the impeachment of President Lee; the first candlelight protest was initiated; and demonstration schedules and other specific plans were discussed and disseminated (Min, 2008). The protesters requested the renegotiation of the terms of import to ensure more strict safety requirements, but the Lee administration refused and suppressed the candlelight protests by force, arguing that people were afraid of mad cow disease

due to the unreliable media source. Ignored by the government, people gathered in front of City Hall in Seoul and shouted “Renegotiate!” and “MB (standing for the name of Lee) Out” (Choe, 2008; Moon, 2009)

Min (2008) categorized the candlelight protest participators into four groups, depending on the way that they had used the digital media for the candlelight protests: 1) participant, 2) recorder, 3) analyst, and 4) disseminator. *Participants* are defined as protesters on the streets with candles. They use the personal digital media with their family members and friends to convey information that these others might have missed and encouraged others’ participation in the rallies. *Recorders* are the ones who documented the picturesque footages using both still and video cameras, and then uploaded them to the Internet. During the candlelight demonstrations, they used their webcams and laptops to webcast live on the website Afreeca (www.afreeca.com), where individuals easily can upload the video clips and broadcasts live. From the live video clips uploaded on the Afreeca website, people were able to see the progression of the candlelight protests as well as the brutality of the police suppression, which paradoxically aroused more public anger and encouraged more participation in the candlelight protests. Next, *analysts* are the ones who examined the photos and video clips uploaded by recorders and identified the police who violently squelched the candlelight demonstrators. They also informed other netizens as to what to bring to the candlelight protests and how to react to the police when detained. Lastly, *disseminators* are the ones who share their experiences and new information via blogs and the Internet forums. Their internet entries often initiated debates and discussions among netizens. Depending on the need and situation, netizens flexibly switched their roles from one group to another of participants, recorders, analysts, and disseminators.

The candlelight demonstration, which was initiated as a reaction to the seemingly unfair contract between South Korea and the U.S., is seen as an historical event in South Korea because the protest was instigated not by renowned activists nor continued by existing progressive organizations. Rather it was ordinary people, who were not working for any political organizations and whose participation in politics was limited their entire lives to the act of voting, now were daring to express their own beliefs in the public arena. Moreover, the creative use of digital media in the process of organizing and operating this demonstration has been considered as another landmark event. Finally, the participation by teenagers was an additional noteworthy component of the candlelight demonstration, which will be elaborated upon in the next section.

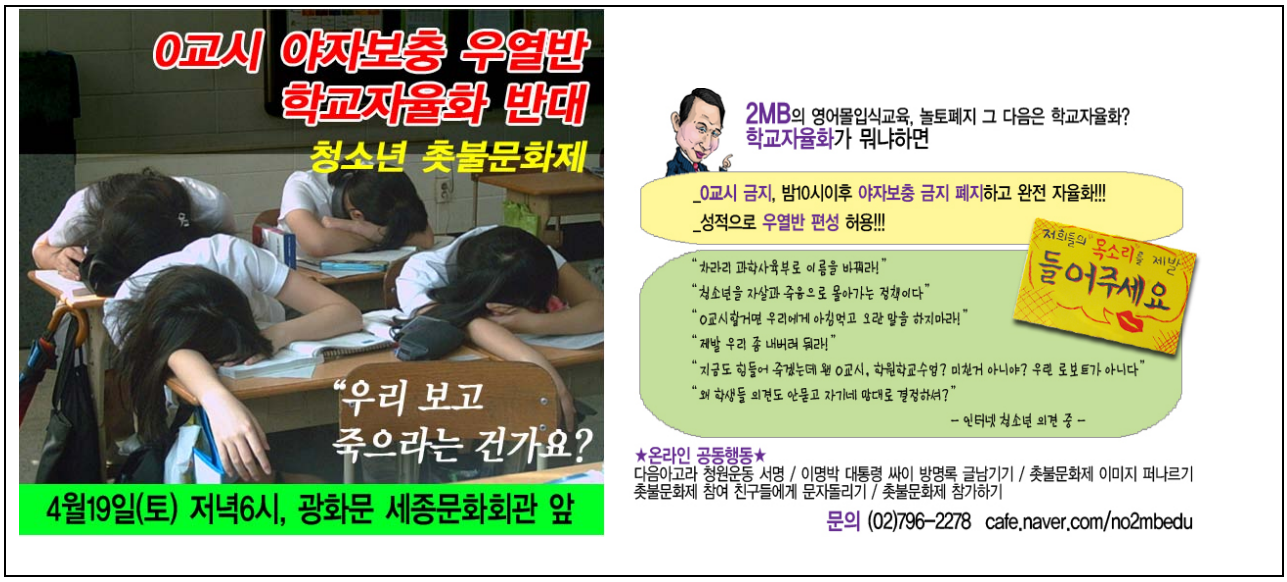
Teenagers in the Candlelight Demonstration

One of the unique and remarkable aspects of the candlelight demonstrations is the fact that teenagers were the ones who first came out on the streets and lit the candles, playing a decisive role in these protests (Burt, 2008; C.-K. Kim et al., 2008; Min, 2008). In fact, the teenagers, mostly girls, are the ones who lit the candles for the protesters. These candlelight protests during the summer of 2008 started on May 2, 2008 and lasted for more than three months (Hong, 2008). The police reported that the second day of the demonstrations had twenty thousand protesters, of which 60-70 percent were middle or high school students (C.-K. Kim et al., 2008). Their participation in turn incited college students and adults, resulting in millions of people holding candles in protest against Lee's policies.

Students' involvement can be explained most notably by their fear that they might be eating the "mad cow disease-contaminated" beef in their school lunches. However, several other reasons have been suggested to explain these youths' courage to hold up the candles. First of all,

as suggested by the slogan on their picket signs, “We Oppose Mad Cow and Mad Education,” the students already were dissatisfied and angered with Lee’s administration due to the new education initiatives, even before U.S. beef became an issue. Students showed their frustration toward the “4.15 School Autonomy Initiative” which gave the school district the authority to decide whether to enforce autonomous study hours at night, the zero period, and ranked classes. As shown in the poster that announced the students’ protests on April 19th against the new governmental educational initiative, their protests began before the *PD Notepad* aired the episode “U.S. Beef: Is It Free from Mad Cow Disease?” which ignited a public debate about the safety of U.S. beef. Whereas students who participated in the demonstration against the new educational initiative can be seen as affiliated with certain groups of progressive and activist teens, more who had never joined any form of demonstration came into the streets to be a part of candlelight demonstrations against the importing of U.S. beef without strict safety regulations. While already resentful toward the Lee government, students declared that they could not trust the safety of the imported U.S. beef, as their school lunches most likely would use U.S. beef since it is cheaper than other beef available in South Korea (C.-K. Kim et al., 2008; H.-j. Lee, 2008; T.-k. Lee, 2008; Min, 2008; The Associated Press, 2008).

<Picture 1: Students demonstrating against “4.15 School Autonomy Initiative”>



<Picture 2: The poster that publicizes the demonstration against "4.15 School Autonomy Initiative" on April 19th>

Secondly, many adults who had a right to vote during the presidential election were not released from blame for their voting for Lee Myung-bak, despite the fact that they knew about his past immoral and illegal conduct. Teenagers, however, were free from that responsibility and felt more freedom to criticize the current government, as they were not the ones who had voted for this administration (Min, 2008). Thirdly, their parents comprise the "386 generation," which played a leading role in Korea's democracy movement during the 80s. Thus the students had learned civic consciousness and critical awareness from their parents that led to their peaceful protests (C.-K. Kim et al., 2008; T.-k. Lee, 2008; Min, 2008).

Finally, as a digital native generation, the students' digital fluency decisively influenced their political activism. Young people in South Korea have better skills and knowledge than their adult counterparts that enables them to access and communicate the information on the Internet more effectively. Thus they strategically used the Internet to shape collective opinions and to put into action what had been discussed on the Internet. These teenagers did not just absorb the information, but analyzed the material by checking the sources and comparing articles from

different presses. They also actively used the new media, including online communities, personal blogs, social network websites, and mobile phones, in order to encourage their friends to participate (C.-K. Kim et al., 2008; H.-j. Lee, 2008; Min, 2008).

In conclusion, teenagers' active participation in the candlelight demonstration was seen as the transformative force that changed the atmosphere and image of the protests. Because of the prevalent image of the "red complex" in South Korea, some people there considered that those who were against the government to be "red" and thus supporters of North Korea; protesters against the government in the past were referred to as "bbal-gang-yee (빨갱이)" which is a degrading expression for "red." Thus the image of protesters in the media, especially in the conservative media, used to be very negative. However, the teenagers' active participation in the candlelight demonstrations changed this image and taught the older generation that protests do not necessarily have to be seriously ideological or political, but can be a venue by which to express their thoughts regarding issues that directly influence their real lives. Unlike their parents' generation who participated in radical demonstrations against the dictatorship, teenagers came out to the streets because they were concerned about the food in the school cafeteria and the possible influence of the new educational policies on their lives. Their demonstrating thus provided an opportunity for the older generation in South Korea to contemplate the meanings of political participation.

Digital Media within the Candlelight Demonstration and Other Views

As mentioned earlier, these candlelight demonstrations are often seen as opening the era of new democracy in South Korea with the use of digital media as well as young people's active involvement and inspiration for a new social activism (T.-s. Jeong, 2009; H.-j. Lee, 2008) that in

turn led to "'the democratization of democratization' movement that pursued the deepening of democracy on the achievement of democracy" (Hong, 2008, p. 10). At the same time, the Lee administration has been criticized for their incapability of dealing with these digital equipped citizens. The police used water cannons, shields, clubs and batons to quell the protesters who were peacefully expressing their thoughts and opinions with candles. When the public was wisely using the new media to gather their own opinions and to discuss what to do to effectively make their voices be heard, the police demonstrated their Internet illiteracy by branding Daum Agora as a subversive form of organization; the police were not able to comprehend how individuals from different backgrounds, without any common affiliation, managed to gather at the Agora website to share their opinions and arrange the candlelight rallies (Hong, 2008; C.-K. Kim et al., 2008; Min, 2008). In the article "Analog Government, Digital Citizens," Min (2008) illustrated this phenomenon as the gap between a digitally fluent public and an illiterate police force: "A government armed with water cannons, shields and clubs is facing off against citizens armed with the Internet, mobile phones, and digital cameras" (p. 95). While the police used walkie-talkies to communicate, the netizens were using Google Earth to locate the police positions and their movements and to advise other netizens about how to evade the police officers (Min, 2008).

Such criticism and blame also sparked the netizens and candlelight participants. The government and those who supported the government, including the press with its right-wing tenor, expressed strong opposition toward the candlelight demonstrations, arguing that the Internet-based public opinion was not healthy nor fair, because inaccurate information was easily circulated (Y. Kim, 2008; Min, 2008). They saw the use of the Internet by candlelight protesters as "impersonal and seemingly uncontrolled Internet-based social mobilization" (Y. Kim, 2008, p.

1). Such views are well reflected by the remarks of politicians in the ruling party. During the 18th National Assembly, President Lee Myung-bak stated that he did not believe in Internet public opinion, and referred to the netizens as victims of a form of "epidemic" (Min, 2008). Joo, Sung-young, the representative of the Grand National Party (GNP), criticized Agora, the Internet forum space, as "digital trash dump where a few Internet vagrants fan anger and hatred in the guise of a majority." The floor leader of the GNP, Hong, Joon-pyo, said that "The Internet is a space where groundless rumors and false stories circulate" (Min, 2008, p. 95). Although Lee's approval rate sank to the bottom during the candle demonstrations and did not reach higher than 30 % even after the protests (Moon, 2009), the critical views held by the Lee administration toward the candlelight demonstrations and the role of the Internet in the protests also could be found among the supporters of Lee as well as among adults who were skeptical about the new media and the candlelight rallies. For instance, these skeptics viewed the teenagers who were engaged in the candlelight demonstrations as "children befuddled and manipulated by rumors" (Min, 2008, p. 96). Others often heard remarks by both the supporters of the Lee administration and the opponents of the candlelight rallies that reflected the notion of a "red-complex" in South Korea, since conservative critics during the demonstrations often called the candlelight protesters "North Korea-friendly," "North Korea supporters," "extreme reds" and "anti-American" (J. S. Chae, 2009; Hong, 2008). These epithets were used even though the candlelight protest during the summer of 2008 was often seen as political participation that was not directly involved with ideological issues regarding the tensions between North and South Korea. Multiple media spin existed during this time, defining the realities about the candlelight demonstrations. While some media sources showed strong sympathy for the protesters, other sources demonized them.

Therefore, when I arrived to teach media literacy in the summer of 2008, I was aware that my work would take place at a strongly historical moment while candlelight was illuminating South Korea and people were intensely debating these issues both online and offline. As the media played a crucial role in these candlelight protests and in other relevant events, I hoped to capture a teachable moment from these incidents and make the media literacy classes relevant to what was happening in South Korea. As a result, I was able to identify the following media literacy lessons by reviewing the candlelight demonstrations: 1) the views and veracity portrayed in the current affairs television programs, 2) the ways that people used the Internet to shape public opinion, 3) the different stories and tones used in reference to the candlelight demonstrations by different news agencies, and 4) the candlelight protesters' use of webcams and laptops in the midst of the demonstrations to convey the real stories that they felt were disguised by some of the major news agencies. Therefore, when I arrived in South Korea on May 30, 2008, I hoped to use this timely opportunity to create a memorable teachable moment for North Korean refugees. Nevertheless, despite my previous arrangements with various institutions to teach media literacy education, I had several unexpected obstacles when I stepped into these sites, which will be further explained in detail in the next section.

Non-transparency of Access Issues in the Field of Media Literacy Education

Among the many scholarly articles and books that analyze young people's mediated experiences or examine the practice and/or the effects of media literacy education, there is usually no explanation of how these researchers obtained access to the institution under study. Whether the scholars observed media literacy classes that were taught by school teachers, they actually taught the media literacy classes themselves for research purposes, or they solely

interviewed students to learn about their mediated experiences or their media literacy classes, the process of how these researchers were able to get into the classroom is often not presented.

For instance, in the book *New Literacies in Action: Teaching and Learning in Multiple Media*, William Kist (2005) observed classes for two to five consecutive days and interviewed teachers in six different educational institutions to learn how teachers embrace new technologies and new literacy. While his seven- year long research describes thoroughly what he observed at each institution, he nonetheless does not tell the readers how he contacted these schools nor what the process was that he underwent to access these institutions. In her research that compares children's digital gap between two schools – one with a high end of technology and the other at a low end, Ellen Seiter (2005) taught at both schools and observed the disparities among children in terms of their use of the computer and Internet. While she gives a comprehensive explanation of her classes and of her observations of young children's computer use, she does not provide an account of how she was able to secure the opportunity to teach at these two institutions. Both Kist (2005) and Seiter (2005) are university professors whose research occurred in the public schools. However, readers are not able to ascertain what these academicians had to do in order to "open the doors" of these schools to obtain their research subjects.

It is not only these two books that exclude explanations of how researchers implemented media literacy education with their school contexts. In fact, most articles and books that incorporate field research at schools or at other types of educational organizations do not explain how these researchers were able to gain access into these sites. The reason for not presenting such information may be that most of the time the main theme and focus of the research regarding media literacy education or children's mediated experiences are to observe what is happening in the classroom or to ask questions via surveys or interviews to learn about the

influence of media literacy education or the impact of the media in the lives of young people. Thus, the actual process of obtaining permission to enter the classroom is often seen as a pre-stage of the research that needs to occur before conducting the "real research."

As a still emerging field, it makes sense that most scholarship in media literacy education emphasizes the content and practice of media literacy education and their educational effects on students. However, because most of this research is conducted not by existing school teachers, but rather by scholars who are affiliated with colleges and universities, the process of contacting institutions and getting permission to teach and/or to conduct research within schools is often a mandatory research step among media literacy scholars. This process often can go very smoothly because of either the already existing relationship between the university and the school research site or the researcher's personal networks. Some schools welcome university professors or graduate students as they see their presence as helpful supports which can enhance the quality of their education and classroom management (Fisherkeller, 2002). Yet for some scholars, opening the door of public schools or educational institutions for research purposes sometimes may be very challenging, as some schools view university-affiliated researchers as those who would force what they think is right on teachers. Furthermore, even after stepping into schools, their different goals, expectations, and educational beliefs can make the collaboration difficult (Hobbs & Yoon, 2008). Therefore, it is imperative that researchers are aware of the complicated nature of entering educational institutions with the purpose of studying media literacy. Media literacy scholars usually have blueprints of the positive educational impact on students and are not aware of any potential difficulty in the process. While such blueprints can motivate scholars at the university level, it is important to be aware of potential obstacles within primary and secondary institutions so that researchers can flexibly cope with such unforeseen problems.

While the main goal of this dissertation is to articulate how media literacy education can enhance North Korean refugees' cultural competence and promote better acculturation, in this chapter I articulate the process of how I was able to gain access into these institutions as well as the obstacles I experienced; in this way, readers are able to understand the unpredictable journey that I experienced while getting into these educational institutions so that I could make media literacy education and research happen. It is expected that readers can see how educators and school leaders in different institutions hold different understandings of media literacy, influencing their attitudes toward my classes. The next section therefore includes how I had to sensitively adapt to the five different institutions based on the differential characteristics of each school and the educational expectations of each educator. This process will demonstrate how I flexibly responded to their existing educational needs and different understandings toward media literacy education. I believe that a description of this process and of the institutional and socio-cultural contexts will be helpful for other media literacy scholars, so that they can see that teaching media literacy at institutions in which the researcher does not have an affiliation is more than the lesson plan design and in-class instruction.

Obtaining Permission to Teach Media Literacy: January 2008

In December 2007 and January 2008, I was in South Korea for a family matter. During this time period, I contacted several institutions to get permission to teach media literacy education during the summer of 2008. Because I was planning to stay in South Korea for only three months during the summer, I wanted to use this time fully in the classroom to teach media literacy, rather than in spending time knocking on the doors of the schools to obtain permission. As a result, I was able to get consent from four different schools, as shown in <Chart 1>. In order

to protect the privacy of the school and students, pseudonyms were used when referring to the names of schools, teachers and students. The following sections discuss the different characteristics of teachers, educational environments and goals that I encountered and vividly describe the process itself by which I was able to obtain permission to teach media literacy during the summer of 2008.

Name of the Institution	Description
Dandelion School	Church affiliated alternative school designed exclusively for North Korean refugees. Rented the apartments to use as a dormitory.
Forsythia School	Church affiliated alternative school designed exclusively for North Korean refugees. Rented the apartments to use as a dormitory.
Althea House	Housing facility for North Korean refugees. Residents, ranging from children to young adults, attend local public schools or other vocational schools. Nobody attends educational institutions that are designed exclusively for North Korean refugees.
Azalea Summer Institute	Non-profit organization that works for North Koreans' human rights. Runs the summer and winter camp for North Korean refugee teenagers. Students concentrate intensively on studying Korean, English and math at the camp. Other electives are offered as well.

<Chart 1> Education Institutions which allowed me to teach media literacy class as of January, 2008

Dandelion School and Forsythia School: Their Views towards the Media Literacy

As part of the proposed plan to teach media literacy education to North Korean refugees using the participatory action research method, I first needed to obtain permission to teach media literacy education during the summer of 2008 to North Korean refugees who had resettled in South Korea. Thus, my first action in the field when I visited South Korea from December 27, 2007 to January 19, 2008 was to contact academic personnel in educational institutions that teach North Korean refugees in order to discuss my teaching a media literacy course at their facility.

The first two schools from which I received permission to teach media literacy are both alternative schools that are designed solely for North Korean refugees. I gained access to the first alternative school by contacting school leadership groups through my own personal network. A friend of my mother-in-law is a volunteer English teacher in this alternative school for North Korean refugees, so I could easily meet with the Vice Principal of this school which I will call "Dandelion School" in this dissertation. I was able to contact the other alternative school through a Korean friend who is doing his Ph.D. studies at the Fox School of Business at Temple University. He introduced me to his friend who had volunteered at the second alternative school that too is geared solely to North Korean refugees, teaching several academic classes to help them prepare for the qualification examination for their school diploma. Through him, I was able to meet the Principal of this second alternative school, which I will call "Forsythia School" in this dissertation. Both Dandelion School and Forsythia School are Christian schools, run by pastors or missionaries. Both schools offer academic preparatory courses so that students are ready for their school diploma exams, as well as extra curricula courses like arts, music, physical exercises, and Bible study.

Both the Vice Principal in Dandelion School and the Principal in Forsythia School expressed uncomfortable feelings when they heard that during the summer of 2008 media literacy education would be taught as part of my dissertation project. They talked about how they had experienced some scholars who had exploited North Korean refugees for their own research purposes. However, their attitudes immediately changed when I told them that I would prepare the course and teach the media literacy subject material myself rather than asking their teachers to teach the course and conduct the survey afterwards. They shared how their students are tired of participating in surveys, resulting in their not paying attention to or caring about what they

mark on the survey sheet. Educators in these two institutions liked the fact that I would volunteer as a teacher, as they often had experienced a deficit of teachers during the summers, since many of their college student volunteers are not available during this time.

Both the Vice Principal in Dandelion School and the Principal in Forsythia School also liked the fact that I could teach students about media because they believed the mass media negatively influence North Korean refugee's acculturation process. They considered media as negative and harmful because they teach students wrong values and morals and often make students obsessed with video games, the Internet and television; such views are similar to those of the protectionists who believe in the negative influence of the mass media on young people. While both school leaders had negative views towards the mass media, they had different attitudes toward and expectations of media literacy education. The Principal in Forsythia School was open to what I could teach during the summer because he did not believe that the media literacy education could actually change the ways that students use the media unless it is implemented for a long period of time. However, he considered my media literacy education class as an opportunity to teach South Korean society to students:

> It would be really great if you can stay in South Korea for a year or two and teach media literacy education to my students. Since you will be with us only for three months, I do not think kids will actually make any differences in terms of their media usage and experiences. But I believe that this can be a great opportunity for students to learn other aspects of South Korean society. We used to have a documentary filmmaker who taught film, movie and documentary as a volunteer teacher. Because he showed a lot of great films that students might have not known otherwise, students loved his class. Students learned a great deal about South Korea through the great documentary films he showed.

> He is now working on his own film and does not have time to teach that course anymore. If you can teach the media, even for the short time, I am sure it will be a unique and interesting experience for students. (Principal, Forsythia School, personal communication, January 5, 2008)

The Principal continued to say that most students who had learned from the documentary filmmaker were not in Forsythia School anymore because they either transferred to another school or passed the school diploma exam. Therefore, he thought that his current students could benefit from my media literacy class more since they previously have never learned anything about the media. I made sure that my media literacy class would not only show good fictional and non-fictional programs to students and talk about Korean society, but also focus on strengthening their ability to access, analyze, evaluate and create media messages themselves. After listening to my explanation of what media literacy is and reading my plan for the summer, the Principal did not like the fact that media literacy skills included the ability to produce media messages. Although I did not include media production in the plan since I predicted that I might not have enough time and resources to include such production aspects in my schedule, the Principal asked me several times why “production ability” was listed in my description of media literacy and if I really did not have a plan to incorporate production into the media literacy class. Even after I told him that I would not include media production in the class, he still added that teaching media production skills would be too ambitious to carry out during the given time. He also said that he did not think students needed to learn such skills. He also did not like the idea of teaching students how to better "access" different forms of the media, because he believed that students already were overwhelmed by the media. However, he liked the idea of strengthening students' ability to analyze and evaluate media messages:

> When you said "media education," I thought what you meant was using the mass media to teach something, like that documentary filmmaker did. I think students will benefit from learning how to analyze and evaluate these messages, as some students do not have a clear distinction between the real world and how the real world is portrayed in the media. Their opportunity to experience South Korean society is very limited, and they learn many things by watching TV. I often tell students that they should not always trust what they watch on TV, but because stories on TV make everything so real, even adults in South Korea change their moral standards after watching TV dramas. How can we blame our students from North Korea for having money-oriented, lewd and debauched values and lifestyles? I also believe that the mass media make North Korean refugees insecure and less confident, because they compare themselves with celebrities or TV characters. Students are getting pressure from the media, like peer pressure. Perhaps, deconstructing the media messages can make students to have at least some distance from the media and contemplate the values that they absorbed without any awareness. (Principal, Forsythia School, personal communication, January 5, 2008)

While the principal in Forsythia School considered the media literacy education as an opportunity for students to better learn South Korean society and to enhance their confidence, the Vice Principal in Dandelion School saw the media literacy education as a way to protect her students by teaching them how to critically analyze the immoral values and ideas in the media and by ‘curing’ them of their media addiction. She used the word "Satan" when explaining the influence of media on students, because students get to watch on television, Internet, and movies sexual content that includes pornography, violence, and materialistic values. She said that teachers in Dandelion School work hard to positively mediate students' media experiences, both

in the dormitory and school, by restricting students' media usage. Nonetheless, teachers were experiencing difficulties and challenges in monitoring students' media usage because they can easily access the internet at the Internet café, called PC Bang, by paying less than one thousand won (one dollar in US currency) for high speed computer use and can watch the television programs from their electronic dictionary by using the DMB (Digital Multimedia Broadcasting) service since most recent electronic dictionaries offer the DMB service for free. Therefore, the Vice Principal at Dandelion School was excited about media literacy education because she regarded this instruction as a way to teach the negative influences of the media and how to reduce students' media use.

Because her expected goals of media literacy education were to protect North Korean refugees from the hazardous mass media and to instill in them negative attitudes toward the mass media – while my objective was to empower students by strengthening their ability to access, analyze, evaluate and create media messages and by equipping them with the knowledge about the socio-cultural and institutional contexts of the mass media – the Vice Principal in Dandelion School expressed her discomfort with the word "empowerment." She believed that most North Korean refugees are not ready to be empowered, but rather need specific guidance in terms of what to do and what not to do. However, the idea of strengthening students' ability to analyze and evaluate media messages led her to consider that media literacy education could be an effective way to make students aware of the prevailing dissoluteness in mass media content:

> If students get to learn how to analyze and evaluate the messages on television, it means they learn to make a judgment if the message is good or bad, right? That means they must have some sort of criterion so that they can draw the line between good messages and bad messages. These North Korean refugees learn all these materialistic values from the

> media, because that's the only thing that today's media convey: money. Students learn South Korea society from the media, and understand the society as dangerous, materialistic, and intemperate. They want to purchase the goods with the famous brand names. They want to buy advertised items. It is not only that. Students are becoming insensitive to all these sexual and violent content. (Vice Principal, Dandelion School, personal communication, January 7, 2008)

I asked the Vice Principal if teachers in Dandelion School have tried at least to talk about these issues. She said that they had never talked about what students learned from the media, but teachers have tried to teach the right values and morals, which are different from what they watch on television and from other forms of media:

> As far as I know, I don't think teachers have ever talked about the values represented on TV, although some teachers might have addressed these issues in class or during individual conversations with students. However, I know all teachers work hard to teach students the right values and morals that reflect a Christian spirit. Yet many students do not pay attention to their teachers' words because they often consider teachers' words as boring and trifling. However, students might have different attitudes to your words as you are young and new to them. (Vice Principal, Dandelion School, personal communication, January 7, 2008)

Even though I could not fully agree with the educational goals and expectations related to media literacy education of both administrators, such as their anticipation that media literacy would be able to make students stay away from the mass media or media literacy could be used to deliver Christian values, nonetheless I found it difficult to oppose their views directly in their presence, as I had to get their permission to teach the course. However, after lengthy

conversations, I was able to clarify that the goals of my media literacy lessons would not be to instill students with negative attitudes toward the media or to encourage them to stop using the media, but rather to help them develop the habit of inquiry and critical thinking skills. Thus I finally was able to obtain permission to teach media literacy to North Korean refugees during the summer of 2008 in Dandelion School and Forsythia School.

Although the Vice Principal in Dandelion School and the Principal in Forsythia School considered the media as harmful and expressed disappointment when I told them that simply turning off the television or computers would not solve the problem, they still welcomed the media literacy class because they had observed that students were learning South Korean society from the mass media. Their observations of the process of North Korean refugees learning about South Korean society through the media echoes Kim's (1977, 1991) study on intercultural communication of immigrants and refugees. According to Kim (1977, 1991), mass communication can play a vital part in the adaptation process for newcomers like immigrants and refugees, especially during the early period of migration. Immigrants and refugees often feel uncomfortable about developing interpersonal relationships when they do not have an adequate level of intercultural communication competency. This discomfort leads them to choose less stressful ways to learn about a culture, often through the mass media. Mass communication allows safer communication activities by providing indirect interaction with socio-cultural environments, and therefore expands “the immigrant’s experiences in the host society beyond the immediate environment” by providing diverse aspects of the host culture (Y. Y. Kim, 1991, p.386). According to the Vice Principal in Dandelion School and the Principal in Forsythia School, young North Korean refugees were using the media not only to compensate for their

limited opportunities to experience South Korean society, but also to learn about the parts of the society to which they did not have direct access.

Although I was able to get approval to teach media literacy in two alternative schools, both of the directors did not give me any definite word as to how many classes I would teach, how often the classes would meet, how many students would be in each class, and what kinds of students I would have, such as their age group, the years they lived in South Korea, and their academic levels. Both schools arranged their school events and class schedule to prepare for the early August national school diploma exams in the most efficient way. I asked both school directors if I would be able to teach media literacy during June and July when students would be intensively studying for these exams.

I also queried them regarding their institutions' summer plans, because many alternative schools for North Korean refugees start their summer vacation immediately after the school diploma exams while others offer academic courses or extracurricular activities. Some educators believe that giving North Korean refugee teenagers too much free time can lead them to fall into temptation or trouble, because they are accustomed to a high pressure life style and do not know how to make use of leisure time in a healthy way. These educators also told me that students want to be regulated by a systematic school schedule during the summer so that they can spend their time wisely. Since several educational institutions for North Korean refugees offer summer programs due to these reasons, I wanted to know whether Dandelion School or Forsythia School had any plans to run summer programs after the school diploma exams and if a media literacy course could be offered as part of that program. However, neither Director gave me a clear answer, and therefore I was not able to learn how often and when I would be able to teach media literacy and to how many North Korean refugees. Because of this uncertainty, I searched for

other educational institutions for North Korean refugees. However, it was a sensitive issue for me to work with several institutions at the same time, which will be elaborated in the next section.

Partnership and Competition among Institutions for North Korean Refugees

I was concerned about the possibility of not being able to spend enough time with students to teach media literacy since as the exam date approached teachers might want to spend all their summer school hours in preparation for the school diploma exams. Therefore, I wanted to contact other educational institutions for North Korean refugees to discuss potential media literacy courses at these schools. I started to look for other educational institutions that provide education to North Korean refugees. Even though I knew that educators in Dandelion School and Forsythia School are quite knowledgeable about other educational programs for North Korean refugees, it was a very sensitive topic to ask for guidance from these teachers about other institutions. Educators who work for North Korean refugees often ally as a team to help North Korean refugees better acculturate in South Korea. For instance, in the summer of 2008, 66 institutions that work for North Korean refugees – such as non-profit institutions, social welfare centers, schools, research institutions, and religious affiliations – collaboratively created a document that includes ten suggestions to the government for making new policies or modifying current policies in order to help North Koreans better adjust to their new culture. They also held a press conference collectively to appeal to the public to gain support for their new agenda.

However, at the same time tension exists among the institutions as they often have to compete with one another for limited grants and support. Moreover, their different views and attitudes towards North Korea and North Korean refugees have led them to have dissimilar

beliefs as to how to help North Korean refugees better adjust to South Korean society. While some believe that offering education that is geared toward North Korean refugees is necessary as this group has different educational needs compared to native South Korean students, others believe that isolating North Korean refugees from public school can delay their acculturation process so North Korean refugees should attend public schools and be blended into the mainstream. Another tension arises from the religious affiliations of these institutions. Most of the educational institutions for North Korean refugees are established and funded by their religious affiliate, mostly by Protestants. However, some educators and social workers believe that having a religious affiliation can limit education by restricting what educators can do for North Korean refugees.

Still, the greatest tension is created by students' mobility. North Korean refugees often move to other institutions when they are not satisfied with their current institution or experience any challenges or conflicts. The problem of their switching schools is related to funding issues, as the extent of student enrollment and the results of the national school diploma exams are directly related to the funding and support each institution receives. Therefore, while these institutions work as partners to help North Korean refugees, at the same time they are rivals and competitors of a fixed amount of funding. I have heard about these tensions and complicated relationships from several social workers, educators and volunteers who work for North Korean refugees and I sensed these tensions when I was communicating with school leaders in Dandelion School and Forsythia School. Therefore, I did not ask these administrators about other institutions where I could teach media literacy during the summer of 2008.

Searching for More Venues to Teach Media Literacy to North Korean Refugees: Stories of Failure

Because I was not able to ask the educators and administrators in Dandelion and Forsythia School, I turned to other sources to learn about other types of institutions and educational programs where I could teach media literacy. Both of my previous North Korean students who had learned media literacy and other academic courses with me during 2002-2003 as well as my other informants who had introduced me to the Dandelion and Forsythia Schools helped me to expand my search by giving me the names of the institutions where I could possibly teach. I also did extensive research on the Internet. Finally, I was able to find contact information from seven additional institutions that provide education to North Korean refugees: two alternative schools exclusively for North Korean refugees, four social welfare centers that have educational programs for North Korean refugees such as after school programs, summer programs or job training courses, and one non-profit organization that works for North Koreans' human rights but also provides a summer institute for teenage North Korean refugees.

When possible, I first contacted these institutions via their own websites. Many of these institutions have their own websites and had a section where volunteers can upload their application. Whenever such forms were available online, I completed the application forms for educational volunteers. These institutions often recruit volunteers who can teach certain academic subjects to help students prepare school diploma exams or extracurricular courses like art, music, martial arts, or computers. When the online application forms were not available, I either emailed my course description to the email address that I found after the thorough web search of the institution or called these institutions and explained the course via the phone.

Because none of the education institutions to which I had submitted an online application or sent an email contacted me, except one non-profit organization, I called these institutions to talk about my summer media literacy course. Some educators and staff members told me that it would be hard for them to give me a definite answer because they did not have specific plans for the summer yet, but would be able to tell me some time later in the spring whether I would be able to teach a media literacy course at their school. Some educators and staff members said that because they always are in need of volunteers, I might just contact them when I come back to Korea in the summer of 2008. Still, I was not able to receive definite go-aheads from any of these institutions. Some of the educators or social workers with whom I talked on the phone were very excited about the idea of media literacy and talked about the great benefits that their students would experience by taking a summer media literacy course. They said that they needed to talk with their bosses or other people who have authority to decide whether to offer the course or not. However, they either did not call me back or told me that they would not know until April or May. I called again those who promised that would call me back, but never did. Some of them said that they might be able to allow me to teach media literacy, but none of them gave me a definite "yes." One social worker in a social welfare center asked me if I could teach media literacy to native South Korean students rather than to North Korean refugees, as North Korean refugees often spend their summer in preparing for the school diploma exams or in catching up with academic subjects if they are attending public school. She continued that they need teachers who can teach extracurricular activities for underprivileged native South Koreans, but need more academic courses for North Korean refugees. Therefore, she asked me if I would be willing to teach media literacy to South Korean students from poor families instead of North Korean refugees.

As I previously indicated, having "the educator's feet in the door of an institution" and gaining permission to teach media literacy education are part of a complicated process that does not easily take place, as many media educators would expect. Although I received permission from two more institutions over the winter of 2007 (which will be explained in the next section) and from one more institution over the summer (which will be described in Chapter Five), it is important to note that I had more failures than successes when accessing different institutions with the offer to teach media literacy education. Therefore, once again, scholars, educators and researchers need to pay close attention to this issue of access, and what makes access successful when they knock on the doors of educational institutions to propose media literacy education. The next section is about how I was able to successfully procure permission from two different institutions.

Getting Permission from Two More Institutes: Azalea Summer Institute and Althea House

While I was not able to hear the positive responses from most institutions that I contacted without any previous relationships or networks, one non-profit organization that works for North Koreans' human rights replied back to my email. This institution offers weekend classes to teach academic subjects with which North Korean refugees often struggle. During the summers and winters, they provide an extensive summer and winter institute for teenage North Korean refugees to allow these students to catch up with their academic subjects –especially math, English, and Korean – the subjects that North Korean refugees often struggle with the most. Because many students have not received any formal or informal education after they defected from North Korean, as they had to hide themselves in China and other countries on route from North Korea to South Korea, and because what they learned in North Korean schools and what

they are learning in South Korea is different, most material that they learn in the South Korean educational system is new and challenging. According to educators, young North Korean refugees experience less pressure from history, sociology, or science, as they can easily memorize them. However, students are afraid of math, English and Korean subjects, as these subjects require a good foundation in order to move up to the next level and students need to do more than mere memorization. Therefore, since 2001, this institution has offered summer and winter programs in order to lay a good foundation for these academic subjects among North Korean refugees. As this program requires students to make a full commitment during the session, all participating students live in a dormitory during the session so that they can block out their time and be focused. In order to offer balanced, whole education, the institution also provides other extracurricular activities.

In January 2008, I emailed this institution and proposed the media literacy education course for their Summer 2008 program, which I will call “Azalea Summer Institute” in this dissertation. I received an email from the educator who is in charge of the summer and winter Institutes, with positive comments and expressed interest in media literacy education. Next we talked on the phone about media literacy and I was soon invited to her office. I had a meeting with her and her colleague who worked for the previous summer and winter Institutes. Both of the school directors perceived media literacy education as a kind of cultural educator, most likely because they considered the media as greatly influential in the formation of the country’s culture and the media themselves as cultural agents. They also talked about the difficulties of managing North Korean refugees' media usage due to these students’ unique backgrounds. For instance, they told me about a boy whom they had taught previously. He had been addicted to television since he was in China. After defecting from North Korea to China, he took shelter in somebody's

house for five years. All that he did during these five years in hiding was watch television. He watched both Chinese as well as South Korean television programs since many South Korean television programs are broadcast on Chinese television channels or widely circulated in China on videotape. Even after this North Korean boy arrived in South Korea, where he did not have to hide himself any more, he still devoted himself to television. As countless entertaining programs are available on South Korean television channels, he is having a hard time in releasing himself from television addiction.

Although these two summer and winter institute managers shared several cases of negative media experiences with young North Korean refugees, they also said that they did not believe that these problems would be solved in a month – which is the duration of the summer institute. However, they still showed their trust that learning about mass media can give students insights into South Korean society. Therefore, they promised to give me an opportunity to teach media literacy in their summer institute either twice or three times a week, depending on their schedule. They told me that I could teach whatever I considered necessary for North Korean refugees. The only thing they asked me to do was after the summer institute to write a summary of the lessons that I taught, so that they could include my lessons in their reports of the summer institute and could replicate what I did if they felt necessary.

With the confirmation from one institute for a summer media literacy class and a strong possibility with two other schools, I was still searching for organizations who would allow me to teach media literacy to North Korean refugees. While I was struggling to find organizations, my colleague, who teaches media literacy in a Korean language department in a South Korea Teachers' College, introduced me to one professor in the Social Welfare Department in one private university in Seoul, South Korea. She has run art therapy courses in several educational

programs for North Korean refugees. After learning about media literacy and the fact that I wanted to teach this course, she gave me positive feedback about myself: that I was different from those many scholars who do *not* jump into the field, but prefer to conduct their research as outsiders. Her good impression of me led her to introduce me to the Director of one housing facility for North Korean refugees. In this organization, the children attend local public school and the girls live with a resident housemother while the boys live with a resident housefather. The professor who introduced me to the Director of this program was teaching art therapy once a week within the housing facility as an afterschool program.

The director of this housing facility, which I will call “Althea House” in this dissertation, gave me positive feedback about media literacy education and said that he would arrange that I would hold a media literacy class in the middle school which several students in Althea House attend. The public middle school that they attend, which I will call “Forest Middle School” in this dissertation, was recently selected by the Ministry of Education as one of the distinctive educational institutions for North Korean refugees, which means that the school has to run several projects or programs that can enhance North Korean refugees' education. As the Director of Althea House closely works with that middle school, he said that he could suggest that a media literacy class be part of their project with North Korean refugees. He could not give me a definite answer about the frequency of the class since he had to discuss this detail with his teachers. However, he said that if the school rejects this proposal, he would allow me to teach media literacy as an afterschool program, in the same way that students take an art therapy course in Althea House after they come back from school once a week. As secondary schools in South Korea have a winter break from the end of December to early March, he was not able to discuss the possibility of a media literacy course with the teachers while I was in South Korea

during January of 2008, but he assured me that he would make the course happen either in Forest Middle School or in Althea House.

After getting a definite promise from two institutions and the strong possibility of teaching media literacy from two other schools, I stopped looking for a place to teach media literacy during the summer of 2008. During the spring semester in 2008, I exchanged emails with all the institutions in order to confirm the summer schedule and to get signatures on the consent form for IRB (Institutional Review Board) review. While I did not hear from the Director of Althea House whether I would be teaching in Forest Middle School as a part of their project for North Korean refugees or in Althea House as an afterschool program, I got the final confirmation from both Dandelion School and Forsythia School. Therefore, by the end of spring of 2008, four institutions had verified that I would teach a summer media literacy course in their institutions: Dandelion School, Forsythia School, Azalea Summer Institute, and Althea House.

Teaching Media Literacy in Different Educational Institutes: The Context in Summer, 2008

As soon as I arrived in South Korea on May 30, 2008, I contacted school leaders and scheduled the classes. As each institute had different educational goals and characteristics, I too had very varied experiences and challenges across institutions. The rest of this chapter will account for the background of each institution and my experiences there.

Dandelion School: Protectionists' Views on Young People's Media Experiences

During the summer of 2008, my first visit to Dandelion School was Thursday, June 5th, with the purpose of meeting the Vice Principal of the school. After the greeting, she introduced me to the teacher, whom I will call "Ms. Jung" in this dissertation; she was responsible for the class schedule during the summer. Fortunately, she had heard nice comments about media

literacy from the Vice Principal, such as its possible benefits for North Korean refugees after their taking the course. As soon as the Principal left the office, she started to talk about her concerns about media's influence on young North Korean refugees:

> I often go out with students for shopping to buy daily necessaries and other household goods. The time students buy the most daily necessities is when they first come to our school because they will be living in an apartment with other students and a teacher. The problem I experience whenever I go shopping with North Korean refugees is that they always want to buy something they have seen on television or at least the brand they are familiar with, no matter how expensive these products are. I have to remind them that they have only limited amounts of money and cannot buy these fancy products all the time. However, it often makes them frustrated because they believe that other native South Koreans use the goods that are advertised on television and think of me as a mean, miserly teacher. (Jung, personal communication, June 5, 2008)

She continued talking about several specific cases of students and other adult North Korean refugees who rigorously pursue materialism in South Korea and how she believes that such attitudes come from the mass media:

> I know one very successful North Korean refugee who is a thriving traditional oriental medical doctor. He is so wealthy that his house is full of fancy furniture and electronic appliances. He is also very generous and giving and has helped other North Korean refugees a lot. I really revere his generosity and empathy. However, I sometimes feel sorry for his obsession with luxurious consumer goods. I visited his house several times and it is really fancy, full of pricey brands. Of course, he deserves them and I do not blame anybody for having these goods. However, what I feel sorry for is the way he

> shows off. Whenever I visited his house, I had to listen to his bragging about the products he recently purchased. He goes like, "Teacher, look at this. This air conditioner is the one advertised by Ko, So-Young[1]. It is certainly different from the one I used to have." I know the air conditioner he used to have was also a very good one. He replaces goods not because they are broken but because he wants to keep a certain standard of living. He doesn't understand that even people in the upper class do not replace furniture and electronic home appliances that often. He makes me think that even though he does not need these famous brands to be seen as successful because his career is certainly going really well, he still defines his success by the material goods that he uses. (Jung, personal communication, June 5, 2008)

As Ms. Jung was sharing her observations of materialistic behavior and its link to the mass media, especially to advertisements, she became excited about the possible contribution of media literacy education in the process of encouraging students to be less commercialized. She seemed to consider media literacy as a great tool to protect students from negative media influences to which most North Korean refugees are exposed. After talking about how she wants me to teach anti-commercialism in my media literacy class, she voiced her concerns about the candlelight demonstrations and how North Korean refugees were participating in the protests to be a part of their peer groups, rather than to express what they believe to be the truth. She also expressed her strong discomfort about the way the candlelight demonstrations were glamorized in the media and extended her uneasiness to how Christianity was portrayed in the press:

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[1] So-Young Ko is a famous Korean actress who often appears on the advertisements for luxury goods.

> I really do not understand why lots of new media outlets, especially media in the left faction, portray the candlelight protesters as if they are the heroes. This is all started by media's exaggerated report about the safety of U.S. beef. I do not like news reporting these days, because they often do not see the real truth. For instance, news often portrays pastors in big churches as if they are infamous criminals who are trying to pass on the well-established church to their sons. To outsiders, these senior pastors might look like greedy, as they appear to be the ones who consider the church as their personal possession. However, for those who attend these churches, they actually may find the son to be the most suitable leader of that church. The whole story cannot be explained by a few paragraphs in the newspaper or in brief news segments. News often distorts the true stories, and very few people know the real truth behind the news. This can be applied to the candlelight demonstrations. I do not think the true stories about candlelight demonstrators are reported on the news, which depicts these people as if they are the heroes. Just like North Korean refugees, I think many people participate in the protests because this is a trend among young people or among those who want to be look cool. I think mob psychology can explain this. (Jung, personal communication, June 5, 2008)

What I heard from Ms. Jung in June 2008 coincided with what I heard from her boss, the Vice Principal, when I first met her in January 2008. Both of them expressed very strong distrust and discomfort toward the media, and welcomed me since they viewed media literacy as an opportunity to guide students onto the "right path." Just like I told the Vice Principal during the first meeting, I tried to assure Ms. Jung that the goal of media literacy is not to protect young people, make them cynical about the media nor to encourage them to hold certain political views, but rather to develop students' habits of inquiry and critical thinking skills. However, they did

not seem to understand the difference between their approaches to media literacy education and mine. They considered “habits of inquiry” and “critical thinking skills” as tools to make students skeptical and thus to lead them ultimately to stay away from the media. Ms. Jung repeated several times how fortunate her students were because they can take a media literacy class.

I tried to describe to the school administrators why becoming cynical or skeptical is not the same as having the skills of inquiry and critical thinking. However, they continued to state that their students are so fortunate to be learning the negative influences of the mass media. Although I failed to clearly convey my real educational goals to the educators at the Dandelion School, this misunderstanding unexpectedly allowed these educators to have a positive perception of my media literacy classes. Nonetheless, as I began to teach the media literacy lessons at the Dandelion School, I faced other hurdles which will be described in the next section.

Dandelion School: Students’ Reactions and Unexpected Obstacles

Due to such high expectations of media literacy by educators in Dandelion School, they assigned my media literacy class to every North Korean refugee who had come recently to South Korea, scheduling the meetings twice a week for three hours per session from June 10th through July 25th, because these students were not ready to take the degree certification exams in August. While other students were intensely preparing for the exams, these students were concentrating their efforts on learning Korean, Korean writing, English, and mathematics as they needed to have a good foundation of these subjects for their exam preparation. Because Dandelion educators believed that media education can strengthen students’ discernment in terms of their media consumption before they are tainted by the corrupt mass media, they made the media education class as a mandatory course for seven of the recently arrived students. Before I started

to teach, I had a plan to cover the issues of stereotyping, representation, the media industry and other related media topics inspired by the candlelight demonstrations. Nonetheless, as explained in Chapter Two, I did not have detailed lesson plans for each day because I wanted to observe what emerged spontaneously in the classroom by applying the emergent curriculum approach. Therefore, I planned to spend the first session in introducing the topics of media and media literacy as well as in learning about the students' media-related knowledge and experiences.

During the class, I was able to sense that some students were not convinced about why they were assigned to take a media literacy class during a time period when they were busy studying academic subjects. They were not engaged in what was covered in the course, which never happened in my previous media literacy classes with other groups of students. Because the media literacy class is about what students experience in their daily lives, my previous students always were excited and engaged from the very first class. However, while some Dandelion students showed their interest through active participation, other students sometimes sighed and did not seem to pay attention to the class materials. My suspicion was confirmed by what Ms. Jung told me about one student's reaction after the first class:

> Teacher Yoon [a reference to me], after participating in the first media literacy class, Young came to me and complained why the school forces her to take a media literacy class, because she does not want to waste her time in irrelevant subjects but wants to focus on real academic subjects. I told her that she should consider herself as the luckiest student in Dandelion School as what she is learning is invaluable for her to become well adjusted in this society. I soothed her with nice words about the class, but she still seems to be dissatisfied with media literacy class. I think she believes this way about the class because she is a very goal-oriented student who is very ambitious about being successful

> in this country. But because of such characteristics, I am sure she will soon become a big fan of your class, as soon as she realizes how this class is useful and relevant for her. In fact, more students told me that they really like you and the class. Hoon, Myungsook, and Heeyoung said that they enjoyed your class and you are a really cool teacher. But for students like Young, it would be helpful to make the connections between what you teach and other academic subjects that they are struggling with, such as English, sociology, or Korean writing. That will make students consider the media literacy class as more crucial. (Jung, personal communication, June 12, 2008)

After her comments on students' feedback about my first class, I decided to put more effort in making connections between media literacy and students' other academic subjects so that they would become more involved in the class. Therefore, for my next class about advertisements and commercialism, I started by reviewing the vocabulary from the previous class – media, communication, literacy and education – and then introduced the new vocabulary for the current class that were: advertisement, target audience, brand, commercial, commercialism, sponsor, and rating, both in Korean and English. Most students were able to explain the vocabulary from the previous class, but demonstrated no knowledge about the new terms. When I explained these words, I did not only talk about their meaning, but also how they could be used in the students' sociology subjects and Korean writing exams, as some university require Korean writing exams as a part of their entrance exams. As a result, students were more interested and engaged in the class materials. Young, the student who complained about media literacy class to Ms. Jung, was now also highly involved with the class materials.

I think one of the reasons that students cared more about what they were learning in my media literacy class was the comments that I left in their notebooks. On the first day, I gave each

student a notebook that secondary school students often use at school and told them to take notes during the class and to write in their in-class journals when they were asked to do so. After the first class, I collected students' notebooks and wrote one or two paragraph-long comments in their in-class journals about their media memories. I also checked what students wrote down during the class and corrected the material if students wrote any incorrect information or typos. On the second day, I went to the class ten minutes early and returned the notebooks to the students. They in turn checked my comments and I could see from their facial expressions that they were gratified with my feedback.

However, I had to experience a disappointing surprise on the third day at Dandelion School. When I went to the school, Ms. Jung told me that they had decided to make every student who did not graduate from high school in North Korea take school diploma exams in August, so that they can be more familiar with the exams. Although students who recently came to South Korea had a very small chance to pass the exams since they were not well-prepared, educators thought it was important to encourage students to be seriously committed to exam preparation. Therefore, they decided to substitute the media literacy class for an English class for those students who would take the school diploma exams. This decision left my class with only two students – Young and Minjung. In the beginning, I was concerned that I would not be able to effectively run the class with only two students. However, it did not take that long for me to realize that there were also advantages in having a media literacy class with a small group of students, a topic that will be discussed in the next section.

Dandelion School: Media Literacy Class with Only Two Students

One of my two students, Young, was a 21 year old female who graduated from a North Korean high school and worked in a factory afterwards. She came to South Korea in April of 2008. Because she had graduated from high school in North Korea, she was exempted from the school diploma exams and was preparing instead for the college entrance exams. The college entrance exam for North Korean refugees is different from the exam for native South Koreans: North Korean refugees do not need to take the national college entrance exam, but take the exams that are designed by each university specifically for North Korean refugees. While each university has different subjects and guidelines for this test, most universities include the writing test and face-to-face interview in which they ask students about their thoughts on various topics. Educators at the Dandelion School believed that taking a media literacy class would prepare Young for the college entrance exams, as the media are very relevant to the lives of South Koreans. Also, these educators expected that Young would be able to learn more about current affairs in my media literacy classes. However, unlike these expectations from her teachers, as Young and I became closer to each other, she later told me that she was less interested in getting into college and more in obtaining job training at the community college. Another student, Minjung, was a sixteen year old girl who came to South Korean in June of 2008. Because she was adopted by a Korean-Chinese family when she was four years old and her parents did not speak Korean at home, she barely was able to speak the Korean language. Therefore, teachers thought she needed to learn the Korean language and culture before she prepared for the exams; they expected that my media literacy class would help her to gain more knowledge about South Korean society and to be exposed to various vocabulary words in the process.

Although Young complained about the media literacy class after the first meeting, her attitude dramatically changed after the second class. Ms. Jung told me that she asked Young if it would be okay for her to take this class only with Minjung, since there was a large discrepancy between the two students' knowledge of South Korea and the Korean language. According to Ms. Jung, Young considered herself as the luckiest student, given that she was not pulled off to learn English, but rather was given the opportunity to study media literacy. Young told Ms. Jung that she would help her fellow student Minjung so that she could benefit from the media literacy class as well.

When I first was informed that I would teach only two students in Dandelion School, I was concerned that I would not be able to run a "proper" media literacy class, as this small number of students might limit the possibility of undertaking a variety of necessary activities. However, because of the very intimate and flexible atmosphere, I was able to easily adjust the lesson plan based on the students' understanding and reactions. The Dandelion School became my "experimental space" in which I could try out different types of teaching resources, pedagogy, and activities, and receive immediate feedback from the students. Both Young and Minjung enjoyed the flexible nature of this media literacy class and actively participated in each activity.

Educators in Dandelion School also gave me positive feedback about how the active participation of Young and Minjung in the media literacy class was leading these students to have active and energetic attitudes in other aspects of their school lives as well. One teacher commented me that it is amazing how Minjung, who had been always complaining and crying in the middle of class, was – after taking my media literacy class – now laughing and pulling tricks on teachers and friends. In fact, because of Minjung's lack of fluency in the Korean language, she did not pay attention at all in the beginning of the summer session. I had to wake her up

several times because she often tried to sleep on her stomach during the class. Whenever I asked her any question or gave any in-class activity, she always said that "I cannot do this because I do not understand." However, as the session proceeded, Minjung demonstrated a great effort to understand the class materials and to express her thoughts. Whenever she saw me before the class started, she excitedly welcomed me and shouted the phrases like "Yay, today is a day with media literacy class!" Furthermore, the differential levels of cultural and language competency between Young and Minjung actually improved my course preparation and teaching in other institutions. Without exception, in all educational institutes that I have taught media literacy during that summer, I encountered the issue of huge gaps among students depending on their previous educational and life experiences. Therefore, I had to find a way to satisfy the students at different levels; my teaching experiences in Dandelion School allowed me to experiment and reflect upon such methodologies to address the differential needs of students.

Educators in Dandelion School also gave me complete freedom in deciding what to teach and how to teach. Because the teachers were busy during the summer in helping students prepare – not only to take the diploma certificate exams on August 1st, but also to attend a one- week long summer camp after the exam – they did not have time to be involved in my class. They asked me and the students only how the class was going. While the educators' unavailability during the summer isolated me and limited discussions about students' progress or problems, this freedom did allow me to discuss the issues of the candlelight demonstrations, internet activism, and the different views of various media in a more open atmosphere. When I first met the educators in Dandelion School, they expressed very strong negative opinions toward the candlelight demonstration as well as toward the young people's use of the internet and other media; they wanted to teach such views to students through the use of media literacy education.

Such views by educators made me concerned that I would not be able to openly discuss these issues in the classes. However, because they did not intervene in my media literacy classes and allowed me to do whatever I wanted to do, I was able to overtly address these politically sensitive issues with the students and thus hear the students' candid opinions.

While I had the benefit of an intimate and flexible environment in Dandelion School, these open conditions also provided difficulties. First of all, while Young and Minjung stayed in the media literacy class from the beginning to the end of the summer, I had two new students during the session. One student, whom I will call Kyunghee, joined the class on July 11th, which was five weeks after the session started, and the other student, whom I will call Eunsoo, joined the class three weeks before the session ended, which was during the second week of August. Both students had high expectations about the class because Young and Minjung had excitedly talked about the class. However, as they did not have any knowledge about media and media literacy at all, I had to review with them the basic terms and concepts. As Young and Minjung were familiar with these basic terms and concepts when the new students joined, I proposed that both Kyunghee and Eunsoo meet with me separately to review the materials with them. However, because they had to take other classes during the school hours and had different schedules after school, such as part-time jobs and plans with friends and family, I could meet with them only during the class periods. Because I was repeating the same material three times – once at the beginning of the summer session, once for Kyunghee and once for Eunsoo – Young expressed uneasiness with not covering new materials about which she was longing to learn. Minjung, by contrast, seemed to appreciate the review session, which enabled her to ascertain these concepts, as she was still struggling to comprehend each session due to her insufficient Korean language ability. Minjung had made tremendous progress in understanding the course materials as the

semester proceeded, but could not remember what she had learned previously. This forgetfulness made her pay great attention when I reviewed the basic concepts of media literacy and other topics that I covered again in the class for Kyunghee and Eunsoo.

Noting that students greatly enjoyed the media literacy class, Ms. Jung asked me if I wanted to continue the course in August. The school officially would close for the summer right after the summer camp from August 4th to 7th, but teachers still would come to school to prepare for the next semester until they had their one-week long summer vacation from August 25th. Ms. Jung told me that, if I were available, she could have students come to school after the summer camp to learn more about media literacy. All students said that they would like to come to school during the summer break to take a media literacy class; therefore I was able to teach media literacy to students for two more weeks up until the teachers closed the school for their break. As Dandelion School was the only educational institute for which I regularly had met with students for almost three months and therefore had the most intimate relationship with them, I was able to try out various kinds of educational materials and pedagogy for teaching diverse topics. This experimental opportunity helped me to better prepare lesson plans without too much risk occurring in the other institutions, where I had only a few weeks with the students. The topics covered in class, the lesson plans, and the educational effects of such teaching will be discussed in Chapter Five.

Althea House: Media Literacy with Heterogeneous Group with North and South Korean Students

As explained in Chapter Four, Althea House is a shelter where young North Korean refugees live together with houseparents. The policy of Althea House is that all students should attend public schools. All middle school students attend Forest Middle School. On January 2008, I met the director of Althea House, who closely worked with educators at Forest Middle School,

and was told that I should not have any problem teaching a media literacy class. However, when I arrived in South Korea on May 30th, I was somewhat concerned about whether I would be able to teach at Althea House as I was not able to reach the director during the spring of 2008. I sent him emails several times, but he never responded to me. I also called his cell phone, but he never picked up the phone. And yet, when I finally did contact him in the summer of 2008 after I came to Korea, he already had arranged that the media literacy class would take place at the public middle school which several students in Althea House were attending. Since the school was required to run several projects or programs for North Korean refugees because it was selected as one of the distinctive educational institutions by the Ministry of Education, the Director of Althea House shared with me the teachers' excitement over my potential contribution to their program. In early June of 2008, I phoned my assigned teacher at the Forest Middle School; the teacher asked me if I could teach media literacy classes on June 18th, 19th, 25th, and 26th, for an hour each time after school. While the media literacy class would include all of the five North Korean refugees in Forest Middle School, the teacher said that native South Korean students would join the class as well.

I thus went to school on Wednesday, June 18th to teach media literacy to a class which was comprised of both North Korean refugees and native South Koreans. I went to school about an hour early so that I could properly introduce myself to school leaders and educators. They warmly greeted me and appreciated my contribution. However, teachers were concerned about the fact that the final exam period was approaching in two weeks, as students might not pay full attention during the class. I asked them if I could teach media literacy after their final exams. As the semester would end in a few weeks after the final exams, educators thought it would be better to run media literacy after the exams. Therefore, I briefly introduced myself and media literacy

to the students on that day and rescheduled the class to July 9th, 10th, 16th and 17th, which was after the final exam period.

When I went back to school on July 9th, I arrived an hour early in order to spend some time with educators and school leaders and to set up the equipment. As I was talking with teachers at the Forest Middle School, one ethics teacher approached me and said that he had participated in the media literacy teacher training program a year ago. He had been wanting to incorporate media literacy into the school curriculum, but did not know how to do it. Therefore, he asked me if he could observe me teaching students so that he could get some ideas. I told him and other teachers that any teacher could join the class and I would welcome any feedback, as they knew the students better than I did. As a result, four teachers observed the class. Their involvement in fact was very beneficial to me as they helped with class discipline and provided useful feedback in terms of letting me know whether the level of my materials was too difficult.

Students showed a great interest in what was covered in the classroom and actively participated in all activities and discussions. However, the class discussion was mostly dominated by native South Koreans as they had more knowledge and experience with the media. On the first day, I asked students to draw a media map that portrayed how they use the media during a typical day. While native South Korean students were busy drawing the diagram of their media usage and several students asked for more paper as A3 size paper was not enough to include their daily media use, North Korean refugees hardly recalled titles of the television programs that they watched and the Internet sites they usually visited. One boy who came to South Korea a few months before and started to attend the Forest Middle School five weeks before could not even compose a proper sentence. Due to this extreme gap of cultural knowledge and competence that existed between North Korean refugees and native South

Korean students, it was very challenging to find a way to satisfy both groups simultaneously. South Korean students were already familiar with the terms and concepts that I was going to cover and preferred in-class activities and discussions, while North Korean refugees needed to be oriented with the basic terms and concepts.

Furthermore, it was hard for me to find out how much these North Korean refugees knew. After the first class, the biology teacher, who was in charge of North Korean refugees and worked as their mentor, invited me to have a snack with her and two other girls from North Korea. These two girls, Bom and Ha-Eun, were very quiet in the class but were very talkative when I met them outside the class. I asked them what they thought about the media literacy class. Both of them said that they thought it was very intriguing, but they still found it challenging. However, they seemed not to care about the difficulty of the class as they were accustomed to challenging class material. The biology teacher later told me that many North Korean refugees often do not care whether the school materials are easy or not, since they know that their school grades do not matter for them to go to a good high school or university, as long as they graduate. In South Korea, North Korean refugees with school diplomas have a special admission system that makes their high school and university admission easier. In order for them to go to academic high schools and university, they do not have to compete with other South Koreans, but rather they take different exams and have their own interview processes in order to get into schools. While this makes higher education more accessible to North Korean refugees, students who attend the schools that offer school diplomas often do not put enough effort toward achieving higher academic accomplishments.

After having the snack with the biology teacher, Bom and Ha-Eun asked me to go to their house, which was Althea House. There I was able to meet other North Korean refugee students

who were in my media literacy class on that day. As I was hanging out with them, I was able to observe that they could adeptly play online games and visit various types of entertainment websites. As I was watching what they were playing, I checked what they wrote on their media map since this material was in my bag. Surprisingly, students did not include on their media maps these websites on which they spent hours each day. I asked them why they did not include these games and websites, and Bom said that she was afraid that other teachers might find out that they played a lot of internet games. Won-Sub, the boy in the 7th grade, said that he did not recall these websites, as he was focusing on the television programs that he often watches. I asked students if they could explain the media, media literacy, and communication. Although they could partially explain these concepts, none of them was able to clearly account for these terms. Bom said that she had paid good attention to the class materials and understood what was discussed in class, but it was difficult for her to recite the material. Ha-Eun added that she could not understand some parts during which I talked about communication and media literacy, but felt ashamed to ask me to explain these terms, since most South Korean students seemed to understand all the materials so easily. In fact, it is not uncommon that when North Korean refugees are attending a public school with native South Koreans, North Korean refugees feel uneasy in expressing what they do not know, since what they do not know is often common knowledge to South Koreans. Furthermore, North Koreans work carefully not to reveal their identity because they do not want others to know that they previously did not belong in this country.

However, unlike most North Korean refugees who attend public schools with other native South Koreans, North Korean refugees who live in Althea House and attend the Forrest Middle School recently had a coming-out time as a group in front of the whole school. When the entire

student body went to the theater to watch the film *Crossing*, a fictional film about North Korean refugees, these five students all stood in front of other students and confessed that they were from North Korea. They earlier had a heated debate as to whether they should reveal their identity as North Korean refugees to their schoolmates, as most of them were hiding this information. They were afraid that students might have a bias toward them after knowing that they were from North Korea. However, they decided to take a risk and tell their friends the truth, so that they did not have to hide their identities any more and could be themselves. Their supervisors at Althea House also recommended to them that they be honest, as they were inevitably lying about many things in regard to themselves, like their hometown, family and childhood. Supervisors at Althea House believed that it was important for students not to be ashamed of who they are, but rather to be proud of themselves. Nevertheless, despite such a decision to come out about their country of origin, Ha-Eun said that some of them, including herself, did not feel comfortable about this revelation and did not want to be seen as knowing less than the South Korean students did.

<Picture 3: The poster of *Crossing*>

The four media literacy sessions at the Forrest Middle School went very smoothly. Although it was the native South Korean students who were more vocal and active in the class, North Korean refugee students also seemed to enjoy and engaged in all teaching materials. I received very positive feedback from teachers as well. However, when I met them again in January 2009 for the follow-up interview, the media literacy class seemed to have the least influence on them compared to other North Korean refugees in the educational institution that were exclusively designed for them. I do not know whether it was due to the result of the shorter

exposure to media literacy, as I taught them one-hour long four class sessions only, or the result of my failure to meet them midway between what the South Korean students and the North Korean refugees knew. While both facts could have influenced the educational effectiveness of my media literacy class, it was true that up until the last class, I experienced a hard time in figuring out what the North Korean refugees knew, although I often hung out with them after class to learn what they knew.

Forsythia School: Informal Talk and Unstructured Classes

Along with Dandelion School, Forsythia School is the school with which I first made contact in January 2008 and received permission to teach media literacy during the summer of 2008. Therefore, I called Forsythia School as soon as I arrived in South Korea and the Principal invited me to the school to discuss the summer media literacy class. However, when I met with him at the school, he did not give me any specific days and times to teach the media literacy class. Rather, he asked me to come to school whenever I had free time and to meet with the students so that I could become close with them. I told him that I would come whenever I did not have any classes in other schools. Because I made an obligation with Dandelion School that I would teach their students every Tuesday morning and Friday afternoon, I told the Forsythia Principal that I would try to come every Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday if I did not have any other schedule conflicts.

Therefore, after the meeting with Forsythia Principal on June 2nd, I went to Forsythia School on June 4th with twenty-five notebooks, colors pencils and color pens to use in the class. I arrived early in the morning in order to be there at 8:00 a.m. during the homeroom period. All twenty-three Forsythia students and all four teachers, including the Principal, had a homeroom

period together every morning. The Principal introduced me during that time and asked me to say something about myself. I briefly talked about why I came to Forsythia School and what media literacy is. Students showed their interest by asking follow-up questions like “can you please tell me what media literacy education is?” “What do you do in America?” “Can you speak English?” and “Do American students learn media literacy at school?”

After the homeroom, I ate breakfast with the teachers and students. All Forsythia students and teachers eat breakfast at school every day, since they do not have this meal available in the dormitory. Then, students went to their classrooms, either to a middle school class or high school class depending on the diploma exams for which they were preparing. While students were taking their classes, the Principal allowed me to use the computer which belonged to the teacher who was on leave due to his broken leg. Throughout the morning, I was using the computer to prepare the lesson plans and to check news articles and Internet forums about the candlelight demonstrations.

Fortunately, during lunch time I was able to talk with seven students who were doing the dishes. Forsythia School rotate students, in groups of six to seven, and these groups take turns in preparing the meals and doing the dishes. I joined the group that was doing the dishes and casually asked them the types of media that they like. Sung, an eighteen year old girl, told me that she is a big fan of Junki Lee, the famous young Korean actor, and watches television whenever she has free time. Kumi, a sixteen year old girl, said that she loves to watch television dramas and movies, both on television and theater, but hates to read books. Sejoon, a sixteen year old boy, told me that he does not like Korean popular culture, so he spends most of his free time playing sports, like soccer and baseball. He also likes to watch North Korean movies. Younghee, a seventeen year old girl, said she likes to listen to music, both from North and South

Korea, and to spend time with animals. Seok, a seventeen year-old boy, said that he likes to watch action movies and television programs that deal with history, such as historical documentaries or dramas that cover certain historical periods. Seok also added that his dream is to be an American gangster, because they seem to be so cool. When I asked him why a gangster who is specifically American, he said he did not have any reason but one day it just came into his mind. Yeji, a seventeen year old girl, said that she loves scary movies. I was not able to hear from Jinae, a fourteen year old girl, since she was busy sending text messages while other students were doing the dishes.

Students shared their stories with excitement and also asked me several questions, like what kinds of movie I like the most, the celebrities I admire, and the types of music I listen to. Because students do not talk a lot about the computer, I asked them if they use computers. Seok said that most students like to play online games, surf the website, chat online, and use Cyworld, the social networking website in South Korea. However, because they all live together in an apartment which the school rents to use as a dormitory, their computer use is restricted. Their dormitory does not have a computer and at school, they can use only the computer during lunch or break time, unless they are using the website that provides educational contents specifically for their diploma exam preparation. If students use the computer during the unauthorized period for three times, then they cannot use the computer even during lunch or break time. Therefore, they often use the computer over the weekend at the PC Bang, a type of Internet café.

After finishing the dishes, they went to their classes and I asked the Principal for the class schedule for the rest of the day. He said that he was going to ask me to teach media literacy if any teacher did not show up. Forsythia School heavily relies on volunteers for class teaching and many of their volunteers are pastors. Because these pastors sometimes have unexpected events in

their church or with their church members, these volunteer teachers often cannot come to teach and students have free study hours. However, on June 4th, all teachers showed up in the morning. Because the Principal did not get any phone call from any teachers who were supposed to teach in the afternoon, he said that it was very unlikely that I would get a chance to teach in the afternoon as well. Therefore, I returned home after the lunch period. I left the notebooks, color pencils and color pens at the school so that I can use them later.

I went to school again on Thursday June 5th and June 9th, but I was not able to have a chance to teach media literacy as no teacher missed a class. However, during the lunch and break times, I was able to observe students on the computer and thus to learn how they were using this medium. I saw that three students were spending time on the online community for North Korean refugees. Because native South Koreans cannot join as members and cannot view the website, I asked students if I could sit next to them and see the website with them. All of them allowed me to sit with them. On that online community, which was created by North Korean refugees to strengthen the sense of community among these refugees, various types of entries were found, such as the job announcements, useful information like good hospitals or sales of certain products, and personal stories such as good news to share, difficulties at work and family grief. Kumi said that she sometimes visits this website to learn about how other North Korean refugees are faring. Sungmi, a sixteen year-old girl, said that she habitually visits this website and clicks on any interesting writing entries. Yongha, a seventeen year old boy, said even though this website is not heavily used as some grown-ups are repeatedly uploading the entries, he likes it since North Korean refugees are honestly sharing their stories because they know that South Koreans are not permitted in this online community.

As I was observing students' use of the computer, I saw Jung-Ah, a fourteen year old girl, listening to something through the earphones that were plugged into the computer. When I approached her to check her monitor so that I could see what she was listening to, she was surprisingly listening to North Korean music from the Naver (www.naver.com), one of the biggest portal websites in South Korea. On Naver, there is a section where people can search for music and listen to a partial or whole part of a song from the website. Even though I often went to Naver and have known that Naver provides music services, I did not know that users could search for North Korean music. When I later told this to other native South Korean friends and family members, all of them said that they never thought that North Korean music was available on this South Korean website. Jung-Ah said that she visits this website whenever she uses the computer and play the music from the website, as she does not know how to download these songs to her MP3 player. She reported that she feels comforted when she listens to North Korean music.

I also occasionally observed students reading *Hankyoreh Shin-Moon*, one of the most progressive Korean newspapers, or *Dong-A Ilbo*, one of the most conservative newspapers. Both newspapers were delivered each day to the school and any students could read these papers during their breaks. Because only one copy for each paper was delivered, students sometimes shared with other students and read the paper simultaneously. The Principal said that he purposely subscribed to these two newspapers so that students could be exposed to diverse views. I asked students if they see any distinctions between these two papers. All five students to whom I asked this question, however, said that they are not aware of any differences between these papers, as they did not pay any attention to what newspaper they were reading.

Even though students did not attend to the tone and views of these two very divergent newspapers, I could see that Forsythia students were more informed about current events than were North Korean refugees from the other institutes that I was studying. Several students with whom I talked during the break or lunch time shared very strong opinions about the candlelight demonstrations – either supporting or opposing them. Some students saw South Korea as an American colony, since the South Korean government does not seem to have autonomy, but is subjugated. They believed that the candlelight demonstrations are necessary and saw these protesters as the real patriots. However, more students expressed uneasiness toward the candle demonstrations, as these protests seemed to be too radical. Many of them also talked about the importance of trusting the politicians, so that they can better practice their duties. I also talked about the candlelight demonstrations with the Principal. While he did not directly express his thoughts about these candlelight demonstrations, he nuanced his beliefs by saying that as Christians, he believes that any authority comes from God, and people need to defer to politicians' decisions. He added that because politicians are also weak human beings, they also make wrong decisions. In such cases, people have to pray rather than oppose them. I asked him if he or other educators talk with students about issues surrounding the candlelight demonstrations or about other political agenda. He said that he and other teachers try not to reinforce any political views on students, but rather try to introduce a biblical worldview.

After going to Forsythia School three times without any teaching opportunities, I finally was able to teach students on my fourth visit on July 11th because one teacher could not make it to the school. The class I went in to teach was for students who were preparing for the high school diploma exams. As students were extremely tense due to these exams, I tried to assure them that media literacy is not irrelevant to their academic preparation for their diploma and

college entrance exams, by relating the materials to English and Sociology subjects. My teaching experiences at Dandelion School greatly helped me to make these connections. I explained the words “communication,” “media,” “mass communication,” “media literacy,” and “education” as if I were explaining English vocabulary with more in-depth descriptions. I also explained these terms within their socio-cultural contexts and emphasized how these words are commonly used in their daily lives and textbooks. Students wrote these words down in their notebooks which I gave them and paid good attention to understanding them well. Students also asked me when and how I would give them a test, so I told them that even though I would not give them any exam, I would give a pop-quiz and those who do well on this quiz would be awarded.

After the class, the Principal asked me to come again on the next day, Thursday June 12th, to translate the leadership series lecture by an American pastor because the translator would not be able to come on that day. However, when I went to school on the 12th, the speaker also did not come due to an emergency situation, so the Principal asked me to teach media literacy to students for one hour and a half. As all Forsythia students were asked to listen to the leadership seminar, students from both middle school and high school exam prep classes were gathered. The problem was that the upper level students had taken one media literacy class with me already the previous day, while the other class was attending the class for the first time. I thus briefly reviewed the concepts for the new students and continually asked questions of the upper level students so that they could be more motivated and effectively review the materials. Then I continued covering the issue of ‘stereotypes’ and ‘representations.’

Even though I went to the Forsythia School two more times the following week, I was not able to get a chance to continue teaching students, as every teacher was able to teach their class. On Monday June 23rd, the Forsythia School was invited to the premier screening of the

documentary film *North Korean 1.5 Generation: The Road to Our Home*, which was about the life of young North Korean refugees in one housing facility. The Principal asked me to join the event and talk about the film with students later at school. I went to the screening with all Forsythia students and talked about the film in my class the next day, Thursday June 26th. Students passionately shared their thoughts, feelings and reflections about the documentary. Many students said that they knew some people in the documentary and shared how their real characteristics are similar or different from the way they appeared in the film. Students also talked about the film *Crossing* which is a fictional film about one North Korean family who defected from North Korea and finally came to South Korea. Even though the official release date of the film was June 25th, most students viewed it a few weeks before the film was released as they were invited to the preview. As I watched the film on the 25th, I was able to lead students' discussion about it. Students' heated debates about these two films led me to teach them about fiction, non-fiction, documentary, and film. The 45 minutes that were given with students was a very short time period for students to express their thoughts, as they had many things to say about these two films. Thus, during lunch time students came to me and continued talking about these two films and their thoughts about the way North Korean refugees are portrayed in the media.

<Picture 4: The poster of *North Korean 1.5 Generation: The Road to Our Home*>

That was my last class at Forsythia School. The Principal said that because students are not ready for the exams, he decided to cancel all the elective courses, such as art, physical education, and Korean traditional music, until the school diploma exams end. Therefore, he admitted that it would be impossible to schedule a media literacy class as part of their summer school schedule, which was his original plan. Even though he said that I could come anytime I wanted and substitute for teachers who did not show up, I decided to withdraw from the Forsythia School so that I could focus on teaching in other schools. Although I had met with

students in class only three times, I consider my time at the Forsythia valuable as I was able to observe students' internet use during the lunch and break times as well as to learn within an informal environment students' thoughts regarding the media, South Korea and what was happening in South Korea during that time. After I withdrew from the Forsythia School, I contacted another educational institute for North Korean refugees to ask if I could teach media literacy there.

Cosmos Social Welfare Center: Media Literacy Education with a Heterogeneous Group of Elementary School Students

After withdrawing from Forsythia School due to their decision to focus on preparations for the diploma certificate exams, I contacted almost every educational institution which I knew that provided any form of programs for North Korean refugees. While most schools that had shown an interest in media literacy programs asked me to teach how to use the computer rather than media literacy, the lead social worker at the Cosmos Social Welfare Center who had expressed an interest in media literacy said that she could give me an opportunity to teach as a part of their summer program for elementary and secondary school students. According to her, while the class for middle and high school students would be comprised of only North Korean refugees who attend public schools, the elementary class would inevitably be with both native South Korean students and North Korean refugees since the Center had very few North Korean refugees. The Cosmos Social Welfare Center provides various programs and support for underprivileged people in the community, including senior citizens who are neglected by their families, children from poor families which cannot take adequate care of their members, and new

immigrants. Because of the space restriction, they could not offer the classes exclusively for children from North Korea but had to include native South Koreans as well.

The community in which the Cosmos Social Welfare Center is located has several North Korean refugees; these refugees with children experience difficulty in taking good care of their offspring since they are consumed with the struggle to adjust to South Korean society. Because these young North Korean children are often neglected by parents, social workers try to provide programs so that they are supported both emotionally and intellectually. While young children often have less difficulty in adjusting to a new host country because they can easily mingle with their friends, teenagers from North Korea go through tougher times and thus feel more isolated. In fact, many North Korean refugees who first went to public school tend to drop out of school after being bullied by other native South Korean students and having a difficult time in catching up in schoolwork. Teenage North Korean refugees whom the Cosmos Social Welfare Center were supporting were either attending public schools or were not getting any form of education from any institutions after withdrawing from public school. Since social workers believe that these North Korean refugee teenagers need special care and support, they wanted to create a summer program exclusively for this cohort. However, the lead social worker said that they were still having a difficult time with recruiting participants because these students did not want to be bothered. Therefore, while she promised to provide me with the opportunity to teach elementary school students, including both Native South Koreans and North Korean refugees, she told me that she would try to form another class comprised solely of North Korean refugee teenagers. Since schools in South Korea start their summer vacation during the third week of July and the Cosmos Social Welfare Center was planning to renovate the Center until the end of July or early August, she asked me to schedule four media literacy classes during the second and

third week of August before public schools start their Fall semester during the last week of that month. The school leader and I decided to hold the media literacy class on Thursday, August 7th, Tuesday, August 12th, Thursday, August 14th, and Tuesday, August 19th, with morning classes for teenagers and afternoon classes for children.

Up until the last minute, social workers worked to recruit teenagers, but could not; this is not surprising since the social workers had a history of not being able to engage these teenagers in programs. This situation thus left me with a class of solely elementary school students. As Ms. Choi and other social workers were aware of the intellectual gap between younger and older children, she asked me to teach one class with children from the first to the third grade and another with children from the fourth to sixth grade. Each one-hour class included fifteen to twenty students. As the classes were held in the library at the Welfare Center, other parents who came to library to read or borrow books with their children also observed the class. Ms. Choi, the social worker who was in charge of North Korean refugees in the Center also observed all sessions, except on the last day when she had to go to a training session.

Unlike teenagers whom I could immediately recognize whether they were from North or South Korea, I was not able to distinguish North Korean refugees from other South Korean students. Before I started teaching the first day, I learned that the class with the younger children would have one North Korean refugee and the other class with older children would include two North Koreans. Again, I could not tell which students were from North Korea until the end of the class meeting. At that time, Ms. Choi identified who were the North Korean refugees. In the class with the younger students, Jihyun, the girl who was very quiet, was born in China of a mother from North Korea and a father from China. She came to South Korea three years ago with her mother while her father arrived a year ago. Jihyun’s friends do not know that her mother

is from North Korea, and think that their classmate used to live in China because of her father's work. Therefore, even though she speaks better Chinese than Korean, students do not make fun of Jihyun's poor Korean and weird accent but consider it as cool, because she can fluently speak a foreign language. Ms. Choi added that Jihyun used to think of herself as Chinese as she was born and raised in China. Jihyun was supposed to be in fourth grade as she is ten years old, but because of her language and other academic abilities, her mother put her in the second grade. Jihyun's friends do not know that she is older than they are. Probably because of the poor nutrition when she was younger, she is now very small and looks like a first grader. Ms. Choi said that many North Korean women in China marry Chinese and have children. While they often defect to South Korea by themselves and leave their children behind in China, an increasing number of North Korean refugees bring their children to South Korea, but rarely their Chinese husbands.

In the later class with older students, Ok-Bin, the girl from North Korea, was absent as she went to visit her grandmother. When Ms. Choi identified Mina as the other North Korean refugee, I was very surprised since she was very active and outspoken. She raised her hand for most of my questions, even when she did not know the answer. She also did not have any accent and spoke just like the native South Koreans. Ms. Choi said that Mina came to South Korea four years ago and currently lives with her mom and step-father. Mina is, according to Ms. Choi, very smart and especially has a talent for language. Even though her school grades are not very good, Ms. Choi believes that Mina has the potential to achieve in her studies, if her parents support her properly. Because her parents are busy working outside the home, however, she barely gets any help from them with her school work. Ms. Choi said that Mina does not worry too much about her studies, but rather focuses on her relationship with friends. Because Mina frequently horns in

and pushes herself forward, her classmates often isolate her. In fact, as I continued teaching the class the following week, I could see that students did not want to sit next to Mina. When Mina tried to borrow a colored pencil, a girl who sat near her grumbled and reluctantly lent her the colored pencil. Ms Jung said that other children do not know that she was born in North Korea, but think that she is from the countryside in South Korea. Her mother does not want her friends to know that she is from North Korea, so when Mina first went to public school, Mina's mother asked the teacher not to tell her classmates that Mina is from North Korea, but from Kangwon-Do, the province that is in the border between North and South Korea.

Because the other North Korean student in the second class did not show up until the last class, Jihyun and Mina were the only North Korean refugee students whom I met in the Cosmos Social Welfare Center. As opposed to my experience in the Forest Middle School, where I had a hard time in adjusting to the difficulty of the class due to the differential levels that existed between the North and South Korean students, I did not have this problem at the Cosmos Social Welfare Center. Although Jihyun sometimes did not seem to understand what I said, as her Korean was still very poor, she could follow the lesson well by getting some help from her classmates. Students in the third grade actively helped Jihyun so that she could follow the lesson. Mina also demonstrated a similar level of intellectual ability compared to other children in the same grade.

Nevertheless, I faced a challenge, albeit a different one: although students were divided into two classes according to their school grades, I still was able to observe a huge gap among students in the same class. In the class with students from first to third grade, the third grade students' media knowledge and use were very different from those of the first grade students. In the other class, likewise the fourth grade students had different knowledge and experiences from

their six grade counterparts. Even though South Korea does not have a term like ‘tween,’ which indicates preteens, six graders acted like teenagers and were certainly different from children in the fourth grade. Because it was very challenging to find a midway point for teaching, after discussing the issues with Ms. Choi I decided to adjust the class materials for the younger students so that everybody could follow the lesson. Since I mostly focused on the issues of stereotypes and representation during the four class sessions in the Cosmos Social Welfare Center, I purposely asked more questions to older students about their experiences with different types of people and praised their responses so that they could be confident with what they knew and at the same time be involved in the class. I also made sure to include younger students by giving them a chance to present their class work and also continuously complemented their work and presentations. Because students were also aware of the differences between older and younger students, I was able to explicitly address the knowledge gap between them and ask the older students to help the younger ones. Therefore, dealing with the discrepancy between older and younger students was easier than addressing the differences between North and South Korean students.

While I was teaching in the Cosmos Social Welfare Center, Ms. Choi often talked about her surprise in observing students’ longer attention span during the media literacy class. She said that many of these students do not have a good attention span and have a hard time concentrating in the class longer than 20 minutes. Therefore, it was very unusual that students actually cared about the material covered by a teacher and did what the teacher asked to do throughout a 60-minute class period that was longer than their other academic classes which were 40 minutes long. Ms. Choi added that she thought that one of the reasons that students were actively participating in the media literacy class was the connection that they could make with real life.

Because they could reflect upon their real media experiences, students got excited and actively engaged in the class. Because the district in which the Cosmos Welfare Center is located has many recent immigrants and the Center is striving to provide good educational programs for these immigrants and their children, Ms. Choi believes that media literacy could be effectively used in these educational programs. Therefore, she asked me to give her the lesson plan so that other educators can use the materials in the future. I received positive feedback from her as well as from the students about the class; moreover students expressed their disappointment when they found out that I would not be able to continue this class after the summer break.

Azalea Summer Institute: Success with Supportive Atmosphere and Accumulated Experiences

As I described in Chapter Four, the Azalea Summer Institute is run by a non-profit organization that works for North Koreans' human rights. They have weekend classes and summer and winter camp to strengthen young North Koreans' academic abilities. I first learned about this institution on their website, and sent them an email in January of 2008, expressing my interests to teach media literacy classes during their summer camp. Back then, they expressed their high hopes and excitement about media literacy education. During the spring of 2008, they also responded promptly to my emails and phone calls that requested their signature for the IRB (Institutional Review Board) protocol. When I arrived in South Korea on May 30th, they already had scheduled a media literacy class for their summer school session from July 30th to August 16th. More specifically, the Director of the summer institute arranged that the media literacy classes would meet four times a week, and each session would be forty minutes long. I asked the Director if I could have a block schedule, meaning that I would teach two class periods in a row so that I could meet students for an hour and twenty minutes each session for twice a week. In

media literacy education settings, block scheduling often creates a more advantageous class environment, enabling more engaging activities (Hobbs, 2007a). After hearing the benefits of having a block schedule for media literacy education, the Director courteously rescheduled my class meeting times. As each of the two class periods would last 40 minutes, my class thus was scheduled for an hour and twenty minutes, twice a week, resulting in a total of six meetings.

Compared to the other four institutions where I taught media literacy during the summer of 2008, I confidently can report that Azalea Summer Institute went the most smoothly. One of the reasons for this success was that I taught last at this institution so therefore I was able to accumulate more experience and knowledge about how to run media literacy classes from my teaching at the other institutions earlier that summer. Although I had taught media literacy to North Korean refugees during 2002 and 2003, the living conditions and the characteristics of North Korean refugees had changed significantly since that period. Compared to my students in 2002 and 2003, students whom I met during the summer of 2008 had a quicker journey in their emigration to South Korea from North Korea. Most of my students in early 2000 had spent two to six years in China and other countries like Thailand, Mongolia or Myanmar before arriving in South Korea. During the summer of 2008, while I had some students who did take several years to settle finally in South Korea from the time that they had left North Korea, most of the students had taken less than a year to come to South Korea. This faster emigration process was a result of the change in the ways that North Koreans escape from their country of origin. As the number of North Korean refugees has increased in South Korea, these refugees look for ways to help their family and relatives back in North Korea move to South Korea. They pay brokers who have personal connections in North Korea and these brokers in turn help their family members to come to South Korea more easily, thus shortening the time and distance. Thus several students in

my class claimed that it took them less than a year to move to South Korea. Such differences may have influenced students' views and attitudes toward their own lives as well as toward South Korean society. For example, I sensed that my students in 2002 were more enthusiastic and positive about being successful and demonstrated more interest in the social and political issues in South Korea.

In addition, since the media environment had changed by 2008, the students' mediated experiences too had dramatically changed. Students were more exposed than in 2002 to pornography and violent media content. In addition, students were more cynical toward people whom they met, toward their future as well as toward the society in general. Of course, these trends are hard to generalize and some students were very similar to my students in 2002. However, as I started to teach North Korean refugees in 2008, I had to learn and adjust myself to these distinctions so that I could better teach media literacy and communicate with my pupils. As mentioned above, my experiences at the Dandelion School, Althea House and Forsythia School prepared me to be a better teacher and allowed me to have particularly satisfying media literacy classes at the Azalea Summer Institute. By the time I joined Azalea's summer camp, I was able to better understand my students, effectively communicate with them, and strategically teach the subject matter.

Even though I taught children at the Cosmos Social Welfare Center while I taught students at the Azalea Summer Institute, the different dynamics at work in the two student populations resulted in significant variations between the two organizations. While I experienced a difficult time in finding a midpoint in terms of teaching level between the younger and older children at the Cosmos Social Welfare Center, students at the Azalea Summer Institute demonstrated similar levels of knowledge. In fact, students at the Azalea Summer Institute had a

broader range of ages than their Cosmos counterparts, from twelve years old to eighteen years old. Students at Azalea also varied in terms of their educational backgrounds, as some students were attending public schools like elementary school, middle school, or high school, while others were attending alternative schools that only served North Korean refugees. However, differences in their ages and educational backgrounds did not seem to have influenced the level nor difficulties in class at Azalea. In fact, students' age differences and their intellectual gap allowed for more heated discussions regarding various topics, such as stereotypes in the media, materialism in South Korea, candlelight demonstrations, media influences on young people, and propaganda. Unlike my initial worries that the older students or those who had lived in South Korea longer might dominate the class discussions, students from different backgrounds actively participated in class. Of course, some students were more vocal than others, but the differences rose from their personalities rather than from their ages or diverse life experiences.

Another reason that I was able to create an effective learning environment at the Azalea Summer Institute was the constructive feedback by another educator, Hamin, a second generation Korean-American volunteer. She recently had finished her first year of doctoral studies in anthropology in California. She wanted to write her dissertation about North Korean refugees, but did not have any concrete ideas as yet about her thesis, leading her to volunteer for the summer camp designed exclusively for North Korean refugees. At the Azalea Summer Institute, she played several roles – English teacher, dormitory superintendent, and multi-functioning staff member – in order to support and help out with the extracurricular activities. In order to assist my class, the summer camp Director asked Hamin to join my media literacy class.

Hamin always arrived ten minutes before the class and asked if I needed any technical or other support for the class. During the class session, she always sat at the back of the class and

attentively observed my lecture and student discussions. Because these media literacy classes were run as a block schedule, I had a ten-minute break after the first forty minutes of each class. During the break, she would bring me a cup of coffee or water and give me feedback about the first half of my lecture. When she gave me this feedback, I did not feel that she was judgmental in her observations of what I did in class, but rather I sensed her heartfelt support and encouragement. She keenly pointed out what aspects of my class led students to be more engaged and interesting and how my class could be improved. For instance, she encouraged me by saying how students' attitudes are very different in my media literacy class as compared to other academic classes. She specifically mentioned some students who often would fall asleep in other classes and did not concentrate on class materials, but in contrast were actively participating in my class. She also commented that in the media literacy class, students' attention span was much better when they were listening to my lecture or partaking in discussions compared to when they watched video clips. After listening to her comments, I carefully observed students' reactions and attitudes when watching video clips, and learned that students whom Hamin mentioned for having wandering attention problems indeed did not pay full attention to the video material. After I discovered this phenomenon, I paused the video clips more frequently and tried to engage students at these breaks by asking them to ponder and discuss what they just had seen or sometimes by adding my own comments. These interjections worked quite well, resulting in students with wandering attention problems to be more focused and engaged in the class material.

Furthermore, Hamin also assisted the class management. Since I had only fifteen students in my class and they all appeared to respect me as their teacher, I usually did not have any problems with class management issues. Because it was a summer camp and most of the teachers

were new to them, students did not seem to make any distinction between teachers who belonged to the organization and those like myself who came from the outside. In other organizations at which I had taught during the summer, some students perceived me as an outsider who would be there only for the summer and would be returning soon to the United States. This distinction sometimes created a sense of curiosity and intimacy, as they saw me more as their older sister and shared their personal problems with me that they would not share with their other teachers. However, the fact that students did not see me as an insider and a "real teacher" also had some negative consequences. Some students did not fully respect me as a teacher and considered me as one whom they could bend to their wishes. Moreover, because some students found the topics covered by the media literacy class to be more fun and exciting, they also wanted the class to be a chance to learn how to have more fun with mass media. Thus they requested that I teach how to freely download files for music as well as television dramas and films or where to find comics on the web. The issue of respect was a general problem at most of the other schools at which I taught during the summer of 2008: I frequently felt challenged to maintain a balance between being a nice, accessible teacher and one who demanded respect and authority.

Yet I did not have this problem of respect at the Azalea Summer Institute. Every teacher, including those who worked full-time, was new to the students. Indeed several of the students had attended this camp in previous years, so they had a more intimate and close relationship with some of the teachers. However, because it was a summer camp, the participants all came from different schools and so they automatically assumed that they would interact with these teachers at the camp only. The students had developed more intimate and comfortable relationships with some of the teachers more than others, but this ease was not based on the teachers' status or on how long they had taught at the camp, but on the teachers' characteristics as well as on their

teaching and communication styles. Therefore, I experienced fewer problems in class management at the Azalea Summer Institute than I did at the other organizations.

While I was able to enjoy the students' enthusiasm and participation in the classroom, their immersion in the class materials sometimes led to heated discussions. The class covered several controversial topics about North and South Korea. Based on their own life experiences and cultural backgrounds, the students exhibited divergent views and perspectives toward these topics. Such diversity sometimes made some students angry with their classmates. Several could not control their tempers and heaped cruel abuse on their classmates. These students' agitation reached a peak when they discussed the film *Crossing,* which I will discuss in more detail in Chapter Five. This film dealt with the long journey of one North Korean family who escaped from North into South Korea. Although this was a fictional film, the story was based on several true stories. While there are many other television dramas and films that deal with the stories of North Korean refugees, some critics and viewers commented that *Crossing* depicts most effectively the conditions of North Korea and North Korean refugees. I used this film in my class at every institution, except at Cosmos Social Welfare because students there were younger than 12 years old and the film was rated for viewers who were older than thirteen years of age.

When I used this film during the summer of 2008, some students considered the portrayals to be accurate or close to accurate depictions of North Korea, while others thought the film exaggerated conditions in order to appeal to South Korean viewers. Such varying responses led to heated discussions, often immersing students in the class materials. At the Azalea Summer Institute, however, students became over-heated in their opinions and wildly reacted to those peers who communicated views that diverged from their own. During one discussion, a boy used very harsh curse words when speaking to another boy who in turn responded with another curse

word. They were extremely angry with each other and continued to talk about how the other one was not smart enough to understand the realities. Although they stopped yelling at each other after I asked them, they continued to huff and puff.

When this argument occurred, Hamin took these two students outside the classroom to continue their disagreement away from their classmates. Seeing these class members not being able to control their tempers and being punished by standing outside the classroom, other students then shared their thoughts in a calmer manner. After the class, I brought back these two boys into the classroom and firmly addressed to everyone the importance of respecting others' opinions even when one does not agree with them. I also spoke to the class about what makes for a democratic society: "You can have different opinions even from the President of the nation, teacher, parents, or religious leaders. You can express these different opinions and can talk about how you think others' opinions are wrong. However, you have to respect others' thoughts and views even when you do not agree with them. I still have a hard time in controlling my temper when I talk to somebody who shares completely different views, but I try to listen to what they say and make an effort to convey my opinions. I hope you try that too, not only in this class, but in other situations."

When I later talked to these two students alone, Hamin was sitting at the back and did not add her comments. While she helped me to have better class management, she also supported me in establishing my authority as a teacher by creating a sense that students should listen to what I, Ms. Yoon, says. Hamin knew when to step in and when to step back. Her help and support were always a great addition to my media literacy class at the Azalea Summer Institute.

Another aspect that created a more effective class atmosphere at the Azalea Summer Institute was that students did not have to worry about their school diploma exam. The camp

took place after the national school diploma exams, because most alternative schools for North Korean refugees started their summer break immediately after this test. Because students who took the exam in early August had not heard the results yet, they were not able to start to prepare for the diploma exams for the higher level of education nor for the college entrance exam. These students therefore were able to enjoy a short period of freedom of not having anything to prepare, which would end soon when they heard the exam results: If they failed the exam, they would have to prepare for the test again; if they passed the exam, they would have to start preparation for the exam for higher education. In addition, many students who attended the summer camp were attending public schools and these students did not need to take school diploma exams. Therefore, everyone in the camp was free from facing the school diploma exam, which had been a large obstacle for me when running the media literacy classes at the other alternative schools. For example, at Forsythia School the principal had cancelled my media literacy class so that students could focus on preparing for their school diploma exams. Likewise the Dandelion School, where I was initially told that the school would require every student to take a media literacy class, later informed me that I would have only two students in the class because other students were too busy with their exam preparations. Just like Althea House and Cosmos Welfare Center whose students were attending public schools, the Azalea Summer Institute had students who were able to actively participate in the media literacy class as it was, and neither teachers nor students changed their minds or pressured me to make the media literacy class include materials for exam preparation. Hence, due to this supportive atmosphere and my accumulated experiences at other institutions during the summer, the media literacy classes at the Azalea Summer Institute yielded satisfying results, both for myself, for the institutions, as well as for the students.

Name of the Institution	Description and Schedule
Dandelion School	Church-affiliated alternative school designed exclusively for North Korean refugees. Rented the apartments to use as a dormitory. Every Tuesday (9-12:00 AM) & Friday (1-4:00 PM) from June 10 to July 25; August 8 (9-11 AM), 21 (9-12 PM), and 22 (9-12 AM)
Cosmos Social Welfare Center	Regional social welfare center that helps disadvantaged groups in Inchon, Korea. August 7, 12, 14, and 19 (4-6:00 PM)
Althea House (Forest Middle School)	Housing facility for North Korean refugees. Residents, ranging from children to young adults, attend local public schools or other vocational schools. None of their students attend educational institutions that are designed exclusively for North Korean refugees. June 18, 19, 25, and 26 (3:30-4:30 PM)
Azalea Summer Institute	Non-profit organization that works for North Koreans' human rights. Runs a summer and winter camp for North Korean refugee teenagers. Students concentrate intensively on studying Korean, English and math at the camp. Other electives are offered as well. From July 30 to August 16; twice weekly (July 30 and August 2, 4, 8, 12, and 13)
Forsythia School	Church-affiliated alternative school designed exclusively for North Korean refugees. Rented the apartments to use as a dormitory. I was asked to teach whenever I could rather than getting specific days to teach. I went to school 9 times from June 9 to June 25, but taught classes 3 times only on June 11, 12, and 25.

<Chart 2 Finalized list of schools at which I taught media literacy during Summer, 2008.>

Conclusion

Chapter Four overall discussed 1) the contexts of South Korean society, from which I captured a teachable moment, and 2) the stories of accessing different institutions in South Korea.

As I mentioned earlier, I had more failures than successes in getting my foot in the door of these educational institutions. In fact, at most institutions, I was not even rejected as they never responded to my emails or returned my phone calls. Nonetheless, by the end of my planning phase, I had permission to teach in several different institutions over the summer, which strengthened my study by allowing me to experience and reflect upon various and diverse aspects of educational contexts and administrative issues. This success of getting into these institutions and the opportunity to teach media literacy classes were possible due to several factors.

Firstly, I always carefully listened to the educators and school leaders at each institution. Paying attention to what they said about media, young people's media experiences, and media literacy provided me with good insights into their position, goals, and educational needs not only about media literacy education but also about the overall objectives of their education. Therefore, careful attendance to the words of one's host is the very first step when trying to gain access to teach media literacy at an institution with which the researcher does not have a direct affiliation.

Secondly, I actively responded to the needs of the school. Because media literacy is not included in their existing curriculum and most educators still do not have a good understanding of the processes of media literacy, simply emphasizing the educational outcome of this education sometimes may discourage school leaders and educators from inviting media literacy into their homeland. Therefore, I always tried to learn their priorities in education and to find out how media literacy education can be used to accomplish these educational goals. However, it is also imperative that media educators do not compromise their own educational priorities. Therefore, it is the role of media educators to find a way to satisfy both educational objectives. In my case, I strove to meet their educational needs by providing opportunities for students to learn new

Korean and English vocabulary and to strengthen their Korean reading comprehension skills. However, at the same time, I used the same lesson to develop students' cultural competency, which will be explicated in the next chapter. Also, because I firmly believe that a media literacy class should aim to empower students with critical thinking skills and habits of inquiry, I did not compromise with the view of educators at Dandelion School who hoped to use media literacy education to protect North Korean refugees from harmful media effects.

Thirdly, I was flexible when working with educators and school leaders at the different institutions. For instance, at Forrest Middle School, I changed the dates of my media literacy classes because of their exam schedule. At Dandelion School, I ran the media literacy class with only two students because the other students were pulled out to prepare for the school diploma exam. I also continued my classes during their summer break as educators and students at Dandelion School wanted to continue the media literacy classes. At Forsythia School, I accepted the principal's suggestion, which was to teach media literacy when other teachers were absent. Although I could not continue my class after teaching three times, my flexibility gave him a good impression not only about myself but also about media literacy education. On my last day at the Forsythia School, the principal apologized for not offering fixed dates for media literacy classes and reported that he learned many positive aspects about media literacy and his students talked a lot about my class. He said that in the future when the school is less pressured with the exam, he wants to formally include media literacy classes in their official schedule. Overall, when I flexibly accommodated to a school's needs and situation, educators and school leaders opened their minds and in turn cooperated with my needs and gave me more opportunities to teach at their institution.

Finally, I used various channels to communicate with students. Having a continuous communication with students is in fact the most important aspect, as communication allows educators to be aware of what students know, need and want. In the classroom, I tried to create a comfortable atmosphere in which students were able to honestly share their thoughts and views. I also used students' personal journals as another channel of communication. I did not solely read their journals, but I also responded to their entries by conscientiously writing comments. Students enjoyed reading these responses to their journal entries and some of them overtly used the journal to convey their thoughts to me or to ask me questions. For instance, one Forsythia student asked me in the blog why I am interested in North Korean refugees, while, according to his view, working for North Korean refugees can give me more troubles than rewards. One student at the Azalea Summer Institute asked if I thought that the reunification between North and South Korea would be possible. Although these questions were not relevant to what was covered in class, I still sincerely answered their questions. This form of communication influenced these students to candidly share their thoughts and participate more actively in class. I also used break and lunch times as opportunities to get to know students better and observe their media usage. All of these efforts to communicate with students helped my preparation of class materials and in turn students were more engaged in the media literacy class, since they also sensed that their opinions and thoughts really mattered.

In conclusion, media educators need to be vigilant in monitoring the socio-cultural background and current affairs of the given time; the views and understanding of the field of media literacy that are held by educators and school leaders; and students' existing knowledge and thoughts. It is especially important when the education is targeting students from diverse cultural orientations because their cultural capital, educational needs, and objectives can be

different from those of students who belong to the society's majority group. The next section will introduce selected lesson plans, how these lessons were taught in class, and the educational outcomes of these teachings.

CHAPTER FIVE

TEACHING MEDIA LITERACY TO NORTH KOREAN REFUGEES: LESSON PLANS AND EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

In the summer of 2008, the three main themes arose in the media literacy classes for North Korean refugees: 1.) media environment, 2) issues of representation and stereotyping, and 3) current affairs. These three major themes were taught by six different lessons, as shown in <Chart 4>: 1.) media mapping for students to be aware of their media environment and reflect upon their media usage; 2) application of the film *Crossing* to encourage students to share their personal stories; 3) additional usage of *Crossing* to examine distinctive framing, tones, views, style, and formatting of different news sources and to discuss the diverse purposes and usage of different internet sites; 4) examination of varied news sources to analyze how the same incident, which is the candlelight demonstration, is reported by different news agencies; 5) stereotyping activity that helps students to become aware of their own stereotypes and the prevalent stereotypes in the society; and 6) the employment of documentaries about North Korean refugees to discuss the importance of participating in the process of media content production for civic action and how the same group of people can be differentially represented based on the documentaries' producers, motives, and objectives. The three themes of media environment, representation and stereotyping, as well as current affairs were addressed in a variety of lesson models, with each lesson model often including more than one of these themes.

<Chart 4: List of selected lesson models at 5 Korean schools.>

Please note that this dissertation selectively describes a portion of the many media literacy lessons that I taught to North Korean refugees at the five different schools in this study; thus not all the lesson models that I taught for this study are presented in the dissertation.

O = I gave the lesson at this school

X = I did not give the lesson at this school

Δ = I did not give the lesson, but had informal conversation with students about the topic

School / Lesson Model	Dandelion School	Forsythia School	Cosmos Social Welfare Center	Althea House	Azalea Summer Institute
Media map	o	o	o	o	o
Crossing for discussion	o	o	x	x	o
Crossing and different media sources	o	x	x	x	o
Different news sources about candlelight demonstration	o	Δ	x	x	o
Stereotyping Activity	o	o	o	o	o
Documentaries about North Korean refugees for discussion	o	o	x	Δ	x

Given that this dissertation project aims to explore how media literacy education can assist North Korean refugees to enhance their cultural competence and to better acculturate to South Korean society, I did not predetermine these three themes and lesson models in advance, but purposely prepared general rather than specified lesson plans before I went into the classroom. Since I taught at five different institutions over different time periods throughout the summer of 2008, I had the opportunity to practice various approaches and lesson plans at each institution. My teaching was influenced by the atmosphere of each institution as well as the educational goals and expectations at each school toward my media literacy class. However, regardless of the varying institutional supports, contexts and educational priorities across these organizations and the unexpected difficulties that arose at some of the institutions, my understanding of North Korean refugees and of their mediated experiences increased over the

summer, as I spent more time with students in and out of the classroom and continuously reflected upon my own teaching and interactions with students. Therefore, my teaching in the early summer at the Dandelion and Forsythia Schools was like a pilot study, providing me with a valuable venue in which to explore different themes, teaching methods, and pedagogy that had the potential to effectively support North Korean refugees to becoming culturally competent and to satisfy their other educational needs. My casual chats and informal hanging out with Forsythia students also greatly assisted me in better understanding their mediated experiences and educational needs. Moreover, while the media mapping was a part of the lesson, it also played a critical role in the process of creating a lesson model by which I could better understand students' media environments and experiences.

From these educational practices, my observations, communication with students, and reflections, certain themes naturally emerged, leading me to create these six lesson models to better accomplish the educational goals of students' gaining cultural competence. Through these educational practices, students were able to expand their knowledge of South Korea society, gain confidence in expressing their thoughts and unique experiences with others, start to develop critical thinking skills, and obtain a better understanding about the issues of media representation and stereotyping, leading them to become aware of the importance of participating in the public discourse. A more detailed explanation of the main educational outcomes and curriculum materials along with other relevant information is provided throughout this chapter. It is important to note that, though described as separate lessons, some of these lessons were combined with other models. The same lesson models also were practiced in distinct ways at each institution, since students had different knowledge, experiences, and reactions to the material. Thus, these lesson plans should not be understood as the only possible ways to cover

these topics in class, but as some of the many possible strategies when addressing these themes and applying these lesson models. In addition, since I taught at five different institutions over three months, a transcription of what took place in each class would take up enormous space. Therefore, I selectively describe only those classes that were particularly relevant to the main educational outcomes of this study.

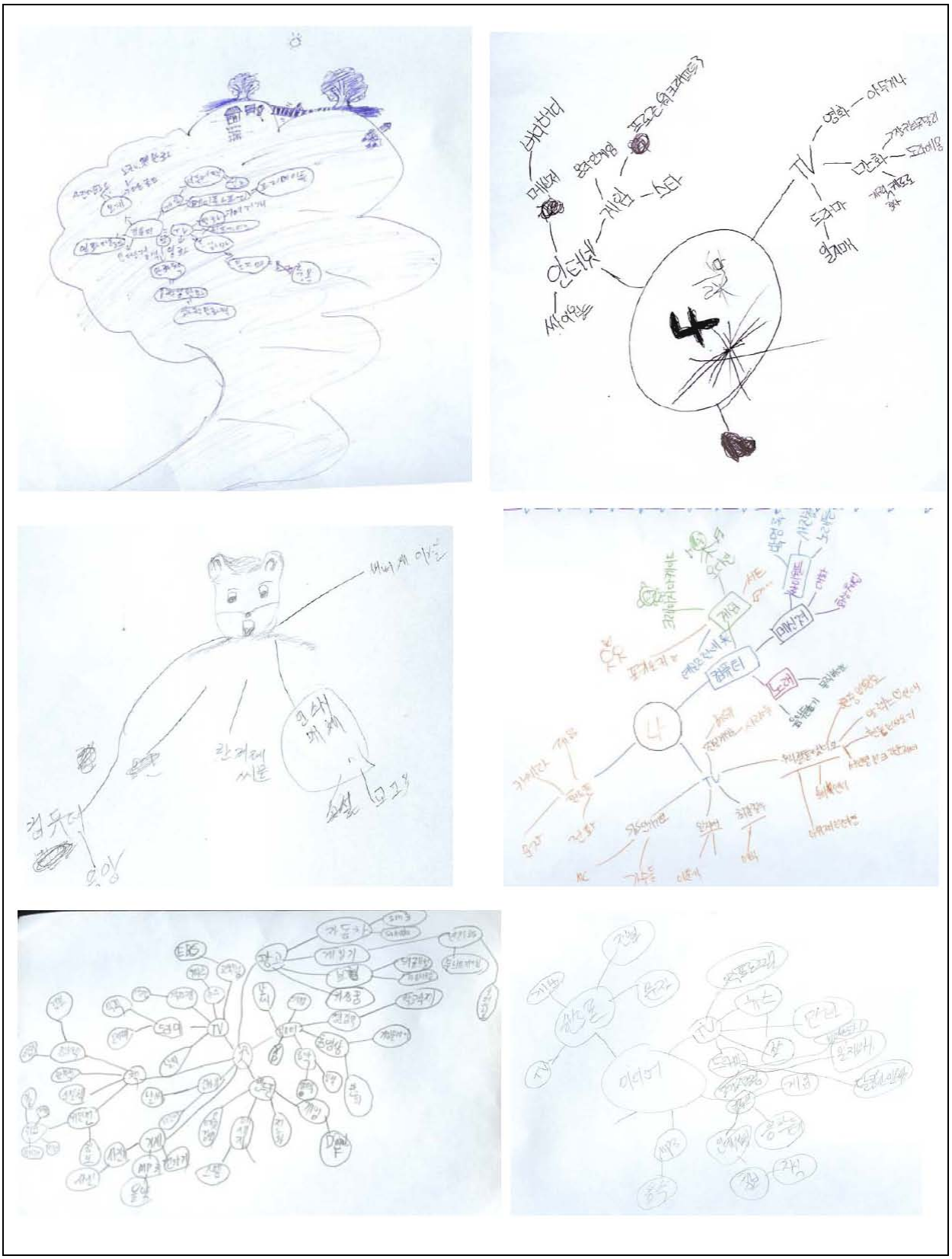
Lesson One: Media Map to Examine Students' Media Environment and Media Usage

A media map is a picture that illustrates media usage of an individual. Students contemplate on how they experience the media and then draw a diagram-like illustration on a piece of paper, as shown in <picture 5>, depicting not only the different mediums that they use – such as television, radio, computer, books, and cell phones – but also the content that they consume through these mediums. Understanding what students know about the mass media and how they experience the media in their real lives is very important for the design of effective curricula that can meet educational goals. Therefore, I always gave the lesson regarding media mapping in the first class at every institution.

The purpose of media mapping is not only for teachers to enhance their understanding of students, but also for students to better reflect upon their own media environment and media usage and in turn for me to better understand students' mediated environment. Moreover, the act of sharing their media maps with classmates allowed them to gain confidence in speaking out about what they thought and experienced.

Before asking students to draw the media map, I always started with a brief introduction of media, communication, and media literacy. Most students reported that they had heard the word "media" and "communication" somewhere before, but no one from any of the institutions

could explain the meanings of these terms. Then, I talked about my own media experiences in detail, sharing how I use different forms of the media for various purposes, and I drew my own media map on the blackboard as I talked. After shortly discussing how media are so prevalent these days and influence every aspect of our lives, I asked students to draw their own media maps. As students drew their own maps, several asked questions about other media which I did not cover, such as “Should watching television using the electronic dictionary be counted as media use?” and “If newspaper and books can be seen as a form of media, what about comics?” After students drew their maps, examples of which can be viewed in <Picture 5>, I then asked them what media outlets they use in their lives; students shouted out words in response: “television,” “computer,” “cell phone,” “book,” “PMP (Portable Media Player), “newspaper,” “magazine,” “MP3 players,” and “film.” I wrote these words in big letters on the blackboard and asked students to share details of how they use each medium. For instance, for the computer, students talked about “Cyworld,” the website where people can create their personal homepages called Minihompy and can join the online communities, “buddy buddy” (the popular messenger in South Korea) and “Gom Player” (the software South Koreans use the most often to watch the video files on the computer). As students shared how they used the media and I wrote on the blackboard what they said, I could see some of them adding what they had heard from their classmates onto their own media map.



<Picture 5: Examples of students' media map>

After drawing the media maps and talking about how they experienced the media, students expressed their surprise as to how their lives were inseparable from media. The following excerpts are the direct translations of entries from students' journals.

> I had no clue what media literacy class was about, but I think I understand it now. It is very important to our lives and people use them everyday. I cannot believe that I did not know what media are before taking this class, while I was using them everyday. (Min-Suk, a 16 year old boy at Forsythia School)
>
> I am amazed how much television I was watching. It seemed like I watched television the most in the class. I was embarrassed when I talked about the television programs that other classmates were not watching. (Eun-Mee, a 17 year old girl at the Azalea Summer Institute)

As students shared their mediated experiences, I first was able to observe that students were very excited and engaged in sharing their own media experiences. They actively commented on their classmates' remarks and added their own media usage, such as "I also go to that website," "I do not like that television show because I do not like the host," and "Does your cell phone have good camera? Mine is really nasty." They shared their opinions about a certain medium or program with their classmates and responded to what other people said. Later in the summer, Young in Dandelion School told me that because of the hierarchical class environment and the focus of the knowledge acquirement in several classes, she rarely felt comfortable in sharing her thoughts in those classes. However, in the media literacy class, she said she could express her thoughts with confidence because there was no right or wrong answer. Since students were sharing their own media experiences, they did not have to worry about giving the correct answer and since they were not criticized for their media usage, they honestly shared how they

use the media. One boy at the Dandelion School even asked me if I would tell what they shared in class to other teachers. After I told him that I would not tell their other teachers, he said, “How come nobody talks about pornography? Boys, don’t you have countless number of pornography files on your computer?” Then, another boy responded him with a joke by saying that “To me, pornography is a part of my life, not a separate media experience. Therefore, I do not need to include that on my media map.”

In fact, starting the first media literacy class with the media map and discussion about their own media usage laid a firm foundation upon which students were able to feel comfortable in sharing their own experiences, views, and thoughts in the classroom. After I set this groundwork, students actively shared their views regarding other issues when the class discussed them. They were confident because their voices were valued and appreciated, which they did not often experience in the rest of their lives. I believe that students’ active participation in the discussions and confident expressions of their thoughts are the very first steps toward establishing their civic engagement, which will be more discussed later in this chapter.

Media mapping also worked as a stepping stone for students to reflect upon their own life styles. Before I asked students to draw the media maps, I asked them what they thought about their media usage. While many students said that they used a variety of media for various purposes, some students said that they were too busy to spend time with the media. These same students were surprised to witness on their media maps the dominance of media influence in their lives. Even other students, who had not included much information on their maps, later added more usage as they listened to their classmates. By contrast, some students strongly argued that they were spending less time with the media than the average South Korean student, although their media maps were densely filled with their media usage. One boy at the Azalea

Summer Institute did not put much on his map, but often commented about what his classmates shared. Based on his responses, I could see that he spent much time watching television, as he had seen most of the programs that were mentioned in the classroom discussion. After realizing that what he wrote on the map and what he shared in the class did not match, I asked him after class why he did not put all his media usage on the map. He responded that it was because he was not confident with his usage of the Korean language. His journal, however, was well-written, although it contained many grammatical and spelling errors. Therefore, before the second class, I complimented his writing and asked why his good Korean is not reflected on his map. Then he replied, with a smile: “Why should I have to write about something that I am not proud of?” I suggest that he was feeling so guilty and ashamed about his heavy media use that he did not want to include it all on his map.

In fact, from what other students shared about their media usage, I could see that they too had ambivalent feelings about the amount of time they spent with the mass media. First, I learned that most saw the media as an entertainment tool although they were using the media for educational purposes as well, such as taking online courses or watching programs from the EBS (Educational Broadcasting System) channel to prepare for their school diploma exams. Students did not consider their learning experiences via the media as real media experiences. Many considered the media as tools for leisure only. When I told them that watching educational programs on television or taking online courses should be considered as media experiences, some students said that learning from the media is studying, not playing, so studying and interacting with the media should be separate.

I was amazed that most students had negative attitudes toward the mass media and even felt guilty about their media usage, when they just had learned the meaning of the term “media.”

Then, after talking with students and their teachers, I realized that their teachers, parents, or guardians have repeatedly told them that they should not watch television or use the Internet. Although many students did not like the negative tone of the adults when talking about media usage, they also felt that they themselves were influenced by these messages and wanted to reduce their own media usage. Most students had never heard any positive comments about the mass media from adults, such as teachers, social workers, parents, and church ministers, and it made them feel ashamed of their mass media use. Just like their teacher who used the word "Satan" when talking about the media's impact on North Korean refugees, some students even used the words "Satan" and "evil" themselves to describe the media.

In summary, while drawing and talking about the media map allowed the students and myself to gain more knowledge about their media usage and laid a firm foundation for students to gain confidence in sharing their thoughts, this visual activity also helped me to observe students' ambivalent attitudes toward the media. They spent much of their time with the media while at the same considering the media as evil and almost satanic, making them cynical about what they viewed in the media. Because such cynicism can prohibit students from learning positive aspects of the media, I designed the class to help students move away from their cynicism and become aware of the possible positive influences of the media. Therefore, the following sections are about how I used films and documentaries about North Korean refugees to meet this objective.

Lesson Two: Discussing the Fictional and Non-Fictional Media Contents about North Korean Refugees

The next lesson model is about using films about North Korean refugees as a spur to encourage students – who often feel uncomfortable about revealing who they are – to share their own stories. This was inspired by my last class at Forsythia School for which the principal had asked me to discuss the documentary *North Korean 1.5 Generation: The Road to Our Home* with my students. I had watched the documentary with the students at its premiere screening event. This documentary is about the life of young North Korean refugees in one housing facility.

In this last class at Forsythia School, I did go on to discuss not only *North Korean 1.5 Generation: The Road to Our Home*, but also *Crossing*, the fictional film about North Korean refugees. Although *Crossing* was released during the summer of 2008 and was not available yet on DVD, I still assumed that most students had seen it already. The marketing team of *Crossing* had contacted most institutions that were associated with North Korean refugees and had invited them to screen events before the film was released to the public. Although a few students had not watched the film as yet, they still had heard a great deal about its content from their peers and teachers. In fact, as with the U.S. mad cow incident and the candlelight demonstrations that I described in Chapter 4, the film *Crossing* offered a teachable moment in a very timely manner, allowing me to teach the various purposes, functions and uses of the media, as described in Lessons Three and Four.

At the Forsythia School, the class first compared these two films that are distinct from each another: one is a non-fictional film that features my students' friends while the other one is a fictional film whose stories were created from several different testimonies given by North Korean refugees. When the class discussed the two films about North Korean refugees, students

were particularly enthusiastic and keen in expressing their perspectives. They did not want the class to end and so continued to share their views with me during the break and later at lunch. After seeing students' involvement and enthusiasm, I decided to use the film *Crossing* to introduce the various purposes, functions and uses of the media. In addition, I expected that the film would naturally lead the class to cover issues of representation and stereotypes, hoping that students would reflect upon how North Korean refugees are represented in the film.

From my own experiences as an educator and a friend of North Korean refugees, I knew that most North Korean refugees do not like to talk about North Korea. Many of them want to hide their identity as North Korean refugees and do not feel comfortable when other people ask them about their country of origin or their experiences and views as North Korean refugees, unless they have a very close and trusting relationship with them. Because many had been disappointed with scholars and reporters who wanted them to be informants, the students especially did not trust people who approached them as experts and media personnel. Therefore, although I was teaching in the organizations whose students were only North Korean refugees (except for Althea House and Cosmos Social Welfare Center) and all the students knew that the main purpose of the media literacy class was for me to write my doctoral dissertation, I had to be very cautious not to give them the impression that I was there to exploit their status as North Korean refugees. In the class, I thus was discreet in talking about issues relating to North Korea and North Korean refugees, unless the students themselves brought up these issues. Although there were a few occasions when I wanted to talk about North Korea, North Korean media, or stereotypes of North Korean refugees, I held back and did not raise these issues. My time with these students was too short to establish a trustworthy relationship, despite the fact that the

students liked the class and often casually talked about North Korea and their lives as North Korean refugees.

However, since the films *Crossing* and *North Korean 1.5 Generation: The Road to Our Home* are both about North Korean refugees, they invite students to take part in discussions with passion and enthusiasm. Students did not have to worry that they might present me with wrong information, because they knew more about North Korea and North Korean refugees than I did. I noted that students were more engaged and focused when the class talked about *Crossing* than at other times that summer, assuring me that films about North Korea are a great teaching resource. Therefore, I decided to use these films to teach a range of media functions and purposes, as elaborated in Lessons Three and Six.

I did not use these films when teaching students from Althea House because the media literacy class for these students, which was conducted at Forest Middle School, was comprised of both North and South Koreans. While most Althea students disclosed that they were from North Korea, one new student hid his country of birth. I thought I would make these students uncomfortable and prevent them from honestly expressing their views and thoughts if I discussed *Crossing* or the documentary about North Korean refugees in this class of mixed students. However, I still was able to talk informally about these films with students when I visited the Althea House shelter where they lived together. I also did not use the film at the Cosmos Social Welfare Center because it was rated for viewers older than 12 years old and most students there were younger. One of the films, *North Korean 1.5 Generation: The Road to Our Home*, also seemed difficult for these less mature students to comprehend fully.

When discussing *Crossing* and *North Korean 1.5 Generation: The Road to Our Home* at the Forsythia School, because it was my last class there I ran it in a casual manner rather than

formally structuring the lesson, thereby creating an atmosphere for students in which they could freely share their thoughts. Most of the Forsythia students thought that *Crossing* accurately portrayed the conditions of North Korea. They said that they became very emotional when they were watching the film. Because the content reminded them of their home country, family, and friends, most of them said that they cried during the screening. They passionately shared their thoughts, but their reactions were more about their feelings and impressions than they were analyses or critiques of the film. When I used this film at the Dandelion School and the Azalea Summer Institute, I was not able to spend the whole class period in an informal discussion as I did at the Forsythia School because of time limitations. However, I still was able to observe that students tended to naturally share their experiences and thoughts about North Korea and North Korean refugees. As they talked, they were reflecting upon their own experiences and organizing their thoughts.

Such contemplations might lead these North Korean refugees to undergo a better cross-cultural adaptation process, because knowing about themselves and their origin are key factors in the cross-cultural adaptation process. In the five stages of the cross-cultural process by Yoshikawa (1988), which were contact, disintegration, reintegration, autonomy, and double-swing, knowing about one's strengths and weaknesses is the key factor for immigrants and refugees to move to the next stage and finally to the double-swing stage in which they can maneuver through life from both their cultural affiliations. Because most young North Koreans hide their identities from others and do not feel comfortable talking about their statuses – even with those who know that they are from North Korea – they seldom have such opportunities as a group discussion to talk about North Korea and North Korean refugees, thus leaving little chance to reflect upon their identity as North Korean refugees. Therefore, the act of sharing their own

experiences as North Korean refugees who live in South Korea can provide them with the opportunity to deliberate upon these topics.

Lesson Three: Crossing and Different Media Sources

Positive Aspects of the Media

The third lesson model used the film *Crossing* and news sources about the film so that students could learn about the various purposes of the media, the positive impact that media can create, and the influences of the different objectives and target audiences of the each medium on content, style, and formation of the news. I first brainstormed the design of these lesson models after I observed students' negative and cynical attitudes toward the media.

From the students' media maps and testimonies about their media experiences, I was able to learn that most North Korean refugees had been immersed in media in their new lives in South Korea; such immersion was what their teachers were so concerned about. These teachers believed that the students' academic pursuits and other parts of their lives would be damaged because of their excessive media use. I argue that on the one hand, it is important for young people not to be obsessed by the media to the degree that their everyday lives are impeded; on the other hand, it is crucial that students do not become completely cynical toward the media. As indicated by Jackson and Hall (2007) in their book *UnSpun: Finding Facts in a World of Disinformation*, "cynicism is a form of gullibility- the cynic rejects facts without evidence, just as the naïve person accepts facts without evidence" (p. 175). Because students live in a media-saturated and image-oriented society, their ability to discern and apply information for various purposes and to use image and media technologies may provide a competitive advantage (Buckingham, 2000). It is not simply because most jobs these days require computer knowledge

or these workplaces have been reshaped by various forms of mediated communication. Rather, most people use the media as sources of information for education, current events, politics and other pursuits, and therefore public opinion may be influenced and shaped by the mass media (Fisherkeller, 2000). The fact that media function as sources of information is particularly important for refugees and immigrants because the media sometimes are the exclusive avenues by which they learn certain aspects of the host society, as their radii of life are often limited compared to those of the native-born populace. Therefore, I decided to set the educational goal of teaching the various purposes and aspects of the media and their possible positive use and influence so that students would not consider the media as something to avoid. In fact, it took courage on my part to express a positive attitude toward the media, as some educators in these institutions in which I taught wanted me to teach only their potentially harmful impact.

Thoman and Jolls (2005) in fact indicate that media literacy should not be media bashing, media censorship or denouncement of the media, but rather should encourage young people to develop critical thinking skills, intellectual skepticism and habits of inquiry. To accomplish these educational goals, scholars have suggested inquiry-based media literacy education (Alvermann & Hagood, 2000; Goodman, 2003; Hobbs, 2001; Hobbs & Frost, 2003; Pailliotet et al., 2000; Tyner, 1998). As a media educator who has taught in various educational settings, I am also confident that inquiry-based learning is a great pedagogic for students to strengthen their critical thinking skills. Before I started to teach during the summer of 2008, I planned to incorporate inquiry-based learning in my class.

However, as I spent more time in the classroom teaching media literacy to North Korean refugees, I began to realize that these students never learned how to think critically or how to question what they were learning. Whenever I tried to incorporate inquiry-based learning, invite

students to ask questions about given topics, or to analyze specific media text, they always blamed or criticized rather than critically examined the media. Because many students had considered media as harmful, it was hard for them to have an objective stance. Consequentially, their attitudes toward the media were very ambivalent: they liked to spend time with the media, but also disliked themselves when they interacted with the mass media and blamed these forces for their negative influence on individuals and the society at large.

Therefore, while I still endeavored to incorporate inquiry-based learning, I decided to stress the positive aspects of the media so that students could appreciate and take advantage of the various purposes and functions of newspapers, magazines, computers, television, film and other media in their lives. However, at the same time, I did not want them to become believers in the media to the degree that they would think that the mass media always will do something good for them. In order to open the gates to the positive sides of the media, but at the same time not turn them into unquestioning devotees, I thought it would be important for students to know that media messages are carefully planned and constructed, so that they would see that all communications should not be viewed in the same way.

In order to show the positive aspects of the mass media and how media messages are carefully planned and constructed, I decided to use the film *Crossing.* This decision was, again, inspired by what Forsythia students shared in class. In my last class at Forsythia School, I asked them what they thought about the impact of this film on South Korean society. Several students reported that the film would have a positive impact on South Koreans in that it would help them better understand North Korean refugees, as illustrated below:

> Seok (17, Boy): I believe that those who watch this film would be able to understand how and why North Koreans came to South Korea. This is a good thing for us.

Heesun (16, Girl): Viewers will know that North Koreans can be found in South Korea as well, and they are not North Koreans any more. Now our nationality is South Korea. After watching the film, people can see that.

Sejoon (16, Boy): People can learn about North Korea from this movie. Very few South Korean films have a lesson to learn, but this film does. This film is great.

(Class Discussion, June 26, 2008)

After several students answered my questions about their thoughts on the impact of *Crossing*, I did not have much time left to discuss the movie further as their other class was about to start. I wrapped up the discussion by saying that not only *Crossing*, but most media that people experience everyday can have either a positive or negative impact, and it is important to be aware of how we are experiencing the media, how we are impacted by them, and how to make that impact positive. Also, I added that because South Korean society is a media-saturated society and there is almost no single aspect of life in which people can be free of the media, it is important to understand how to use the media for various purposes. Although discussing these two fictional and non-fictional films yielded positive educational outcomes, I believe that designing more lesson plans about these two films may yield other educational benefits. Because I could not continue my teaching at Forsythia School, I applied this framework to other schools: the Dandelion School and the Azalea Summer Institute, the two institutions that I could discuss these films.

On the first day that the class covered the film at both institutions, I first showed the trailer and asked students what they thought about the film. I asked those who had seen the film already to wait until those who had not watched the film yet could share their reactions. Among the fifteen students, I only had one who had not seen this film as yet; she said the trailer was too

scary, making her not want to see the film. She also reported that she already knew the plot of the film and had an opportunity to watch this film several times with her friends and teachers, but not want to be reminded of her torturous past. (During the break, I asked her if it would be okay with her if the class talked about *Crossing*. She then smiled and said that it was fine with her and even added that the class discussion about *Crossing* actually made her want to see the film.)

After asking students to describe the film's plot so that all could be reminded of the story line, I invited them to freely express what they thought about the film. Similar to the reactions of the students at Forsythia School, both Dandelion and Althea students revealed strong feelings toward the film; yet while most students at Forsythia School liked the film, some Dandelion and Azalea students did not. Their likes and dislikes were certainly influenced by their opinions regarding how accurately the film depicted North Korea and North Korean refugees. While some students were amazed with how detailed the film was in its representation of the conditions of North Korea and North Korean refugees, others did not agree with these opinions and criticized the film for exaggerating the conditions in North Korea by showing its extreme poverty. Although North Korea is poor and has difficulties in obtaining food, students said that the film had the potential to mislead its viewers to thinking that all North Korean refugees left their country because they were hungry, as demonstrated below:

> Yoon-Chul (13, Boy, Azalea): I cried a lot during the movie. I had to cry. I also saw other people crying a lot during the movie. I watched this film with other North Korean refugees, so I do not know whether non-North Koreans would be touched. But for me, this was a good film.
>
> Hyun-Mee (15, Girl, Azalea): If I just look at the quality of the film, like acting, I think this is a good film. This is very touching film that can make viewers cry. However, I hope

South Koreans do not think that this is the condition of North Korea and North Korean refugees. This film is very far from the truth.

Sung-Ah (16, Girl, Azalea): I have been to prisons in China, Burma, and North Korea and I had the most fun in North Korea. This film is so fictional, especially the part in which they show the North Korean prison.

Kang-Jun (18, Boy, Azalea): What you see from the film is the conditions of the years 1997 and 1998. During that time, North Korea was going through the worst famine ever and North Korea is in better condition now.

Young (20, Girl, Dandelion): I hate the fact that this film can give the impression that all North Koreans escaped their home country because they had nothing to eat or because they were so poor. One day, near the Eulji-ro subway station (the busy part of the Seoul downtown area), I saw one lady who seemed to be in her early 30s who was giving a speech about why South Korean Government should not spend taxes from South Koreans to help North Korean refugees. She argued that these North Korean refugees abandoned their families and their own country because they were hungry, and South Korea should not help those who betrayed their own families and country to be able to eat better food. After hearing her speech, I wept loudly on the street. This film can reinforce such views among South Koreans who do not know us well.

(Class Discussion, July 8, 2008, Forsythia School; August 4, 2008, Azalea Summer Institute)

Most Azalea students, including those who liked the film because of its accurate representations of the conditions in North Korea, agreed with Kang-Jun's statement that the film's portrayals are closer to the situation in the late 1990s than to current conditions. I asked

students what would be the possible reason for portraying the state of affairs in North Korea at a point in history when the county was going through its most difficult times. The following is how the students responded:

> Kang-Jun (18, Boy): I think it was because South Korea wants to show people that North Korea is a very poor country. That is what North Korea does as well. Both North and South Koreas want their people to believe that they are better than the other.
>
> Heejung (16, Girl): Because this is a drama. I don't think the film crew specifically chose a certain period of time. They just made up the story to appeal to the audience.
>
> Song-Chul (18, Boy): They had several North Korean refugees on the crew. I heard that these crews advised the production team when the team was recreating the conditions of North Korea. Probably, the Director asked these crews to tell him the conditions of North Korea when North Korea had its worst hardships.
>
> (Class Discussion, August 4, 2008, Azalea Summer Institute)

After hearing what Song-Chul said, I shared with the students what I had researched about the crew members who were from North Korea. Several North Korean refugees participated in this film production process, including the Assistant Director, several supporting actors and actresses, and the teacher who taught the South Korean actors to use a North Korean accent. Before the class, I tried to find more information about these crew members, actors and actresses and could find details about only five of them. The Assistant Director, Chung-Young Kim, who left North Korea in 1999, was caught when trying to escape North Korea and was sent to prison there. He attempted to escape himself again and this time he succeeded. Jinhee Kim, who escaped North Korea in 1997, played a supporting role of the leading character's neighbor. In an interview, she reported that she felt so sad when people do not believe the horrible

conditions in North Korea. Yeonjung Oh, who escaped North Korea in 1998, played the role of the broker. The woman who taught a North Korean accent to the South Korean actors did not reveal her real name in the interview, but did say that she had escaped from North Korea in 1998 and had taken eight years to come to South Korea. Jungsuk Han, who escaped from North Korea in 1998, played the role of a public relations worker in the North Korean government office. In real life, her father had passed away in a North Korea prison (Korea Film, 2008).

The student Kang-Jun, who had said that the film seemed to portray the actual conditions of North Korea during the late 1990s, shouted that he was right in suspecting the correct time period of the film. Students added that they thought that the Director must have listened to these crew members when he recreated North Korea and the journey of North Korean refugees, because, based on their statements on the website, these crew members all seemed to have very adverse escape stories. Still, some students expressed uncomfortable feelings that some South Koreans may believe that North Korea still looks today as it is portrayed in the film:

> Hyun-Mee (15, Girl): Probably in the beginning or in the end, they could write a sentence or two that these days, North Korea looks different from the film.
>
> Jun-Sung (17, Boy): When I searched the Internet, I saw this film was being advertised as "based on true story." This phrase was also written in the trailer. Probably, they could get rid of that statement in the film advertisements.
>
> (Class Discussion, August 4, 2008, Azalea Summer Institute)

Through discussions about *Crossing*, I provided a venue for students not only to comfortably share their thoughts and feelings about North Korea and North Korean refugees, but also to see that media represent only some of the reality and that critical analysis of media content can allow viewers to see its deeper meanings. In order to continue to create opportunities to learn about

additional factors that influence media messages, I used other media sources about *Crossing*, as shown in the next section.

Crossing and Different News Sources

After students shared their thoughts about the film, I asked if they had read any reviews of the film. Some students said that they had seen reviews on the Internet. However, when I asked them what the reviews said, they could not explain what they had read, except for a few students who reported that they have seen the star ratings on the portal websites by Netizens. I asked them again if anybody had read any reviews or articles about the movie on other media besides the Internet. Except for the three Azalea students who said that they had read the hardcopy newspaper with an article about the film or an interview with the main characters, other students at the Dandelion School and Azalea Summer Institution said that their main source of information was the Internet and they had not read hardcopy articles. Next I asked students if anybody had read magazine articles about the film. At the Dandelion School, nobody had read any magazine treatments. In fact, Minjung, whose Chinese was more fluent than was her Korean, asked me what a magazine is, and Young explained to her. At the Azalea Summer Institute, most students said that they had read displayed magazines at a hospital or bank, but nobody said that they had spent money to buy a magazine, except Jun-Sung (17, Boy) who said that he sometimes bought a computer magazine.

I then handed out an article about the film that was copied from *Sisain*¸ the weekly magazine on current events. The article was a recopy from their 41st volume that was circulated one week before the film's release. The entire class read the article together. I then asked students what they thought about the article and nobody shared their thoughts, but some did ask

the meaning of several words that they did not understand. After explaining these words, I asked them to write these words in their notebook and to find the meanings of the vocabulary and the sentences that included these words as homework for the next class. I next asked them to read the article again silently. Then I asked them again about their thoughts. They responded that the article was too difficult for them to understand. When I used the article from *Sisain* at the Dandelion School, I spent more in-class time in explaining the vocabulary and the meaning of the sentences because Minjung, the girl who was adopted by Chinese parents, could not speak fluent Korean and the article was beyond her level. Fortunately, Young, the only other student at Dandelion, was patient and helped her to better understand the text. When I could not explain the words, Young explained them in Chinese to Minjung. Since I had more time at Dandelion School, I was able to spend a whole class period going through the article line by line. At the Azalea Summer Institute, by contrast, my time was very limited; therefore I was not able to spend as much of the class time to go over the reading that thoroughly. My solution was to read the article again aloud to the Azalea students; as I read, I wrote the key words on the blackboard that explained the main points of the article such as: "The films that the Director Tae-Gyun Kim directed before *Crossing*," "the motives of producing this film," "a short summary of the film," "the analysis of the film," "the reality of the film," "the real lives of North Korean refugees," "the process of producing this film" and "what the writer of the article felt and thought after watching the film."

After discussing the content of this article, I handed out another one about *Crossing* that was published in *Cine21*, the most popular weekly film magazine. I copied this article from the volume that was circulated the week of the film's release. Like the lesson with the *Sisain* article, the entire class read the article aloud together and then I asked students for any vocabulary that

they did not understand. Students had more words that needed further explanation. After defining these words, I again asked them to write these words and to look in a dictionary for their meaning and usage as homework. When I invited a volunteer to summarize the article at the Azalea Summer Institute, two students raised their hands and I asked Jongsung, a 16 year old boy, to explain. While Jongsung summarized the article, I along with other students added comments. During the students' discussion about the article, I wrote down what they said about its content: "star-rating of the film," "summary of the film story," "analysis of the leading characters," "films director Tae-Gyun Kim directed before *Crossing*," "analysis of the film," "artistic and aesthetic value of the film" and "explanations of several scenes." Students reported that the *Cine21* article was much more difficult to read than was the one from *Sisain*; yet because they read the *Sisain* article first, they could better understand the *Cine21* article. At the Dandelion School, I spent the whole class period again *with* the *Cine21* article. Because I had a block schedule there, I had the time to read aloud both of the articles on the first day of the lesson on *Crossing.*

After a discussion of these two pieces, I passed out an article about *Crossing* that was published in *Lady KyungHyang*, one of the most popular women's magazines. For the Dandelion students, I asked them to read the article as homework and find the meaning of the vocabulary that they did not know. At the Azalea Summer Institute, the entire class read the article together and I asked students to report any words that they did not understand. Students shouted out a few words that they could not comprehend, and some were able to explain some of these words to their peers. I then wrote down them on the Blackboard, and explained the meaning of each. I also asked students to find their meaning and usage from the dictionary for homework. Some students complained that they already knew some of the words, but I still insisted that they complete the

homework for every word so that they learned not only their meaning but also the correct way to use them in their writing and oral communication. Students liked the article in *Lady KyungHyang* the most because it was the shortest, most interesting and best written of the three, with the easiest words. When I asked for a volunteer to summarize the article, many students raised their hands. This time I asked Jung-Sim to summarize the piece, and other students joined in. While students were presenting the plot and other issues related to the movie, I wrote on the Blackboard what they said: "the image of the leading actor, In-Pyo Cha," "other films that In-Pyo Cha was featured in," and "the reasons why In-Pyo Cha accepted the Director's call to feature in this film."

After reading the three articles, I asked students at the Azalea Summer Institute to take a few minutes to revisit what they had read and draw comparisons among the three. After a few minutes, they shared their thoughts about these pieces:

Sung-Ah (16, Girl): *Lady KyungHyang* is certainly the best. Simple is always better.

Eun-Mee (17, Girl): Although *Lady KyungHyang* is easily written, I like the *Cine21* article the most. It included the star ratings in various categories and this helps readers to have a clear picture of the film.

Il-Chul (15, Boy): I like the *Cine21* article too. This article not only discusses the film, but also other background information of the film.

Eun-Mee (17, Girl): Articles in *Lady KyungHyang* and *Sisain* also give information about the background.

Jun-Sung (17, boy): The *Lady KyungHyang* article uses most of its space to talk about Cha In-Pyo.

Eun-Mee (17, Girl): It was because Cha In-Pyo is the leading character.

Jun-Sung (17, boy): But other articles did not use that much space to talk about him.

Jiwon (I, teacher): These three articles are all from magazines and all of them are about the film *Crossing*. However, we saw that these articles discuss different topics. What do you think is the reason for that?

Sung-Ah (16, Girl): It's because they cannot write the same story.

Man-Ki (18, boy): This is all about the film *Crossing.* The writers are different for each article, and it is not surprising that they talk about different things. If we wrote the essay about the same topic right now, we would all write different stories. For instance, if we wrote the essay about school, I am sure all of us would write a story that is different from our classmates.

Jiwon (I, teacher): Yes, these magazines featured different stories because the authors were different. Then, does it mean if Yeon-Woo Kim (the reporter who wrote the article in *Lady KyungHyang*) wrote an article for *Cine21,* do you think he would write the same story?

Man-Ki (18, boy): Yes.

Jiwon (I, teacher): Then, would you write the same essay when you are writing for your school newspaper or when you are writing for your Minihompy (the personal website in South Korea)?

None of the Azalea students answered this question, including Man-Ki. I continued my questioning.

Jiwon (I, teacher): Is there anything that they need to take into consideration when they write these articles? Remember that they are paid to write. It is not their Minihompy or blogs.

Man-Ki (18, boy): Since they were paid to write, I am sure that they were asked to write the articles that people like.

Jiwon (I, teacher): Why do they have to write the articles that people like?

Man-Ki (18, boy): Because they need to sell magazines. People do not buy magazines these days, but read these reviews on the Internet. It must be interesting to open people's wallet.

Jiwon (I, teacher): Jun-Sung, did you like the article in *Lady KyungHyang*?

Jun-Sung (17, boy): Yes.

Jiwon (I, teacher): You said that you sometimes buy the computer magazine. Then, would you be willing to buy *Lady KyungHyang*?

Jun-Sung (17, boy): No.

Jiwon (I, teacher): Why not?

Jun-Sung (17, boy): Because this is for ladies. The title of the magazine is "*Lady KyungHyang*." It has the word "lady" in the title.

Jiwon (I, teacher): Okay, Jun-Sung said that he would not buy *Lady KyungHyang* because it has the word "lady" in the title. Then, who would buy this magazine?

Sung-Ah (16, Girl): Certainly women, not men, unless they are buying this for their girlfriends or wives.

Jiwon (I, teacher): Yes, as Jung-Sung and Sung-Ah mentioned, *Lady KyungHyang* is for women. It means they write the articles for…

Some of the students in unison: Women.

(Class Discussion, August 4, 2008, Azalea Summer Institute)

This discussion naturally led me to talk about target audiences. I explained that mass media – such as films, television drama, radio programs, popular songs, newspapers, and magazines – usually try to reach as wide an audience as possible. But because it is hard to satisfy everyone, they target specific groups of people to which they want to appeal. These groups may be divided by gender, age, educational level, hobbies, interests, or other aspects. At this point, I showed them advertisements that were included in *Lady KyungHyang* and students were able to note that most advertised products in *Lady KyungHyang* were cosmetics, clothes, bags, underwear, vitamins, and kitchenware. Students then discussed that other women's magazines which they have read at the hospital or bank had similar advertisements. When I asked them why these women's magazines have many advertisements for these particular products, students responded that it is women who buy these magazines and women are particularly interested in cosmetics, clothes, and kitchenware.

Then I asked them how having women as a target audience might have influenced the content of this article. Students shared that, unlike the other two articles, the *Lady KyungHyang* article talked more about the family lives of the actor In-Pyo Cha, including his two adopted daughters and how he could have empathy to his character because his own son is the same age as the character of the son in the movie. Students also noted that the *Lady KyungHyang* article focused on the family life of the character and of In-Pyo Cha while the *Cine 21* article concentrated more on the quality of the film and its artistic value and the *Sisain* article talked more about the real lives of North Korean refugees.

The comparison of three different articles on the same topic was an effective strategy in teaching the concepts of target audience, various media objectives, and how the narratives of each medium, in this case three different magazines, are influenced by these factors. The

following are translated excerpts from students' journal entries written after we compared the three articles in class:

> Nam-Jin (13, boy, Azalea): It was interesting to see the different focus of these magazine articles based on their characteristics of each magazine. I hope we had more time to talk about them.
>
> Eun-Mee (17, Girl, Azalea): Whenever I read women's magazines in the dental clinic, I was frustrated with too many advertisements and never took a close attention to them. From now on, I do not want to ignore them, but want to find out why these products were advertised specifically in that specific magazine.
>
> Young (21, Girl, Dandelion): I never thought that articles with the same topic can be different based on where these articles are published.
>
> (Journal Entries from Azalea and Dandelion Students, 2008)

Students started to establish an awareness of target audiences and the different purposes of each media outlet. During an interview in January of 2009 which was four months after the media literacy class, I observed that students were starting to see that media messages are constructed and that they can vary depending on the target audience.

> Young (21, Girl, Dandelion): I cannot say that I think about target audience whenever I use the media. However, I sometimes think about it when I see the advertisements. It is especially interesting when I watch the cable channels that have lots of advertisements saying that they will lend money to people. Compared to the main networks, I also see more advertisements of funeral-assisting companies. This might be because the cable channels are cheaper for airing the advertisements, but maybe old people watch television all day long and these funeral-assisting companies might know that these people watch

> the television during the day while other people are busy at work or school. (Interview, January 4, 2009)
>
> Heejung (16, Girl, Azalea): I have a friend in the U.S. and when I was chatting with her on Nate messenger, we talked about webtoons (Internet comics on Naver) that both of us like. Then, as I talked to her, I realized that although we were both looking at the same site, the advertising on the same page was different. The advertisement she was looking at was specifically gearing toward Koreans who live in America. That reminded me of the target audience of an advertisement. I told her about target audience, and she did not know what that was. I felt great that I knew about the media better than a native South Korean friend. (Interview, January 13, 2009)

Crossing and Different Internet Sources

In the next class, I continued the lesson about *Crossing* with several different Internet sources. Over the summer, I learned that even though most students spend a great deal of time on the Internet, their usage is limited to watching entertainment news on portal websites, chatting with their friends using the messenger Buddy Buddy or Nate, using Cyworld for their Minihompy, taking academic online courses, or downloading films, dramas, or music files. I wanted to use this media literacy class to expose students to other possible uses of the Internet. I prepared the list of websites about *Crossing*, including the film's main homepage, reviews and articles at different websites, and online fan communities of the Director and the leading characters. Because I had only two students at Dandelion School, I was able to use my laptop to show these websites. At the Azalea Summer Institute, the classroom was equipped with the

computer and projector, so I could easily show students whatever I wanted to from the school computer.

First, I asked students if anybody had ever visited the main homepage of the film; nobody at the Dandelion School nor the Azalea Summer Institute had been to that website. In fact, most students did not even know that films have their own homepages. As I navigated the website, http://www.crossing2008.co.kr, and clicked on each section – including casting, production notes, pictures, trailer, and media coverage – students shouted out the specific parts of which they wanted to see more. For instance, when I opened the production notes, students wanted me to click on the link that had more stories and pictures. After skimming through the *Crossing* homepage, I showed students what they would see when they searched for *Crossing* at two of the most popular portal websites in Korea: Daum and Naver. From the *Crossing* homepage, these two portal websites provide similar information, such as casting, reviews, articles, and pictures. Users also can see the links to various internet communities and blog postings at these portal sites. I asked students why most films that are released these days have their own homepage while people can still get the information about the film at the portal websites. The students responded as following at the Azalea Summer Institute:

> Man-Ki (18, boy): I don't know why the films have to have their own websites. People would not even know that the film homepage exists unless they searched for the film at the portal website and saw the link to the film's homepage. But I wonder whether they would actually click the link. When they search the portal, people can get most information that they want about the film.

Eun-Mee (17, Girl): I agree. People can see more information about the film on Naver or Daum, because these two websites show the blog postings that are written by viewers who watched the film. The homepage provides very limited information.

Nam-Jin (13, boy): But the main homepage can function as the face of the film. It will be useful when they introduce the film to other people. Also, they can put on the information they want. When teacher Yoon searched Naver, I saw some star ratings that were very low, although they had lots of high ratings. I am sure that they would not want to show these bad ratings or reviews to others.

Jiwon (I, teacher): Nam-Jin said that the *Crossing* crew can control the information they put on their homepage and they would put stories that would leave positive impressions on viewers. In fact, the films' marketing teams often run the homepages and these homepages are used for promotions. Here is the banner advertisement of the film. (I opened the Internet banner advertisement for the class and did not show it to them until this moment. After I showed the banner advertisement, I clicked the banner and the homepage was opened.) Let me click the banner here. As you can see, the banner took us to the homepage. Here, as Nam-Jin said, we can see only positive reviews of the film. Yesterday, we learned about the target audience. Then, who would be the target audience for this website?

Jae-Min (15, boy): Those who liked the film.

Jiwon (I, teacher): Why do they want the people who liked this film to visit this website?

Jae-Min (15, boy): So that they can better learn about the film?

Sung-Ah (16, Girl): I think the website is to attract those who have not watched the film so that they can watch it.

> Jiwon (I, teacher): Both Jae-Min and Sung-Ah are right. Those who liked this film can enjoy this homepage because they can read these behind-the-scene stories, articles and reviews of the film. Also, if anybody visited this homepage from the portal or banner advertisements, it means that they had some interest in this film. The website can serve to reinforce this interest and help them to better understand what kind of film this is. Then, these viewers might decide to go to the theater to watch this film.
>
> (Discussion at Azalea Summer Institute, August 8, 2008)

Then I showed students the Agora section of the portal website Daum. Users can write whatever they want on Daum Agora, which is categorized as "Discussion," "Story," "Fun Board," and "Petition/ Appeal." Based on the type of posting, users can choose where to post the entry. For instance, if they want to write about the issue of refugees in South Korea, they can choose the category based on the goal of the entry: If the entry is to emphasize why we should help refugees, this can be posted on "Discussion" so other people can share their opinions about this issue. The "Discussion" section is again divided by topics of "Free Discussion," "Politics," "Economy," "Real Estate," "Stocks/Funding," "Society," "Education," "Art/Culture," and "Religion." Just like its title "Discussion," people with different opinions share their thoughts and sometimes dispute what others wrote. The original posting as well as responses to that original posting are grouped as one thread, so viewers can see the process of how people discussed the topic and argued with each other. The "Story" section is for those who want to share any specific incidents or story. For instance, if users want to share the life of a refugee whom they know, they can write this entry in the "Story" section. This section is less argumentative than the "Discussion" section. People still can respond in the form of a short reply or as a new posting and these responses too are grouped as a thread. The "Petition/ Appeal"

section is for those who want to ask for a change of policy for refugees or to help them. Although Agora is very famous in South Korea, especially during the U.S. beef and candlelight incidents as people exchanged opinions and information there, only a few of the Azalea students were familiar with the site. Most students said that although they visit Daum almost daily, they did not know about Agora.

When I searched for "Crossing" on Daum Agora, most entries were found on "Petition/ Appeal" and "Discussion." Just by skimming the title of the postings, students were able to determine whether the entries were about how pitiful North Korean refugees are or about how atrocious North Korea is. Students shouted out the title of the posting that they wanted to read, and I opened three of them so that students could get a sense of how people communicate on the Internet when discussing specific topics. After reading a few postings together, several students became emotional about some of the entries, particularly the ones that had titles like "Lee, Myung Bak! You should watch *Crossing* and help North Korea" and "Let's light up the worst hell on earth." Students did not like the fact that *Crossing* is used for political reasons to justify the actions of certain groups of people or to criticize others. In fact, several postings were very short with one or two sentences only, and the contents of the postings were simply asking specific politicians to watch this film.

Students were also angry at postings which described North Korean refugees as poor and pitiful and North Korea as a hell and a nightmare. Several Azalea students said that they wished that they could write something at this site. Because students did not have access to a computer during the camp and the only computers that the school had were the ones that teachers used in their classrooms, students were not able to write what they wanted during the camp period. However, students started to comprehend the importance of expressing their thoughts to other

people. The following are entries from a translated journal on the day that the class examined the Daum Agora. While these excerpts are directly translated from students' journal entries, the translation does not capture the tone, misspelling, wrong grammar nor inadequate word choices that evidently show students' insufficient language skills.

> Man-Ki (18, boy): I have visited Agora before, but I never thought about searching for information in Agora. I always read the postings that were appeared on the first page. I also like how anybody can publicly talk about what they want to talk about and those who want to continue the dialogue can respond to that posting. I certainly have not used the Internet fully before. I think Agora can be a good place to learn what and how South Koreans think about different topics.
>
> HoSub (15, boy): It was really frustrating to see what people wrote about *Crossing* and North Korea. I thought the film would have a positive influence on South Koreans because the film can awake people's interests in North Korean refugees. But it seems like these people do not get the point of the film. I wish I can write a posting there.
>
> Jun-Sung (17, boy): I have heard people praising the Internet for its ability to connect people from all over the world. However, I cannot send messages to my friend in North Korea via the Internet, so I always sneer at those who praise the computer. But still, they are somewhat right about the computer. You can talk to the world using the computer. Although nobody might actually care what you write, you still feel that you sent a message to the world…I wish my Korean ability was better than what I have now. I cannot write a long essay at a place where people can read because I always have lots of grammatical errors and typos. I should study Korean harder.
>
> (Journal Entries, Azalea Summer Institute, August 8, 2008)

Students' awareness of the importance of speaking their voices was not diminished when I met them again four months later:

> Heejung (16, Girl, Azalea): After the summer camp, I wrote something on Agora. It was not a long piece of writing, but was a short response to the posting about alternative school education. The author argued that students who graduated from an alternative school should receive a school diploma. I really liked that argument because I think it is not fair that I cannot get the school diploma simply because I attended an alternative school instead of a public school. So, I clicked the recommendation button next to the article. However, some responses to that article were very disappointing. They argued that if alternative schools give school diplomas, students will no longer stay in the public education system and disqualified students will get school diplomas. I was very mad at these statements, so I commented on one of these statements. I wrote that alternative schools provide education for students who cannot be served by public education, and it is not fair that students cannot get degrees simply because they do not attend public schools. (Interview, January 13, 2009)

When I asked Heejung whether anyone had responded to her comments, she reported that she had deleted her entry few minutes after because she was not sure how other people would think about what she wrote. She did not have confidence in her Korean writing and thought somebody might ridicule her for her poor Korean. I told her that people would not have to know who wrote a particular posting because she could write it anonymously. Still, she said that she felt better after writing these comments and that was good enough for her. Moreover, other people already had shared similar thoughts with her, so she thought it would be okay for her to delete what she wrote. She continued that she wanted to have her own blog in the future after she got into college

and her Korean was more fluent. When that happens, she told me that she would reveal her identity as a North Korean refugee on the blog and would share her views and thoughts, so that native South Koreans could see how North Koreans think.

After reviewing Daum Agora, I introduced the online fan communities of the Director, Tae-Gyun Kim, as well as of the leading actor, In-Pyo Cha. I also showed the blog postings written by those who had watched the film. This in-class review of various online sources regarding the same topic allowed students to see the "bigger picture" of the Internet. Here are more excerpts from students' journal entries:

> Sung-Ah (16, Girl): I feel that I have seen the bigger picture of the Internet. It was amazing to see different tones and content of these writings about *Crossing.* They all talked about the same thing, but they had different things to say based on what they wanted to say and where they were presenting these words.
>
> Jun-Sung (17, boy): I never paid attention to what I read and where I read it on the Internet. To me, they seemed all same. Today, we closely observed different things that we can do online. It is amazing to see that some bloggers wrote better than professional journalists. I thought it was not fair that these bloggers are not paid while journalists are paid just because they are writing for a newspaper.
>
> Ha-Young (17, Girl): Today, Teacher Yoon taught us how people can use the Internet and post what they want to post depending on their different purposes and motives. The film agency, fans, and critical viewers had all different attitudes towards the film. Today's class reminded me of the online fan community of DBSG (Dong Bang Shin Gi, one of the most famous South Korean boy band quintets). I am a member of that community and visit the community at least once a day and I sometimes search for

> DBSG at portal websites. But what I find at portal sites are sometimes different from what I read in the fan community. What fans write in the DBSG fan community, what journalists write about them, and what bloggers write about them are different. Sometimes, the wrong information about DBSG is widely spread on the Internet. Although fans know that these rumors are not true, most people who do not pay close attention to DBSG would not know the truth and would believe whatever they read online. I always wondered why some people write bad things about DBSG with animosity. But today, I thought the reason they write such stories might be their different motives. From now on, whenever I see gossip about DBSG online, I first will try to figure out what made the people write such things. I will also speak up and tell the truth.
>
> (Journal Entries, Azalea Summer Institute, August 8, 2008)

I spent two classes about *Crossing* at the Azalea Summer Institute and four classes at the Dandelion School to let students know that mass media can be experienced positively and nobody needs to be blamed for using the media if they are used in correct ways. I also wanted to teach various possible uses of the Internet as well as different tones of the articles, blog postings, and other online writings based on writers' goals, views and positions. These class periods were not long enough to teach all of these topics. Nonetheless, what students shared in class and in their journals indicate that they begain to be aware of these critical media literacy issues.

When I met Young later during the winter of 2008 – the girl who used the word "evil" to describe the mass media – her negative stance toward the computer and other media certainly had changed. The mass media were now part of her life and she did not feel guilty about them, even when she used them for leisure purposes. When I met her in the second week of January 2009, the drama series *Boys over Flowers* had started just the week before. This drama series is

based on the Japanese comic books. After Japan and Taiwan, South Korea was the third country that had produced the drama series based on this comic book. Young was so excited about this drama and said that she owned the comic books of *Boys over Flowers* and had watched the Japanese version drama on the computer. She also reported that she had searched for information about not only the drama's Korean actors, but also its Japanese and Taiwanese actors. When she talked about *Boys over Flowers,* she seemed so happy, rather than feeling guilty and ashamed for reading comics, watching television dramas, and becoming a fan of these actors. During an interview in January 2009, Young reported that unlike her computer use before she took the media literacy class four months earlier, she now uses the computer for more diverse purposes:

> Before taking the media literacy class, I was afraid of using the computer because I had seen many North Korean refugees becoming addicted to the computer. Also, I wasn't good at computers, so I did not feel comfortable using them. I had a Cyworld account before taking a media literacy class because most of my friends were using it and they were communicating on Cyworld. I sometimes had things that I wanted to post, such as pictures that I wanted to upload or special moments that I wanted to remember. But I did not actually used Cyworld, but just kept the account. Now, as you have seen it these days, I upload pictures, copy good excerpts from books or the Internet, and write comments on my friends' postings. Also, whenever I go to see a movie, I check the reviews before I go to the theater. I sometimes read the reviews after I watch the film to see whether other people had similar or different impressions about the film. When I am not motivated to study, I also look for success stories on the Internet. I don't know if you ever tried to find these success stories, but if you search for them, you will be able to read how these

> successful people were able to make it that far. Reading about their efforts to overcome adversity and the strategies they used are helpful, keeping me motivated.
>
> (Young, Interview, Dandelion School, January 4, 2009)

There also are times that Young stays online overnight to search for news and stories about an actor whom she likes. She may reproach herself for watching too much television. However, she now knows that she does not have to demonize the mass media since they also can be used effectively for various purposes. This new attitude can be a starting point from which Young can begin to pursue an active and positive use of the media in order to achieve her goals.

Overall, this section is about the power in media literacy education of using fictional and nonfictional films that feature characters with whom students can identify. Close analysis and reflection upon these films and other related media sources led students to be more conscious about the varied potential uses of the media, including for civic action. After these students became more aware of the different functions and usage of the mass media, many, who used to have a very negative stance toward the media, started to see their positive impact on people and on the society at large.

Lesson Four: Different News Sources about the Candlelight Demonstration

This section is about the issues surrounding the candlelight demonstration and how I incorporated this topic into the classroom in order to develop students' critical thinking skills and to help them understand the divergent views and tones of different media sources as well as citizens' use of the media for the purpose of democratic actions.

When I started this dissertation project, one of my reasons for suggesting that media literacy would better refugees' acculturation process emanated from several previous studies on

how immigrants and refugees use the mass media as a safe, unthreatening way to become familiar with their host society (Y. Y. Kim, 1977, 1991; Y. Y. Kim & Gunykunst, 1988; Riggins, 1994). From my previous experience as an educator of North Korean refugees, I also observed that the ways that they experience and understand the media were different from other South Korean students of their age. During the same time that I was an instructor with North Korean refugees from 2002 to 2003, I also was teaching at an alternative school at which all students were native South Koreans. I was able to observe clear differences between the two groups. Just like Prensky's (2001) framework about young people as digital natives on the one hand and older people as digital immigrants on the other, the South Korean students appeared to be commercial media natives while the North Korean refugees were commercial media immigrants. As several educators noted in dismay, many young North Korean refugees seemed to be dominated by South Korean media and their hatred, cynicism, and complaints toward South Korea seemed to be influenced by the mass media. Such attitudes were revealed overtly when these students talked about the U.S. beef and candlelight incidents.

Different Representations of Candlelight Demonstration in Different News Agencies

As I indicated in Chapter 4, South Korea was going through some turmoil because of issues surrounding the importing of U.S. beef. Many South Koreans worried that the new pact between South Korea and the U.S. government would result in unsafe beef, which could not be sold in the United States nor exported to other countries like Taiwan and Japan. Those citizens who believed that this was an unfair pact participated in the candlelight demonstrations. These demonstrations took place over the entire country, and people could read, watch, and hear about these events from every media outlet. The progressive news agencies heavily criticized the

government and supported the candlelight demonstrations, while the conservative news agencies condemned those who participated for speaking out against their government based on a non-validated fact. They also reproached the Internet for instigating people.

The different tones of these news agencies were apparent. It was clear that people heard different stories based on their news sources. Despite the different attitudes about the issue of U.S. beef and the candlelight demonstrations, most people during the summer of 2008 said that South Korea was going through one of its most critical historical moments, as the nation-wide demonstrations were organized not by professional activists, but by the general public. While I was in Korea during the summer of 2008, I frequently heard the phrase “the new start of the real democracy by ordinary people.” This summer certainly provided a teachable moment in which to discuss the issues of representation as well as subjectivity/objectivity of the media.

However, because the demonstrations were a very sensitive topic and some teachers already expressed their expectations about how they want me to handle this issue, I had to use a different approach at each institution. At the Cosmos Social Welfare Center, I did not cover this issue because students were too young to discuss it. During the class break time when I could have casual conversations with students, I noted that some six graders were capable of understanding what was going on regarding this issue. However, the topic was too complicated for the younger children. Moreover, because the media literacy class was held in the open area of the library at the Welfare Center, other children and parents were watching and hearing what we were doing. Because some parents might become uncomfortable with this topic being discussed or with my tone and attitude and then complain to the other educators and social workers who work there, I decided not to take a risk of discussing such a controversial topic with elementary students at the Cosmos Social Welfare Center.

At the Forsythia School, I never had a chance to formally discuss this topic with students because I had to stop teaching there after holding three classes. However, because the school subscribed to two very different newspapers, *Hankyoreh Shin-Moon*, one of the most progressive Korean newspapers, and *Dong-A Ilbo,* one of the most conservative newspapers, I was able to talk about the tones of the two different newspapers during the break and lunch times. The newspapers were available in the open area and anybody could read them whenever they had a free period. Every time I saw students reading the newspaper, I asked them if they had chosen to read a specific newspaper or had grabbed whichever one was available. All the students reported that they did not have any preference, but just read any paper that was available. Some of them said that they did not actually read the papers, but just skimmed them until they found a noteworthy article or reached the entertainment news. Only a few students made an attempt to read the newspaper everyday to check local and global current events.

One day I had a chance to talk with Dong-Gun (16, boy) while he was reading *Dong-A Ilbo*. He was reading the front page which had a picture of people fighting with the police. I asked him what he thought about the article. Dong-Gun said that he did not like the fact that South Koreans hold demonstrations over trivial issues. He also said that he could not understand why people were so mad at the government because if they were not happy with the U.S. beef, they could simply not buy it and choose beef from a different country. I asked him what if these cows were served in the school cafeteria or in the army. He did not say anything for a while, so I asked him if he always read *Dong-A Ilbo*. Dong-Gun said that he never paid attention to what newspaper he read, so he did not know whether he read *Dong-A Ilbo* or *Hankyoreh Shin-Moon* most of the time or read them both. I handed *Hankyoreh Shin-Moon* to Dong-Gun and asked him if he would compare the two newspapers. He first said that he did not know what to look at, so I

asked him if he could distinguish any differences in their tones when describing the candlelight demonstrations. After carefully reading *Hankyoreh Shin-Moon*, he could see that *Dong-A Ilbo* condemned protesters more harshly. He also said that *Hankyoreh Shin-Moon* portrayed more about the brutal suppression of the demonstrations by the police, while *Dong-A Ilbo* did not describe the suppression in as much detail. Dong-Gun said that even though he read the newspaper every day, he never noticed the divergent tones of the two newspapers, and in the future would pay closer attention to the different stories that they covered.

Although I had a chance to talk about different tones and views of different news agencies with a student only at the Forsythia School, the informal talk there during lunch time offered me an "A-ha" moment about how to approach this issue at the Dandelion School. As I described in Chapter 4, teachers at the Dandelion School were not happy with people standing up against the government and holding candle demonstrations. Moreover, they thought that the Internet misled people into believing false information and asked me to teach students not to trust what they see on television or read online. Because I had a totally different view toward the issue of candle demonstrations and the mass media, I had to be careful when covering these subjects in the classroom.

However, the lessons about *Crossing* and my conversation with Dong-Gun at the Forsythia School gave me the idea that I could design a class similar to a NIE (Newspaper in Education) class. In South Korea, NIE is more popular than media literacy education, because NIE is seen as effective in preparing students for the college entrance writing test. In a NIE class, students often get a chance to critically analyze a newspaper article or compare two articles regarding the same topic. In order for students to see how the same incident, in this case a candlelight demonstration, was discussed distinctly by newspapers, I prepared editorial columns

from *Hankyoreh Shin-Moon,* one of the more liberal newspapers and from *Chosun Ilbo,* one of the most conservative newspapers.

I had only two students at the Dandelion School the day on which I held this lesson comparing the two newspaper editorial columns. Both of them liked the close reading of the text, as they thought it was a great opportunity to expand their vocabulary and improve their Korean language skills. Because of the intimate class environment, they felt comfortable when asking questions about the words and expressions that they did not understand. One of the students, Minjung, had almost four times more words that she did not understand than did her peer Young, but Young was very tolerant and helped Minjung to better understand the expressions. Minjung conceived of this class like a Korean language class, and told me several times that she felt a media literacy class was more effective in learning Korean than was a Korean language class. After going through the words she did not know, Minjung was able to understand the main theme of the texts. Nevertheless, the newspaper column was too challenging for her to comprehend the words and to read between the lines, which is often important to critically analyze such a text. Therefore, although both Dandelion students were highly motivated and excited when analyzing these newspaper editorial columns, Young was the only one who expressed her thoughts most of the time during the class. When she read these two columns, she said she was confused:

> Young (21, girl): I am so confused. It doesn't seem like these editorial columns are written about the same incidents. Which one should I believe?
>
> Jiwon (I, teacher): What do you think?
>
> Young: I don't know. I never thought about this kind of issue. I always read the news from the portal website, and I did not pay attention to the names of the news agencies.

Until you told me today, I did not even know that these news articles in the portal websites indicate where the news came from. In fact, it is kind of scary that people can have a totally different understanding about this candlelight demonstration depending on where they get their news from.

Jiwon: Then, how can we know who is telling the truth? What if both of the articles you read are not stating the facts? Is there anything that you can do?

Young: I really don't know. Probably, people can investigate what is true.

Jiwon: It is important for readers to find out whether the articles they read are conveying the facts. But, can readers do that all the time?

Young: Probably not.

Jiwon: Then, what can people do?

Young: Well, they can at least ask questions even if they cannot validate the truth.

Jiwon: Great! Yes, people can ask questions and try to critically analyze the texts. But, were you able to tell which newspaper was telling the truth? Of course, both articles you read today were editorial columns and editorial staff writes their opinions here, so it is subjective by default. But which column is reflecting the truth?

(Class Discussion, Dandelion School, July 25, 2008)

After silence for a while, I talked about the importance of finding the sources that are trustworthy. I briefly explained the history and reputation of these two newspapers. I told the class that because people with different political affiliations, views and beliefs would judge these two newspapers differently, it is important to have one's own point of view and be able to discern what is right and wrong. When I met Young again after four months, she said that she sometimes visited *Hankyoreh Shin-Moon* to read the news rather than reading the random news

articles from the portal websites. She was still getting most of the news from the portal websites, but she sometimes felt overwhelmed by trash news that did not help her at all. She also felt that many important news stories are not displayed on the front page of the portal website, so she sometimes just visited the newspaper website to thoroughly review the news there. Because she now trusts *Hankyoreh Shin-Moon* the most, she tries to make sure that she is informed by the news agency that she counts on the most. My interview with her in January of 2009 confirmed to me that the media literacy class had helped her to move away from a cynical and negative view toward the media. Rather than denouncing the media indiscriminately, she has begun to be aware of the importance of a trustworthy source which can help her to establish her own viewpoints.

Although both Minjung and Young are motivated and enjoyed the class when reviewing the editorial columns, I learned that this lesson plan was problematic to adopt at the Azalea Summer Institute, because I was not be able to have a one-to-one teaching experience with the 15 Azalea students. Because of the students' different levels of reading comprehension skills and intellectual abilities, I was afraid that some might not be able to fully participate in this class activity, just as Minjung had been isolated when she compared the two editorial columns. I also worried that if I focused on explaining the difficult vocabulary, some students would enjoy learning them while other students who already knew these words might feel the class was tedious. Therefore, rather than applying the same teaching strategy, I decided to use *Media Focus*, a weekly television program by KBS (Korean Broadcasting System). According to their website, *Media Focus*, whose title was changed to *Media Critic* on November 15th, 2008, "seeks to monitor and criticize media on their roles and responsibility and also provide healthy alternatives" and "will offer a channel for the audience to view confusing and conflicting media reports with a critical perspective." The program aims to examine media reports and programs to

"distinguish true, false, distorted, misleading, or exaggerated content" and suggests "ways to enhance accurate coverage and promote media advancement" (KBS, n.d.).

On August 12th at the Azalea Summer Institute, I first asked students if anybody subscribed to a newspaper or regularly read a paper at school or at a library. When a few students raised their hands, I asked what newspapers they read and why they read these papers. Those who said that they read a newspaper said that the reason why was because their parents or school subscribed to that paper; moreover they did not know why their parents or teachers subscribed to that specific newspaper. Then I showed the first six-minute segment of *Media Focus* that had aired on June 28, 2008; this segment dealt with how major newspapers had covered the candlelight demonstrations in different ways based on their political affiliations. The film compared the pictures, agenda, and tones of these newspapers. Students were amazed at how the same incident could be so differentially reported by these major newspapers and television news programs, as demonstrated in the class discussion below:

> Jun-Sung (17, boy): Why do they have such different coverage about the same incident?
>
> Jiwon (I, teacher): That is a great question. Can anybody make a guess? Why do you think these major news agencies reported the same incident so differently?

After few seconds of silence, Jun-Sung answered the question that he himself posed.

> Jun-Sung (17, boy): Some articles certainly made those protesters look bad, while other newspapers had opposite attitudes. They made the police look so bad. It probably means that these newspapers are taking the side of the protesters while other newspapers are siding with the police.

Man-Ki (18, boy): I think it is because they have different beliefs about who is right. Most people have their own beliefs about this issue of U.S. beef and the candlelight demonstration. These articles show what these journalists believe about this issue. (Class Discussion, August 4, Azalea Summer Institute)

After Manki's words, I reminded students of the key questions about media literacy (Hobbs, n.d.), which they had learned in their second media literacy class:

1.) Who is the author and what is the purpose of the message?

2.) What techniques are used to attract your attention?

3.) What lifestyles, values, and points of view are represented?

4.) How might different people interpret the message differently?

5.) What is omitted from the message?

Then I asked if they think that these questions could be useful in understanding the different agendas and tones of the same incident covered by the major newspapers. The Azalea students responded that the third and fifth questions could be helpful in discussing this issue of differential agendas and tones:

Jun-Sung (17, boy): Certainly certain points of views are represented here.

Heejung (16, girl): I've heard adults criticizing those who protest against the government. On the other had, some of my friends at church have participated in the candlelight demonstrations. The way they talked about the incidents were very contradictory. I am sure these journalists had such different views, and these views were well implied in their article.

Jiwon (I, teacher): Then, why do you think some people have favorable impressions toward protesters while others do not?

Heejung (16, girl): It might be their beliefs about the protest. Some people think that the citizens should respect what government does. But not everybody agrees with that idea.

Jun-Sung (17, boy): This also can be about whether they support Lee Myung-Bak. Those who support Lee Myung-Bak will be unhappy with these protesters. Such differences can influence the article in terms of what to report and what not to report.

Jiwon (I, teacher): Both Heejung and Jun-Sung are right. Certainly, these newspapers had their own vales and points of view when reporting this incident, and this influenced what to include and what to omit in their articles. Then, what can we say about their objectivity and subjectivity as journalists? Can we say that these articles are objectively conveying the facts?

Sung-Ah (16, girl): Journalists are never objective. They even sometimes write a fictional novel in their article. People should not expect that they tell the truth.

Jiwon (I, teacher): Can you please tell why you think these journalists never report the facts?

Sung-Ah (16, girl): Because they do that. If you tell them ABC, they write only about A or B or C. Not all of them, which can totally change the meaning.

Jiwon (I, teacher): Then, we can ask the fifth question: What is omitted from the message?

Jun-Sung (17, boy): But people do not ask these questions when they watch television or read the newspaper. They just believe what they hear.

Jiwon (I, teacher): Do you just believe what you hear from the media?

Jun-Sung (17, boy): I sometimes do, because I cannot know whether they reported the truth or not.

Sung-Ah (16, girl): That's why I do not believe them, because I can never know whether they conveyed a fact or a falsehood.

Jiwon (I, teacher): Then, should we just distrust the media all the time because they might have lied to us, or do we just have to believe them because there is no other alternative?

Eun-Mee (17, girl): We may not know whether what we read is accurate or distorted. But at least, we can ask questions.

Jiwon (I, teacher): Yes, we can ask questions. We can ask who the author is. It is important for us to know which source is trustworthy and which is not. I trust certain news sources more than the other, because I share their views, beliefs and political affiliation. The reason you saw such huge differences between these newspapers is because they have different views, beliefs and political affiliation. These journalists may not purposely distort the truth when they write an article, but they intentionally or unintentionally can focus on a certain aspect of an incident and can omit other aspects of an incident. Therefore, I strongly urge you to find the news sources that you can trust the most. Going back to asking questions, the five questions of media literacy can be very useful in critically analyzing the media. We often do not think about the message we receive from the media. When we start to ask questions, we no longer have to just believe whatever we hear from the media blindly or distrust and ignore all the messages as if they are all telling the lies. Mass media help us to expand the radius of our lives. They help us to better understand the society we belong to and the world we cannot have direct contact with. Therefore, rather than just bashing the media, I hope you all know how to use the media well and how to critically understand these messages.

(Class Discussion, August 12, Azalea Summer Institute)

Students asked me if I would tell them the news source that I trust the most. I shared two newspapers that I particularly trust, but also reminded students to find their own news sources because my choice of papers is based on what I believe. When students asked me how to find the newspaper that they themselves can trust, I told them to study articles from multiple sources. Because students have easy access to all the newspaper articles on the Internet, I suggested that students go to the internet to get exposure to different news sources. I also advised them to be aware of what news agencies have provided the news whenever they read or watch the news on the portal websites, because these websites display news from multiple agencies on their main pages; the students responded that they usually do read the news from these sites. Because most portal websites do not indicate where the news is coming from on their main pages, readers will not be able to know who created the news until they actually click on an article and read it. Although students still may tend to consume most of their news from these portal sites and click a news article just by looking at the title, I stressed that they should check the source whenever they read the news at a portal website.

However, disappointingly, none of the Azalea students whom I interviewed in the winter of 2008 remembered all the five key questions of media literacy. Some of them even did not recall that they had learned the five media literacy questions. Some of these students nonetheless demonstrated a different attitude, including habits of inquiry, when reading or watching the news after they had taken the media literacy class, as indicated below:

> Heejung (16, girl): Before taking the media literacy class, I never paid attention to the newspaper companies. I just read entertainment news from Daum and did not check where the article was coming from. Now I automatically look at the newspaper company when I read them. I also realized that in the comment section, people write like, “no

wonder this kind of article is published by this news agency." I learned that people look at where the news comes from.

(Interview, January 13, 2009)

Hyun-Mee (15, girl): I have to admit that I often just watch television or navigate the portal sites without thinking. However, whenever I don't like certain programs or news, I try to think why this makes me uncomfortable.

(Interview, January 15, 2009)

I held only six classes at the Azalea Summer Institute during the summer of 2008. Since the media literacy class was not continued by other teachers, students thus learned *about* the media solely (in their lives to date) during the summer of 2008. My six classes with them might have not been enough for students to become media literate and culturally competent as I had hoped for before starting the program. However, some students at least started to become aware of the importance of critically examining media messages and locating a good news source that they could trust. Thus, one might strongly argue that how they experienced the media and saw the world through the media had changed in meaningful ways.

Lesson Five: Media Representation and Stereotypes

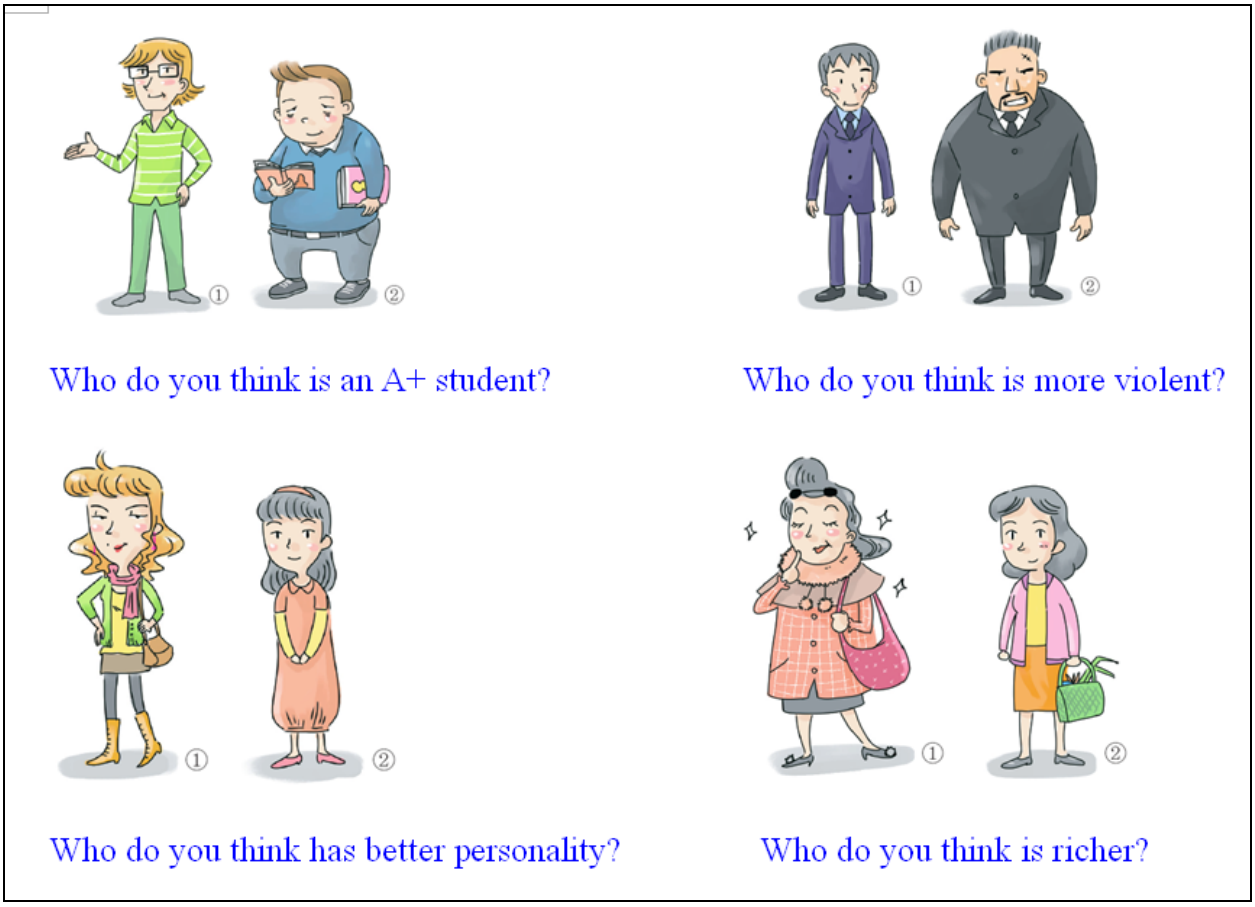
In the previous section, I discussed how media literacy education lessons that use different news sources regarding the same incident can help students to understand how reality is constructed in the media. The following Lesson Models Five and Six describe how students deepened their understanding about the constructed nature of the media, explored issues of representation and stereotyping, and reconsidered their participation in the process of creating media messages.

Media Representation and Stereotypes

North Korean refugees who have lived in South Korea more than a few years often do not trust researchers and media personnel because of their own experiences as informants and subjects. As I indicated in the previous section, many of them experienced that what they said was tweaked, often in ways in which they did not want to present themselves. Thus they were cynical toward the media personnel because they did not see the point of doing this type of participation. They thought that whatever they did or said, people's perceptions toward North Korean refugees and their position in the society would not improve. Some students also expressed a deep-rooted cynicism and suspicion toward the media, not because of their experiences with media personnel but because of the messages in the media. One of the Dandelion students who could not continue to attend the media literacy class because he had to prepare for examinations told me that he felt so badly that he would not be able to take this class anymore because he wanted to know more about the media. He believed that the media deceived people all the time and that people are not aware of this deception.

Another reason that students did not like the media was the way the mass media depict North Korea and North Korean refugees. Some students even had the feeling of being victimized in that they felt they always were disregarded by a majority of society. In order to help these students to better understand the issues of representation and stereotyping so that they could recognize that stories in the mass media often create formulaic characters which can be more easily understood by viewers, I adapted the stereotype activity in the curriculum designed for first to third grade students by the Korean Broadcasting Commission (2007). In this activity, students see illustrated pictures of two different people and answer such questions as, "Who do

you think is an A+ student?" "Who do you think is more violent?" "Who do you think has better personality?" and "Who do you think is richer?" (Picture 6)



<Picture 6: Stereotype Activity>

I used this activity at all the institutions in which I taught during the summer of 2008. Students had their own reasons for why they thought that certain characters seem to be smart, violent, nice, and rich, although they were not aware of their own biases. For instance, while some students thought the boy who wears the glasses must be smarter, other students believed that the other boy with a book must be smarter because he has books in his hands and has dark circles under his eyes. This dialogue about students' own stereotypes naturally led into a discussion of how people learn such stereotypes and the influence of stereotypes prevalent in the

mass media. From this discussion, students found out that North Korean refugees are not the only group labeled by particular characterizations. In fact, students expressed their surprise that most groups of people are labeled based on their gender, social class, occupation, place of residence, and even religion. Then the class talked about how such stereotypes in the media can be problematic:

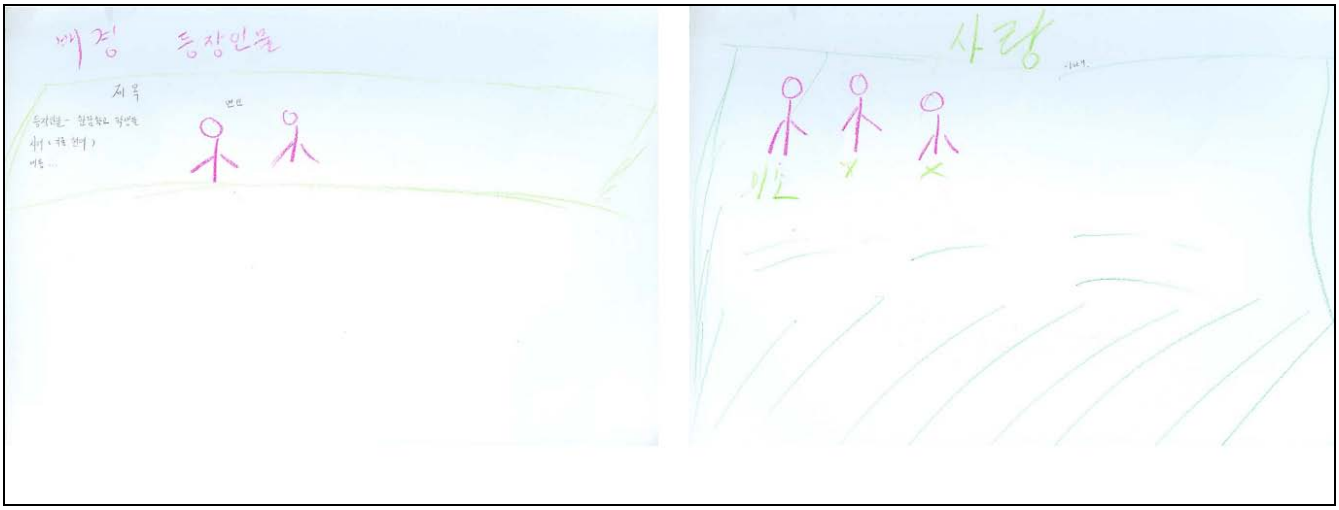
> Seok (17, Boy): I don't think stereotypes come from the media. I think people had stereotypes before the media existed.
>
> Sejoon (16, Boy): I agree. But the media certainly influence people to believe these images. As Teacher Yoon indicated, I cannot recall that any fat people appeared as smart characters on television.
>
> Unhee (16, Girl): I think this can be very dangerous because people can believe what is not true about others.
>
> (Class discussion, June 12, 2008, Forsythia School)

Students in other institutions had similar responses about the stereotypes in the media. These students thought the mass media can mislead people to have wrong impressions about certain groups of people. When I asked them for any alternative solutions, most students did not have any ideas. Next I talked about how the mainstream media have represented the views of only certain groups, usually those of the privileged groups, while ignoring the views of minorities and underrepresented people. When I asked students if they thought that media production by different groups of people can be an alternative solution for the misrepresentations and stereotypes in the media, they responded that it would be an unrealistic solution because most people cannot produce their own dramas and films. Then, I talked about how the advancement of technology, especially the computer, has enabled the production of one's own

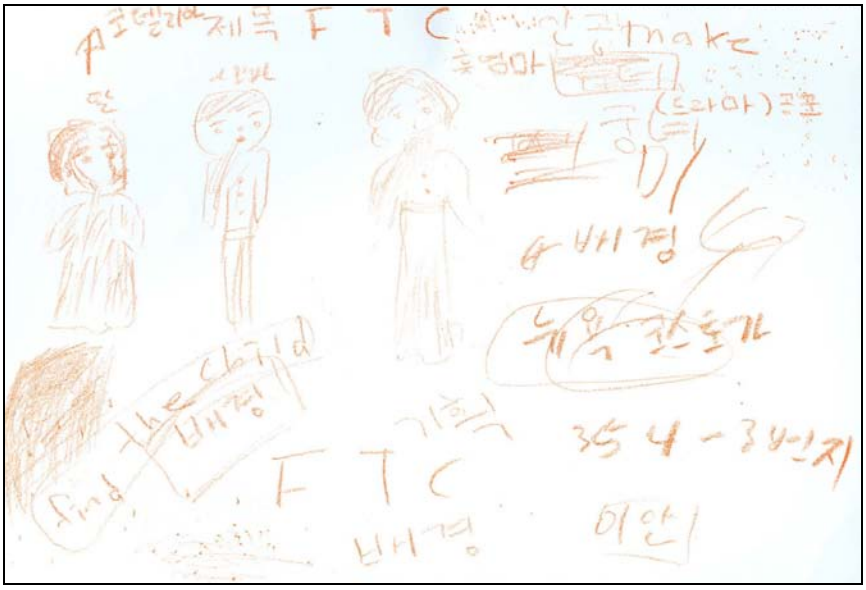
media content. Then I shared such examples as “Power Bloggers,” the term used in Korea to describe the bloggers whose blogs are filled with useful content and have many visitors each day. I also told them about short videos that have been widely circulated on the Internet. All of these videos were produced by individuals who are non-professional media personnel. I also introduced several independent films that were created by non-professional filmmakers.

I continued that students were correct when they said it would be unrealistic for individuals to create their own television dramas or large-scale films. However, indebted to the development of media technology, people now can easily produce and distribute the messages they want, as the students have witnessed by the examples of blogs, internet video clips, and independent films. Then I introduced the book which I brought to class, *I am Changing the World with Cyworld* (Seung-Soo Im & Yang, 2007) written by two people who run the online community “The World We Live Together.” In this book, they discuss how the Internet, specifically Cyworld in this case, can have a positive and meaningful impact on the society at large. The authors also included examples of how people who met on Cyworld minihompies and online communities have made a positive impact on various areas of South Korean society. Students showed great interest and excitement in this book, arguing that Cyworld, which most of them were visiting every day despite being scolded by their teachers and parents, could be used to change the world. Some students even asked me if they could read the book during the break and took a closer look at the book after the class. At Forest Middle School, Cosmos Social Welfare Center, and Azalea Summer Institute, I wrapped up the classes about stereotypes by asking students to take advantage of this possibility and speak out with their voices so that they would not be victims of the biased representations in the media any more, but rather the creators and distributors of messages that can represent themselves more accurately and genuinely.

In Forsythia School, I asked students to think about the stories that they wanted to tell to a wide audience. Students drew the stories and presented them in front of the class; several of these stories reflected their own life stories. For instance, one student drew two students on the first page and wrote “Characters: Forsythia School Students” and “The Time Period: Present Days.” She said that these two people are Forsythia students who are a couple. She drew three people on the next page, saying that because this couple’s love is so innocent and beautiful, this love makes other people happy; therefore she wrote “smile” below the illustration of the third person <Picture 7>. Because she actually had a boyfriend at the Forsythia School and her classmates all knew about him, the students proceeded to poke fun at the couple; in response, these two students smiled and asked their classmates to stop teasing them. Another student drew the story about a girl who was lost in New York City. Her father and stepmother worked hard to find her, and because of her stepmother’s efforts and brilliant ideas, they were able to find her without the help of the police <Picture 8>. This story was created by a boy, so I asked him why he made the leading character as a girl rather than a boy. He responded that here the leading character was a stepmother and the reason he included the female character was because dramas often become more interesting when they have attractive actresses. After class, I learned from his teacher that this student’s mother had remarried in South Korea so the student was living with his mother and stepfather, not stepmother. Therefore, it is interesting to note that this student drew the story about a particularly caring stepmother when he was not having a good relationship with his stepfather.



<Picture 7: Forsythia student created a story about the couple who attend Forsythia School.>



<Picture 8: Forsythia student created a story about a girl who was lost in the New York city, but was found by her step-mother.>

<Picture 9: Forsythia student created a story going to the house where the whole family lives together>

Students also depicted stories that manifested their strong wishes and desires. For instance, one girl drew farmland and a grandmother's house near the farmland. She then drew high skyscrapers and a house with the words "The house of one family." She also depicted a car that was heading to the house from the grandmother's house <Picture 9>. When she presented her work, she said only that the story is about going to the house where the whole family lives together. When I asked her for further details, she did not say anything, but just smiled. After class, I learned from her teacher that her mother is still in China and did not get the opportunity to come to South Korea as yet.

In summary, contemplating the issue of media representations and stereotypes naturally led the class to discuss the importance of having different media representations in the society, so that the students could have the opportunity to learn various aspects about different groups of people. Students also learned that diversity in media production can enable varied representations in media content. Furthermore, by learning about the relatively easy accessibility to different media for the purpose of creating their own messages, students started to become aware of the possibilities of using the media to speak out with their own voices. Such awareness slowly turned to even firmer resolution and beliefs about the importance of speaking out with their own voices, as students learned the next lesson in which they watched and discussed the documentaries about North Korean refugees, including the ones produced by young North Korean refugees themselves.

Lesson Six: North Korean Refugees as Subjects and Producers of Documentaries about Themselves

As students started to become aware of the importance of having diversity in media representations and see how anyone can create messages using the media, I decided that watching the documentaries in which North Korea refugees participated in the production would help students gain the confidence that they too can become a part of creating messages. Therefore, I showed four different documentaries at the Dandelion School where I taught two students throughout the entire summer of 2008, twice weekly with three hours for each class, since I had enough time compared to the more limited class periods at the other institutions. These films were *North Korean 1.5 Generation: Who Are We, North Korean 1.5 Generation: The Road to Our Home* by QChannel, *The Long Journey I*, and *The Long Journey II* by students

in 34school (Three Four School). I first showed Dandelion students *North Korean 1.5 Generation: Who Are We* and *North Korean 1.5 Generation: The Road to Our Home*. These two films are about the lives of young North Korean refugees in South Korea, produced by QChannel, the only documentary channel in South Korea. After showing these two one-hour long documentaries in class, I asked the two students, Minjung and Young, what they thought about the film. Both of them were immersed in these documentaries, as the films were about people who resembled them. The two students considered these films to be very well made with honest and genuine disclosure of what young North Korean refugees really go through in South Korea. Students particularly liked the fact that these documentaries show both the joyful moments as well as the hardships of North Korean refugees, unlike other media portrayals that often reveal the difficult moments only. After the two students shared their impressions about the films, I discussed how I first watched *North Korean 1.5 Generation: The Road to Our Home* at the screening event with Forsythia students. This film features the lives of the residents of Althea House, the shelter in which North Korean refugees live with their guardians who are South Korean adults. Before the screening, the director of the Althea House spoke in front of the audience about the students' reactions when they were discussing the possibility of participating in this documentary project:

> In the beginning, many students were doubtful and hesitant about this project. Some of them had participated in such kinds of projects before, but did not like what came out as a result. The final output was often different from what we wanted to communicate through these projects. However, from these experiences, we have learned that it is still important to use media to tell our stories. By revealing their identities through media, I have seen many young North Koreans become more confident about themselves. At the same time,

it is important to tell these stories, because such stories are not still heard by many South Koreans. (Informal Speech in the film screening event, June 23, 2008)

Title of the film	Description of the film
Crossing	Fictional film about one North Korean family whose father escapes to South Korea to obtain medicine for his sick wife and whose young son also escapes North Korea after his mother dies.
North Korean 1.5 Generation: Who Are We	Documentary by QChannel, the only documentary channel in South Korea, about the lives of young North Korean refugees in South Korea.
North Korean 1.5 Generation: The Road to Our Home	The documentary by QChannel about Our Home, the shelter for North Korean refugees.
The Long Journey I	Documentary by students at the 34school presents the story of one North Korean refugee girl who shares what she experienced in China as she revisits the place where she lived at critical times in her life. She talks about the difficulties and crises that she went through at each location.
The Long Journey II	Documentary by students at the 34school about young North Korean refugees' return to China where they all risked their lives daily as a result of not only their illegal residency, but also their attempts to come to South Korea.

<Chart 3: List of films discussed in the media literacy classes for North Korean refugees>

<Picture 10: Screen captures from the film *The Long Journey I*>

<Picture 11: Screen captures from the film *The Long Journey II*>

After hearing what the director shared about his thoughts about North Korean refugees' appearing in the media, Young expressed her strong agreement with this idea. She said that although she still does not like media personnel – especially journalists – she willingly would be an informant if the reporter had good intentions. She said that she could feel the warm heart and good intentions of the filmmaker when she watched the *North Korean 1.5 Generation* series.

In fact, when I interviewed students who were the main subjects of *North Korean 1.5 Generation: The Road to Our Home*, they said similar things about the director and the film crew. Because this documentary was about students in Althea House and I taught a media literacy class at Forest Middle School where students in Althea House attend, I was able to conduct a group interview with them after school. When I asked what they thought about the documentary, they responded that they were satisfied with the outcome, although some of them complained that they were disappointed with not seeing some of the scenes that the crew shot. They thought the film's director did not include some very humorous and interesting scenes that they had filmed at Althea House. They also talked about how hard it was for them as subjects to be natural in front of the camera. Although they wanted to be indifferent to the video camera, they felt awkward in carrying out their daily routines while somebody else was filming them. One boy was particularly teased by his friends for becoming a different person in front of the camera. However, they did agree that the filmmakers did not distort anything and did their best to accurately portray Althea House. I also asked students if they agreed with what the director of the Althea House said before the screening about having seen young North Korean refugees becoming more confident through revelations about their identities via the media. Except for one student who recently arrived in South Korea, all the other students revealed their identity as North Korean refugees on camera. They said that they felt relieved after such revelations as they

did not have to lie anymore. Ha-Eun said that she does not know whether telling her friends that she was from North Korea made her feel competent, but at least she now feels more comfortable.

Unlike Forest Middle School which Althea students were attending, Dandelion School is only for North Korean refugees; as a result Minjung and Young never have had to lie to their close friends about where they are from. However, Minjung said that she does not tell that she is from North Korea to those who are not very close to her; she tells these people that she is from China, since she can speak better Chinese than Korean. However, she said that watching the *North Korean 1.5 Generation* series and the subsequent discussion about the film has made her want to tell people that she is from North Korea, because she is tired of making up stories about her past.

After watching the *North Korean 1.5 Generation* series at the Dandelion School, the class watched *The Long Journey I* and *The Long Journey II* at the next class meeting. *The Long Journey I* and *II* are documentaries that were produced by students at the 34school (Three Four School), the alternative school designed exclusively for North Korean refugees. *The Long Journey I,* which is about 30 minutes long, presents the story of one North Korean refugee girl who shares what she experienced in China as she revisits the places where she lived at critical times in her life. She talks about the difficulties and crises that she went through at each location. *The Long Journey II,* which is about fifty minutes long, is also about young North Korean refugees' return to China where they all had to risk their lives every day as a result of not only their illegal residency, but also their attempts to come to South Korea. North Korean refugees are not protected by the international agreement regarding refugees because they are not recognized as refugees. The Chinese government therefore sends illegal North Koreans back to their homeland, where these defectors are either executed or harshly punished. For the students in the

film, their memories in China are like a nightmare because they never felt stable there living with the continual fear of repatriation back to North Korea. Thus the film depicts students and teachers at the 34 School returning to China together, portraying the emotions and reactions of the young North Korean refugees when they revisit these nightmarish places. This documentary also shows how this trip back to China helped these students to come to the realization that they do not have to fear anybody anymore as their status has changed. With South Korean passports, they have started to comfortably communicate with people whom they met on their journey, including the police.

After watching *The Long Journey I* and *II*, both Minjung and Young were curious whether these students actually produced the film themselves. They were suspicious that it was the teachers who did all the work while these students just stood in front of the camera. After learning that the students themselves wrote the scripts and took responsibility for each stage of the documentary after the teachers had suggested that they document their stories, Mingjung and Young were surprised at the students' capability. Nonetheless, Young said that she thought the quality of the film was not professional enough, and she did not like the overall tone of *The Long Journey I & II* because students in the film complained about those who helped them in China safely come to South Korea. Still, Young was amazed by these students' ability to transform their own stories into a documentary. In fact, Young felt that the 34 School students were better than she was because the only thing she could do was criticize the film while they actually took a camera and told their stories to the world. Moreover, she said that she did not think that she would be able to retrace her life in China like the 34 School students did, but she could imagine that this process must be very therapeutic as students did not just simply learn second hand but rather they directly experienced that they do not have to fear anything, even in China. Minjung

also liked the film very much and even said that she wanted to transfer to 34 School so that she could learn how to make a documentary.

The students' recognition about the importance of participating in the process of message creation process also was observed when I met them again four months later for an interview:

> Young (21, Girl, Dandelion): I still do not like journalists' views on North Korea and North Korean refugees. Whenever I see the news, they make me sigh…I never had any interview requests after the summer. But if any journalists ask me to be an informant, I will do the interview, although that might depend on the quality of the journalists. Probably, I can request what should be included in the news when I do the interview. Well, maybe, I may still do the interview even if I don't get a good impression from the journalists, because it may be better to say something than say nothing (Interview, January 4, 2009).

When I asked Hyun-Mee to sign the IRB consent form for an interview and explained the process, she asked me if I would use the interview for the radio since I was using a voice recorder. When I told her that the interview would not be aired by the mass media, but used only for my dissertation, she asked me the thesis of the dissertation. After learning what the dissertation was about, she said the following:

> Hyun-Mee (15, Girl, Azalea): Oh, I remember. You came to Korea last summer for your dissertation, right? I totally forgot that you were there for your study, because for me, it was the media class and you never made us feel that you were there for your study. You seemed like you were there to teach only… Even though this interview is for your dissertation, you can use this for the radio or for other media. But because you are a media teacher, you will not change what we said, right?

(Interview, January 15, 2009)

Another Azalea student, Heejung, liked the consent form when I gave it to her to sign before the interview. She said that she never has signed such a form although she had participated in several interviews before. She said it would be wonderful if she could ask journalists and reporters to sign a consent form when they interviewed her, so that they could not distort what she tells them.

Students' distrust and cynical attitudes toward the mainstream media were still prevalent when I interviewed them. However, as observed from their interviews after four months, students did demonstrate different attitudes toward the media. Students now saw that the media can have positive influences and can be a part of positive change. Thus the media literacy class appears to have helped them to see why they need to speak up and tell their stories so that people are not deceived by the distorted media messages about North Korea and North Korean refugees. Now they seem to be ready to be a part of the discourse about North Korea and North Korean refugees.

Social Environment, Institutional Contexts, and Media Literacy

This chapter overall describes six selected lesson models that I incorporated into the media literacy classes for North Korean refugees: 1.) drawing and discussing the media map; 2.) using *Crossing*, the fictional film about North Korean refugees, as a topic with which to discuss the issue of representation and to create a comfortable environment for students in which to share their stories as North Korean refugees; 3) utilizing different media content about *Crossing*, such as various news sources or internet sites, to help students understand diverse objectives as well as the notion of target audiences for different media, how these factors influence media content, and the positive uses and influences of the media; 4.) examining the tone, focus and framing of news sources surrounding the issues of importing U.S. beef and of the

candlelight demonstration in order to explore how media represent only some realities and how the different political affiliations of these news agencies determine what is omitted and what is emphasized; 5.) discussing stereotypes and figuring out students' own stereotyping by using the stereotyping activity so that students could contemplate the influence of prevalent stereotypes in the media and start to see how media content created by various groups of people can ensure a variety of representations (Picture 6); and 6.) analyzing documentaries about North Korean refugees which sparked continuous discussions about representation and helped students to see the importance of partaking in the process of producing and distributing media messages to start changing the world. These six lesson models covered the three themes under study here: 1.) media environment, 2) issues of representation and stereotypes, and 3) current affairs.

Occasionally, some of these lessons were combined with other lesson models, which created synergy effects. For instance, at the Dandelion School, the lesson about the stereotyping activity (Picture 6) was merged with the analysis of the documentaries about North Korean refugees, helping students to ruminate about the issue of stereotyping in the documentaries that were produced by different producers with different purposes. This deepened students' contemplations on the topic of stereotypes. However, at the Cosmos Social Welfare Center, I gave a lesson only on the stereotyping activity, but did not include a discussion of these documentaries, because they were too difficult to be comprehended by elementary school students. Moreover, unlike the Dandelion School where I could watch these films with students in class, I did not have enough time to watch them with students at the Cosmos Social Welfare Center. Thus I flexibly decided what to teach and how to teach, depending on differences among students and the institutional context, such as the number of classes, the technological equipment, the dynamics of students – whether heterogeneous or homogenous grouped, the students' age,

and their educational needs and goals. Also, based on these factors at each institution, the same lesson model was differentially applied.

Therefore, once again, it is important to be aware of students' learning environments, educational needs, and the school's priorities when creating and adjusting the curriculum accordingly. Furthermore, it is also crucial that media educators are informed by their research findings and by other existing studies as to how to effectively teach media literacy, so that they uncover what areas can be compromised and what cannot be negotiated. For instance, knowing the effectiveness of the block schedule in teaching media literacy, I asked educators at the Azalea Summer Institute if they could arrange my class as a block schedule. Fortunately, they complied with my request, creating opportunities for more in-depth discussions about given topics. I also was able to prepare lessons without worrying too much about if I would be able to complete a given activity because of time constraints.

Another example that demonstrates how my previous knowledge and principles guided the direction of the curriculum can be found from my educational focus at the Dandelion School. Although the educators at the Dandelion School wanted me to teach students why the mass media are destructive and why students should not waste their time with the media, I never included these topics in my teaching. Because I believed that students' ability to access, analyze, evaluate and create messages in various forms is one of the most important skills that students need to be culturally competent in media-immersed South Korean society, I worked to demonstrate how mass media can be used for various purposes and how some media influence can be powerfully beneficial. As a result, students who used to be very cynical and called the media evil started to become aware of the variety of functions of the media, their positive influence, and constructive ways to use the media.

It is a very complicated dance for media educators to have to balance on the one hand supporting a school's existing educational goals and on the other not yielding to certain aspects of media education. Because different media educators have different priorities and principles, certain notions tend to be negotiable for some educators while the same notion would not be compromised by other educators. This degree of negotiation appears to depend on the educational value, focus and principles of each educator. Therefore, it is critical for media literacy educators to continuously reflect upon their own teaching and have a good knowledge about studies in their field, so that they can make informed decisions as they create their lesson plans.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

Media Literacy for North Korean Refugees

When I first planned this dissertation project, I hoped to demonstrate how media literacy education can contribute to the development of young North Korean refugees' cultural competence and confidence in whatever they pursue. As a person who has guided them as a teacher and has had a close personal friendship with them since 2002, I have noticed that they care too much about what others think of them and often do not like to meet new people in fear of others' negative judgments. I also have seen them being preoccupied with television viewing, the internet, and even pornography. While it is common that young people spend much of their time in front of the media, I also observed that some North Korean refugees' daily lives have been interrupted to the extreme by the amount of hours that they spend with the mass media and the content of these media. However, rather than forcing them to just avoid media use, I have striven to help them to become more sophisticated media users. As I indicated several times throughout this dissertation, the mass media were often their primary source of understanding of South Korean life; therefore I sought to explore whether media literacy education may have any kind of positive impact on these North Korean refugees' assimilation into their new cultural environment.

Motivated by my previous observations of and experiences with North Korean refugees, I embarked upon this dissertation project six months prior to actually teaching in the classroom by first making contact with institutions. After visiting several educational centers and procuring their permission, I was able to start the media literacy instruction in June of 2008. After I began this classroom phase, however, several unexpected things occurred, such as my teaching only

two students in one institution and having to withdraw from another. Nonetheless, these seemingly unfortunate experiences allowed me to understand the complicated nature of institutional bureaucracy when one implements an outside program like media literacy education. Moreover, these experiences with the institutions, my time with students in and out of the classroom, along with my own reflections allowed me to observe what content I needed to cover in the classroom. Before I started to teach, I did not have detailed lesson plans, but rather broad educational goals: that the students would enhance their cultural competency and adaptation through learning about the issues of representation and stereotypes, thereby strengthening their critical thinking skills and habits of inquiry. In order to find out what and how I needed to teach, I adapted the emergent curriculum strategies which allow educators to observe what arises in the classroom and spontaneously and flexibly create curricula based on the students' enthusiasm, interest, and educational needs (Wellhousen & Crowther, 2004).

Adaptation of the emergent curriculum still does connote that instructors need to plan for what takes places in class by creating a classroom environment which promotes the emergence of meaning. For my media literacy class, I believed that it was important that the first media literacy class provide students with the opportunity to reflect upon how they experience the media, so that they can be aware not only of how their lives are connected with the media, but also of how the media influence in ways of which they might not be aware. The strategy of drawing and then talking about the media map in class created an atmosphere in which students were able to comfortably share their thoughts. These activities also helped me to have better knowledge and insights about students' mediated experiences.

From my daily pedagogical documentation, observation, and interaction with students, I was able to create lessons by using the film *Crossing*, the issue regarding mad cow disease and

the candlelight demonstration, and the documentaries' about North Korean refugees. With regard to *Crossing,* students discussed the film, thus allowing them to share their own thoughts, views and experiences, and then they closely examined the reviews of this film from various media sources and several relevant Internet sites; through this research process, they learned how the different purposes and target audiences of these media sources in turn can influence their media content, style and formation. Having perceived during the summer of 2008 the issue of importing U.S. beef and the resulting candlelight demonstrations as effective teaching opportunities, I discussed these timely topics in class by comparing the varied tones and emphases of the different news agencies in their reporting of these topics. Students learned – based on the political affiliation and the history of these news agencies – that the same event can be reported very differently. Lastly, students' deconstruction of documentaries about North Korean refugees, produced either by professional filmmakers or by North Korean refugees themselves, helped students learn about the issues of representation and the importance of direct participation in the process of creating the stories that are circulated widely by the media.

Educational Outcome

Media literacy education classes for North Korean refugees during the summer of 2008 resulted in noteworthy educational consequences. Although three months can be seen as an insufficient duration of time to see significant educational impact, this dissertation shows that media literacy education had several positive effects on young North Korean refugees by helping them to move away from cynical and negative views toward the media, by promoting a better understanding of South Korea through critical eyes, and by providing opportunities for students

to contemplate the importance of speaking out with their creative voices. These educational outcomes align with the previous research findings in the field of media literacy education.

To begin with, scholars have argued that media literacy education should not encourage students to be cynical viewers, but rather critical viewers who are able not only to analyze media content with keen eyes, but also to enjoy the authentic pleasure possible in the mass media process (Hobbs, 1998). While simply deconstructing the media texts can lead students to be cynical about the mass media, such close analysis of the media along with an understanding of contextual information and institutional knowledge can help students to have a more holistic understanding of the texts. Although their conclusions after examining the contextual information and deconstructing the texts still may be skeptical, that stance is "a more directed cynicism, one born of analysis rather than attitude" (Lewis & Jhally, 1998, p.112).

In order to help students to be less cynical but nonetheless to remain critical, I also tried to go beyond a text analysis of the media texts so that students were able to gain the big picture of the media industry, leading them to have a holistic concept of what they experience everyday, as suggested by Lewis and Jhally (1998). At the same time, I focused overtly on the media's positive aspects. Focusing on the possible affirmative influence of the media in media literacy education aligns with the arguments by Potter and Byrne (2007) that media literacy instruction emphasizes positive aspects that can be caused by media experiences, like learning about the world from the media, finding joy and happiness, and reinforcing existing values and beliefs. When the goal of media literacy education is to encourage students to be less susceptible to the negative aspects of the media – such as the violent media content – researchers have found that overt discussions about the negative consequences of the violence can help students to be more critical and less apt to actually perform such violence (Amy I. Nathanson, 2006; A. I. Nathanson

& Cantor, 2000; Vooijs & Van Der Voort, 1993). Unlike most research in media literacy education that highlights media's negative impact, I instead emphasized the possible positive consequences of the media. Just as discussing the negative impact of media violence was effective in encouraging children to be critical toward such violence, discussing the positive impact encouraged students to be open to the "good" side of the mass media.

Secondly, as this dissertation project indicates, while North Korean refugees could obtain a more comprehensive understanding of South Korea through media literacy education, other research also indicates that media literacy education has the potential to help students critically and holistically understand their surrounding society and culture. Mass media are often the major sources for understanding other cultures, shaping social and cultural reality and identity, and expanding one's knowledge of the world (Henry, 1997; J. P. Mitchell & Marriage, 2003). Close analysis of media texts has the potential to encourage students not only to understand how certain groups of people are represented in the media, but to create discussions about how these representations are similar or dissimilar to the real culture, life styles, and other characteristics of the television population (Tella, 1997). Therefore, media literacy classes often incorporate analyses of how social and cultural realities have been shaped by the media and how different groups of people have been represented (Bullock & Jafri, 2000; Hobbs, 2007a; Kellner & Share, 2005). Understanding and contemplating the complexities involved in media coverage and representation can allow students to see the big picture of what they have received previously in dribs and drabs from the media. Thus the educational goal for media literacy education in this dissertation was to help North Korean refugees to better understand South Korea by critically analyzing the content and contexts of the media that they experience every day. Although I did not gather enough data to claim that students could now better comprehend South Korean society

because of the media literacy classes, this research does indicate that students certainly demonstrated a grasping of the deeper meaning of what they watched and experienced from the media. In addition, the students began to be aware of diverse tones, emphasis and framing of different media sources. All these new attitudes and thinking abilities have the potential to lead students to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of South Korean society.

Thirdly, media literacy education encouraged North Korean refugees to see the importance of speaking out with their voices and sharing their own stories and views. According to Reguillo (2009), "the biggest adversary for youth empowerment is their own and fatalist assumption of their social, political and occupational 'inadequacy'" (p. 29). North Korean refugees had been suffering from a deep-rooted "inadequacy" and lethargy that led them to believe that they would not be able to make any meaningful changes in the society no matter what they did. Because of these feelings of smallness, they were not motivated to share their own views and thoughts with other members of the society. However, media literacy education opened the door for them to reflect upon their own potential in South Korean society; they started to become aware of why it matters for them to share their views and thoughts and of how their efforts can make an important contribution to South Korea.

Similar educational effects have been observed in other media literacy education efforts with underrepresented groups of students. In the research conducted by Bullock and Jafri (2000) with Muslim women in Canada, one woman reported that if she had her own television station, she would employ Muslim women to analyze the news coverage and to find the absence of Muslim women's images in the media. Through media literacy education, she was able to note the Canadian news programs' underrepresentation of images of Muslim women with professional jobs. To 'normalize' the image of Islam women wearing the head covering or hijab,

the interviewee said that she would have the Muslim woman reporter wear the hijab to report the news, so that other Canadians could accept Muslim women with hijab as members of their country rather than as outsiders (Bullock & Jafri, 2000). In a study with young Arab-American women (Bing-Canar & Zerkel, 1998), a year-long critical media literacy class helped students who had been "victimized by stereotypical media images" to begin "actively constructing their own images through the production of the video" (p. 735). In this media literacy class that took place in Chicago, young Arab-American women collectively produced a film, *Benaat Chicago (Daughters of Chicago): Growing Up Arab and Female in Chicago*.

Factors that Influence Media Literacy Education and the Value of Emergent Curriculum

The educational outcomes that were listed in the previous section, however, did not occur at all institutions in which I taught media literacy during the summer of 2008. Several factors affected the pedagogy and topics that were covered in the classroom, including students' dynamics, the school environment, and educational goals. I could not give certain lessons at some schools because of the short duration of the class, insufficient technology equipment, or students' intellectual capacities that were influenced by their age, how long they had been living in South Korea, and their previous education. Moreover, even when I gave the same lesson across multiple schools, different responses from students sometimes sparked distinct directions and content of the lessons. Therefore, although I present a sample lesson model in Chapter Five, media educators should not assume that these models can be applied automatically to any groups of North Korean refugees or emigrated students. It is expected that educators will carefully need to examine their students' characteristics, educational needs, and other contextual factors and then accept, adapt or reject this lesson model.

Furthermore, it is also vital that media educators balance themselves between helping the school to achieve their educational objectives and keeping their own educational priorities as media educators. People have different understandings of and beliefs in young people's media experiences, influencing their rationales for teaching media literacy. There is no right or wrong answer about this issue and scholars for several decades have debated about the power of the media versus the power of the audience. Nonetheless, I believe that it is important for media educators to have their own philosophy and principles, informed by studies and research findings. Their philosophy and principles will guide them when they have to decide what can and cannot be compromised. When I taught media literacy education during the summer of 2008, I tried to conform to the existing educational goals and teachers' expectations about media literacy classes. However, when some educators in these institutions asked me to make students stay away from the media, especially from the computer and television, their view of media literacy as a tool to "protect" young people from the media influence was different from my view of this instruction as an aide to help students by which they can become "empowered." Therefore, I did not surrender my educational goals to help students become "empowered" citizens who are informed by various media content, are able to critically analyze and evaluate these messages, are able to understand the influence of this media content, and ultimately can participate in creating these messages so that they can be a part of this discourse. Although these benefits were not what educators in these institutions wanted from media education, they still were satisfied with my overall plan, seeing the other educational outcomes, such as students' developing fondness for media literacy classes that in turn motivated them to like to come to school along with their increasing English and Korean vocabulary and reading comprehension skills.

In conclusion, because media educators will face different attitudes of school leaders and educators and sometimes experience unexpected difficulties, it is important for them to be informed about the principles of media literacy education and how media literacy is taught in different educational settings. Due to increasing public awareness regarding the importance of media literacy education, many books and articles about the theories and practices of media literacy can be easily located. Thanks to the Internet, educators also are able to conveniently retrieve these useful sources online. For instance, the website of the Center for Media Literacy (www.medialit.org) provides various kinds of sources including academic articles, views and reflections of educators, and lesson plans. The Media Education Lab at Temple University also has a website (www.mediaeducationlab.com) that includes research publications about media literacy, teaching resources, and other relevant news and stories about this topic. Moreover, the *Journal of Media Literacy Education* (www.jmle.org) features academic articles which provide research findings about media literacy education, voices from the field that include the reflections and vivid experiences of media educators, and professional resources that include reviews of books, reports and other sources that might be helpful for these instructors and researchers. All of these websites provide their content free of charge.

What I have listed here are only a few of the many available sources that can help media educators to establish their own educational priorities and principles. However, despite these sources that can be easily obtained, many media educators experience difficulties in reviewing these sources because of their busy schedules. When media literacy is taught by teachers at school, they usually have to prepare the class materials from scratch since media literacy is not what they have taught previously. Outsiders too experience hardships in managing time to obtain these new sources. Therefore, their participation in seminars and professional

development as well as communication with other media educators and scholars to learn from each other also can help these educators to gain more knowledge and insights.

Significance of the Study

While this dissertation project has expanded upon the existing findings and beliefs in media literacy education, this research also has added to the current field of media literacy with new findings and insights. Firstly, this research emphasizes the importance of motivating students and educators about media literacy. Secondly, it shows the complicated nature of initiating a partnership for media literacy education. Thirdly, the dissertation provides a theoretical framework of cultural competency, borrowed from non-communication fields, and suggests that cultural competency be used to collectively address the unique educational needs of marginalized students. Finally, this is the first field research in media literacy education for North Korean refugees. These four positive outcomes of this dissertation, which I will discuss in more detail below, make unique contributions to both scholars and practitioners who work with North Korean refugees.

The Importance of Motivating Students and Educators about Media Literacy

When initiating media literacy education programs, most educators have a strong rationale and motivation for implementing media literacy education. After taking classes, students tend to fall in love with their media literacy class because the course deals with topics with which they are interested and find ‘fun.’ Despite the joy that students experience from such media literacy classes, as they learn more about the underlying processes and the contexts of producing and consuming media content they also begin to see the importance of learning about

their new media-saturated society and of expanding their knowledge about the world. Yet it does not necessarily mean that media literacy education can automatically motivate students to be passionate about these subjects. To some, especially when preoccupied with other burdens like exams or admission to higher education, media literacy can be seen as a waste of a school period. Moreover, school leaders, educators and administrators may not support the media literacy education if they do not see a clear rationale of why it is important to include this material in their institutions.

These roadblocks were very apparent in my field research, and consequentially created several additional obstacles. At Dandelion School, some students at first did not understand why they had to learn media literacy, complaining that they were already busy with other pursuits and did not want to add another topic to learn that would not help them practically. Students' attitudes nonetheless did change after they understood why it was important to learn about the media and saw how the media literacy class could help their Korean and English vocabulary and reading comprehension skills. Still, because of the burden of studying for the school diploma exam, some students and teachers were less motivated to learn about media literacy.

It would be optimal if students and educators were able to value the importance of media literacy education through seeing the critical roles that media play in society as well as in students' lives, and then implement media literacy because of these reasons. In this way, educators would be able to focus more easily on strengthening students' ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create media messages via various media forms. However, most educational institutions want media literacy to do more than these processes because they have other educational goals to accomplish. For example, in most alternative schools designed for North Korean refugees, the primary educational goal valued among students and educators is for

pupils to pass the school diploma exams; therefore any other classes that do not seem to help students pass the exams were seen as not as important as were the exam preparatory classes. I had to stop teaching at the Forsythia School because the educators wanted to prepare the students for the exams. At Dandelion School, I ended up with two students who did not need to prep for the upcoming exam because they had just come to Korea and thus were not ready as yet for the exam. These two students began to become motivated about the media literacy materials after seeing the relevance of the class to their new lives in South Korea.

In particular, their concentration level and interests dramatically increased when I related the class materials to their Korean or English subjects. When we closely analyzed the media texts, I spent much of a class period in explaining the meaning of certain words and how these words could be used in other contexts. Most of these words were Korean vocabulary with which they were not familiar. In addition, there also were several English terms that I needed to explain in class because South Korean media use many words of foreign origin. As I explained these words, it became imperative that I introduce the English words from which these words originated. Students seemed to be happy with learning these words as they felt like they had learned something more practical and useful. If I were to teach media literacy again to North Korean refugees in South Korea, I would frame media literacy as an opportunity to expand students' knowledge about their new society as well as about Korean and English languages, topics which ultimately could help students' diploma exam preparation. During this process of learning practical skills, I would be able to add other possible education effects of media literacy education such as critical thinking skills, habits of inquiry, and a holistic understanding of the complexities involved in media coverage and representation.

For my undergraduate thesis that I wrote in 2001, I conducted research about the history and conditions of cultural exchange between North and South Korea in order to suggest better ways of cultural exchanges, concentrating on the mass media. For this project, I interviewed North Korean refugees to learn their opinions about South Korean mass media. When I visited one of the institutions that was run by North Korean refugees to help the acculturation process of their fellow refugees, I met one old woman who had risked her life several times to come to South Korea. When I asked her my prepared interview questions, she stared at my face and asked me why I was interested in North Korean refugees' media experiences. I told her that it was because I believed that the mass media could be a good source for both countries by which to better understand the other. Because North Korean refugees are the ones who have experienced media from both countries, I thought that learning from these informants would be the optimal starting point from which to explore this issue.

After listening to my words, the old woman told me that while she respects my passion about this issue, she thinks that most North Korean refugees would think mass media are not the important matter in their lives, because they have other issues to take care of, such as how to make a living, how to be an insider in South Korean society, and how to provide a better living environment for their family members. This interchange became a precious "Ah-ha" moment that allowed me to see that for many people, media are not as important as what I thought they were. For these refugees, learning media, thinking about the media and discussing the media were extravagances in their lives. I wanted to convey my belief that while I agreed with her, I still thought it would be important for these newcomers to know about the media because they could learn about South Korean society and culture from the media while South Koreans in turn could learn about North Korea and North Korean refugees. In order for native South Koreans to

develop an accurate understanding of North Korea and North Korean refugees, I believe that North Korean refugees should speak up when they see inaccurate representations of themselves and North Korea. However, I failed to convince my aged North Korean interviewee of such advantages. She still did not see my point of view while another North Korean refugee who had listened to our conversation also agreed with her, saying that if I wanted to help North Korean refugees or to work for the unification of North and South Korea, I should do something other than research on the media.

From my own experiences with young North Korean refugees as a teacher after I graduated from the college, however, I received confirmation that it is indeed very important for North Korean refugees to be informed about the media because their lives are certainly inseparable from these information sources. In fact, when I first contacted educators who work with North Korean refugees, they showed a strong interest in media literacy because they also thought that media were playing a significant role in the lives of young North Korean refugees. Yet in some institutions, it took time to motivate students and educators to see the value of how students experience the media, how they perceive the world through the media, how they can participate in the process of creating stories that are widely communicated via the media, and how they effectively can use the media for various purposes.

Although other researchers have indicated the effectiveness of media literacy in developing immigrant students' language skills (Quinlisk, 2003; Tella, 1997; Vargas, 2006), I did not even mention this possible educational outcome to students and educators when I had initiated the partnerships nor when I saw that some students were not able to comprehend the rationale for media literacy education. Some students started to see the importance of these issues after they had attended media literacy classes; again the way they were more excited about

media literacy classes was by experiencing how such courses helped them to learn Korean and English. In the early stage of this dissertation project, I myself did not see the value of motivating students and educators by appealing to their own practical educational goals and needs. I speculate that if I had pursued this more personal and practical approach from the very beginning of the classes, students then would have been more motivated from the start.

Thus I learned from my own experiences – including my missteps – that motivating students and teachers is one of the most critical factors for the success of media literacy education. It is when media literacy education is brought in by an outsider of the institution – which is the case in many media literacy education settings – media literacy cannot be launched or continued without the support of insider school leaders and educators. In this dissertation, I documented the process of how I learned about the importance of involving students and educators in a successful media literacy program and how I was able to motivate them by satisfying their primary educational goals. Consequentially, this dissertation will be able to help media literacy educators become aware of what they need to prepare before initiating media literacy education in a given institution and how they can communicate what they need to emphasize when establishing such a partnership. However, while media literacy educators often need to make the connection between educational goals and needs of the institution on the hand and the possible contribution of media literacy education to meet these needs on the other, it is also important to note that they need to communicate the significant roles that the mass media play not only in young people's lives but also in the society along with other benefits of learning about the media for students such as becoming sophisticated citizens.

The Complicated Nature of Initiating the Partnership for Media Literacy Education

As an extension of my argument that it is important to motivate students and educators when starting media literacy education, this research also discusses the complicated nature of initiating such a partnership with schools. Many media literacy education programs are still in existence because of the efforts of one or a few individuals who are passionate enough to do the extra work in addition to their existing workload. Because media literacy is not an official school subject in most countries, the shared understanding of why these skills are important and why students need to learn about the media should be the starting point for incorporating such education into any given institution. Therefore, those who want to implement media literacy in existing educational settings need to begin by communicating the appropriate rationale with school leaders and educators. While most existing studies in media literacy discuss many strong reasons why young people need to study media literacy, it is very hard to find any studies that articulate the complicated process of bringing media literacy education into existing educational settings. As I indicated in the beginning of Chapter 4, most studies in media literacy education do not provide an explicit account of how they gained entrance into their educational settings.

In Chapter 4, I provided a step-by-step explanation of how I was able to access these institutions, initiate the relationship, develop the partnership, and work with their existing knowledge and belief systems around media literacy conceptualizations to get "my foot in the door." I listened to educators and school leaders, and then demonstrated flexibility when initiating media literacy education in these various contexts. However, at the same time, there were areas for which I did not compromise. For instance, educators at the Dandelion School wanted me to teach students how bad media are, why they should never trust such sources and why they need to always avoid the media. Yet rather than teaching such negative aspects of the

mass media, I instead provided lessons about their positive aspects. Despite my more upbeat approach, educators nonetheless were satisfied with how I was teaching media literacy because they saw that their students were learning a great deal of Korean and English through their work with media texts and that their students were enjoying the classes.

Therefore, this dissertation advances knowledge in the field of media literacy by opening up an account and discussion about the complicated nature of working with schools and some possible strategies and helpful approaches when developing a relationship with such an educational institution. Because many institutions are still closed to media literacy and thus media literacy educators and scholars often have difficulty in initiating media literacy courses unless they are skillful in negotiating, detailed accounts about how others have experienced this process can be helpful for media literacy educators. That being said, I urge that it is important that other media literacy educators themselves carefully document this process of how they were able to develop partnerships with schools and initiate media literacy projects. I hope this dissertation has opened or reinforced future discussions of these issues.

Media Literacy and Cultural Competency for Marginalized Students

In the field of media literacy education, it is not new to suggest the value of media literacy education for educating minority students, like students of color or immigrants. Previous studies have argued that media literacy is a powerful pedagogy to empower underprivileged students by giving them the cultural capital and opportunity by which to communicate their thoughts and creativity (Bing-Canar & Zerkel, 1998; De Block & Buckingham, 2007; De Block et al., 2005; Vargas, 2006). Because parents of these students often lack cultural competencies themselves, they have difficulty in effectively guiding their children toward enriched cultural

experiences within the foreign culture and in mediating their children's media experiences. Therefore, media literacy can be seen as a valuable tool by which to develop students' cultural capital by strengthening some of the skills and knowledge that they may have difficulty in learning from their parents (Vargas, 2006). In addition, because media literacy emphasizes the ability to communicate with various forms of the media, media literacy is seen as empowering students by giving them an opportunity to speak out with their voices via various modes and styles.

Past research has explored these educational goals and effects not only for programs for diverse students, but also for most media literacy educational settings. However, the process of increasing the cultural capital and empowering students with opportunities to express themselves has examined cases when the education is geared toward groups of students who are marginalized because their educational needs differ from those of mainstream students. Nevertheless, media literacy studies have failed to theoretically frame such specific educational needs and goals of diverse students. In order to collectively address these distinct educational needs of students in minority groups, this dissertation suggests "cultural competency" as a major educational goal for these students. Thus, because cultural competency is often emphasized in the fields of education, social work, counseling and business since professionals from these fields have to deal with their clients and students from various cultural backgrounds, I have adapted their definitions, theoretical framework, and previous research findings.

Cultural competency suggests, as defined by Collier (1996), "the demonstrated ability to negotiate mutual meanings, rules, and positive outcomes" with individuals from different cultural backgrounds or within foreign contexts. In order to develop cultural competency, communication skills, knowledge of the culture, and access to the various cultural texts are

critical, which are often the educational goals of media literacy education programs designed for underprivileged and marginalized groups of students. This dissertation thus has advanced the field of media literacy education by demonstrating how media literacy can be used effectively to develop cultural competency among marginalized students because of its potential contribution to developing students' language skills, allowing students to comprehensively understand the society represented in the media, and accessing and analyzing various tones, emphasis, and framing in various media texts.

Media Literacy Education for North Korean Refugees

This dissertation project is the first field research with North Korean refugees in the discipline of media literacy education. More than 13,000 North Korean refugees live in South Korea and about 13 to 15% of them are between nine and eighteen years of age (Ministry of Unification, 2008), but they are isolated in the field of media literacy in South Korea. Because media literacy is still an emerging field and not yet settled within public educational settings, most research in media literacy education has been conducted in K-12 educational settings. Some educators in alternative schools incorporate media literacy education, but these efforts have not been documented to date. This dissertation therefore has significance because it is the first documented media literacy education research with North Korean refugees. The findings suggest how media literacy education can be adapted in alternative schools while serving the institutions' educational priorities.

Because North Korean refugees have not been served effectively in public educational settings, alternative schools usually have been meeting their educational needs. But because alternative schools cannot confer school degrees, their education is often geared toward

preparation for the school diploma exams. Students thus do have the opportunity to take other extra-curricula activities, like art, music, physical education, and drama. These extra-curricula classes often are cancelled because of the need for exam preparation. Although some educators see a problem in the placement of so much focus on exam prep, it is sometimes inevitable because their supporters and funders want to know how many students have passed the exam in order to decide the amount of funding to allot that is based on the number of students who earned degrees via the exam.

This dissertation research has examined how media literacy education can be effective in strengthening cultural competency among North Korean refugees. At the same time, this study suggests that media literacy has the potential to meet other educational needs, such as expanding Korean and English vocabulary, strengthening reading comprehension skills, broadening an understanding of South Korean society, and enhancing critical thinking skills. All these skills can lay a foundation for students' intellectual ability, which can ultimately help prepare them for the diploma and college entrance exams. This is indeed a depressing reality that education for North Korean refugees is focused primarily on exam preparation, because what they do need to learn – to be better citizens in South Korea – is often not covered in the diploma or university entrance exam preparation. But at the same time, because many students and teachers are stressed out because of the exam and this reality cannot be overlooked, it is important to create educational environments in which students can prepare sufficiently for the exam while still having their other educational needs met within these contexts. This dissertation demonstrates how media literacy can help to meet this urgent need among alternative schools while also satisfying other educational needs that have been neglected so far, such as strengthening critical thinking skills, developing habits of inquiry, and attaining more comprehensive knowledge and views about

current events and their host society. This effective ‘side effect’ of media literacy education led the educators at the Dandelion School, who held different political views and opinions about the media than mine, to continue to have me teach students even during their summer break. Why? Because these educators overheard their students talking about how their Korean and English improved because of the media literacy classes, and how they were enjoying my classes. In fact, Ms. Jung, an educator at the Dandelion School, told me how amazing it was for her to see students actually liking the media literacy classes, since they usually find classes boring despite their deep-rooted desire to study diligently and be successful. She even thanked me for making the media literacy class be a “hook” that was able to encourage students to come to school. Although using media literacy merely to hook students to come to school is not desirable, the attraction of students via a media literacy program that promotes intellectual curiosity and a heightened interest in learning can be a useful tool to expand students’ learning.

Furthermore, another significant impact of this research includes the documentation of media literacy education within divergent educational settings. In South Korea, there is an ongoing debate among educators and social workers as to whether North Korean refugees should go to public schools or to educational institutions exclusively designed for them. Those who believe that young North Korean refugees should go to public schools argue that these new students cannot be protected forever within an environment comprised solely of other North Korean refugees; rather they should learn how to live with other members of the society as quickly as possible. Other educators, however, believe that the school drop-out rates of North Korean refugees is an indication that public schools cannot serve the specific educational needs of North Korean refugees, and thus it is imperative to provide what these students need to better

adjust to life in South Korea. They argue that mingling with other South Korea students can come after these North Korean refugees are more prepared and assimilated.

Both opinions about North Korean refugee's schooling are solid and sensible. However, in examining the media literacy education setting, this research shows that media literacy can be more effectively taught in a homogenous educational setting. Because learning about media deals with students' own culture, experiences, and cultural capital, those who do not belong to this discourse can feel less confident in communicating their views and experiences, which in turn can make them feel different from the "majority." While it is imperative for students to be proud of their own culture and experiences, they are often sensitive about how others think about them especially during the childhood and teenage periods. Therefore, although it is ideal to encourage students to be positive and secure with what they have, the pressure that they feel about others' judgments can make students shrink. Therefore, I argue that in order for students to be confident with their own culture, background and experiences, it is important that they have opportunities to express themselves freely in a safe environment and gain confidence in this setting. In this way, students can see the importance of sharing their stories with members of the larger society. This dissertation has demonstrated that, in order to provide a safe classroom environment in which students can speak freely about their opinions, a homogenous classroom environment of only North Korean refugees is more effective than a heterogeneous classroom in which North Korean refugees tend to be silent most of the time.

Limitations

While this research has several significant results that can expand our knowledge and insight of the field of media literacy education, this dissertation also has several methodological

limitations. First, it can be argued that the timing, duration, and sample size of the field research might be problematic. I conducted the field research over the summer of 2008 immediately before school diploma exams. Because students and teachers were anxious over the upcoming exam, in some institutions the media literacy classes either were cancelled or students who would have taken the exam were pulled out. Most alternative schools focused their classes on exam preparation and had summer vacation immediately after the exam. Therefore, some schools which I contacted to ask if I could teach media literacy asked me if I could teach in September. This was not an issue in the Azalea Summer Institute, Cosmos Social Welfare Center, and Althea House. In the Azalea Summer Institute, their summer camp took place after the diploma exam and many students were attending public schools. In the Cosmos Social Welfare Center and Althea House, students were attending public schools. Nevertheless, in other alternative schools, June to August was certainly not the best time to hold media literacy classes because of the diploma exams. Moreover, although I taught media literacy in five different institutions over three months, I held fewer than six classes at each institution, except at the Dandelion School. Even at the Dandelion School, I had only two students most of the time. Is it appropriate to draw conclusions that media literacy education can help North Korean refugees to develop cultural competency and to better acculturate to South Korean society from such small samples and time periods? Although I was able to observe several noteworthy changes among students, spending more time with students and having a larger sample would have strengthened this research.

Secondly, the media literacy classes described in this dissertation heavily relied on incidents that took place in South Korea during the summer of 2008. It was in fact what I had planned to do, as I tried to incorporate emergent curricula that allowed educators to observe what emerges in the classroom and design the lesson plans based on the predetermined educational

goals as well as on what emerges in class. Although I grasped more from what emerged from the society and media than from what emerged from the students themselves, the reflections on the current events in class created teachable moments that resulted in students relating more with the media literacy classes than with their other courses. When I started this dissertation project, I hoped that this research would be useful for those who wanted to practice media literacy education with North Korean refugees. However, these educators could have difficulties in implementing what I did during the summer of 2008 because many of my lesson plans were tied into the specific events that took place during that period in history. In addition, because one goal of this dissertation was to observe how media literacy can strengthen students' cultural competency and promote a more effective acculturation process, it is arguable that the same educational practices held during a different time period may have resulted in educators having difficulties in finding "teachable moments."

Thirdly, it is questionable if the results would be the same if the research were conducted by a different researcher. Can I argue that the findings in this dissertation study solely came from the media literacy lessons? Or were these factors also influenced by my qualities as a teacher and my relationship with the students? Could the results of this research have been stronger or weaker depending on who taught the media literacy education classes? Because individuals' behavior, action, and attitudes do not happen haphazardly (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982), I believe that what I observed from students as educational outcomes did not come about by accident, but mainly from the interventions and stimuli that students experienced from media literacy education. Hence, if researchers were to follow the same methodological and instructional practices with the same educational goals, I believe that it is possible to get similar results. However, at the same time, because other educators can observe different aspects from students,

resulting in a distinctive understanding of what emerges in the classroom, the direction of the studies may be different as the research proceeds. Furthermore, like other action research in the field of education, the goal of this research is to improve instruction; thus the quality of education often depends on the educational beliefs and characteristics of the teacher. Therefore, readers need to take this qualification into consideration when implementing the recommendations here.

Fourthly, it is also important to reflect upon whether the media literacy education was the only intervention in this research project. In and out of the classroom, I not only talked about media with students; I also taught English and Korean to Dandelion students and had casual interactions with students at the other institutions. When I talked about various issues outside the classroom, students had the opportunity to learn my views and opinions. I also discussed several times about why it is important for them to be competent and not worry too much about what others think of them, as their values cannot be changed by what others say about them. For instance, at the Forest Middle School and Cosmos Social Welfare Center, I wrapped up the discussion of stereotypes by directly suggesting to them that while it is important not to have stereotypes when understanding others, it is also crucial that we are not influenced by how others think about us. Then, I showed them a 10,000 won bill, which is worth 10 dollars, and asked who would like to take this money if I say that anybody who claims the money can have it. Then, almost everybody raised their hands. Then, I crumpled the bill a little, and asked them if they were still interested. Students still said that they wanted to have that money. Finally, I crumpled the bill a little bit more, and asked students again if they were still interested. Students still said that they would like to have that money. Then, I asked students why they wanted to have that bill and they answered that whether the money was crumpled or flattened, it was still worth 10,000

won. I concluded the class by saying that just as the value of this bill does not change no matter what we say to this bill or whether it is crumpled or not, an individual's own value will not be diminished no matter what other people say. Students said that contemplating their own value with this example of the money bill was very powerful.

The results of this study provide strong evidence that media literacy can help students enhance their understanding of stereotypes. Yet it is hard to control the other variables of this research within the classroom setting; therefore one might argue that other variables may have influenced students' attitudes and what they shared in my class. In addition, one of the reasons that students found the media literacy instruction useful was that they found the material helpful in honing their English and Korean skills. However, this improvement might have come from my own expertise as a language teacher. After I graduated from high school in 1998, I worked as an English tutor until I came to the United States in 2002 for graduate work. My experiences as an English tutor may have influenced the ways that I incorporated language learning into the media literacy classes since I knew what needed to be covered for the exams.

Furthermore, while the students whom I interviewed after four months of actual media literacy classes were able to recall much of what they had learned, the fact that I kept in touch with them via Minihompy, a social network website in South Korea, during this period needs to be taken into consideration. I often visited students' minihompy and left comments on their pictures and entries, and they in turn would visit my minihompy and make comments. Because some of the messages that we left on each other's minihompy was about the classes that we had had together and about the media, students could have been reminded in this way about what they had learned over the summer. Therefore, if they had not kept in touch with me online, their responses to my interview questions might have been different.

Lastly, there is the limitation of writing about my own teaching. In qualitative research that involves participatory action research, the observations by the researcher are one of the most important factors in the process of data collection, decoding the data, and analyzing the research. However, like many other action research papers, I was the one who taught the students, observed and evaluated my own teaching, and decoded the data that were collected from my own teaching. Might it have been more reliable if this dissertation project had a separate educator and researcher, so that the researcher could observe the teacher more objectively? Furthermore, although I tried to reflect upon my own teaching through daily field notes, there is the possibility that I might have had a more favorable, and thus more biased, stance because I was writing about my own teaching.

Suggestions for Future Research

Based on the unique contribution of this dissertation as well as its limitations, the present study represents a strong starting point for numerous future research projects regarding media literacy education for students of different cultural backgrounds. As argued above, the field of media literacy needs more studies that describe how this form of education can be initiated in various educational settings. Although the actual educational practices are the critical elements of media literacy education, classroom teaching will not be possible until the school leaders and teachers open their doors and allow media educators inside their institutions. Many media education scholars and educators still rely on personal networks or serendipitous opportunities, and even after they get an opportunity to incorporate media literacy education, the different educational goals, attitudes, and views between school leaders and the media educators can create difficulties in flexibly coping with these issues. Therefore, studies that document how

other educators have successfully gone through this process will act to inspire and provide others with practical help and support.

In addition, longitudinal studies about media literacy need to be conducted with North Korean refugees at a different time of the year. As I indicated earlier, the summer was not the optimum time to teach media literacy to North Korean refugees in some institutions because of pressure to prepare for the diploma exam. If students had started media literacy classes in the beginning of the fall semester when they had fewer distractions from the exam preparation, the attitudes of teachers and students and the educational outcome might have been different. Moreover, if my classes were run for a longer period of time, I would have been able to make different observations. For instance, in the summer of 2008, I experienced that media literacy education was much more successful when the classes were comprised only of North Korean refugees rather than of heterogeneous students. However, if media literacy education would have been lasted for at least a semester or a year, I may have been able to observe changes in attitudes among North Korean refugees as they gained more knowledge about the media – and with such knowledge more confidence in themselves. Because this research was conducted for only three months and for six classes at each institution (except at the Dandelion School), we must frame this research as a pilot study that examined various issues that arise when an educator who does not belong to an institution teaches media literacy to North Korean refugees. Therefore, longitudinal research is still needed to continue the discussion initiated here, and to better understand how to effectively use media literacy for North Korean refugees to enhance cultural competence and promote better acculturation.

Lastly, it would be beneficial for this research to be followed up by more field research in media literacy with other groups of immigrants and refugees. This dissertation project targeted

young North Korean refugees who live in South Korea. Because of the unique situation and relationship between North and South Korea, what North Korean refugees experience may not be the same as what other refugees and immigrants undergo. Therefore, what I have discovered and suggested in this dissertation may or may not apply to other groups of refugees in South Korea or in other countries. Although a handful of scholars have conducted research that demonstrates how media literacy education is useful for students in minority groups to better understand themselves, their host society, and the complexities involved in media production and consumption (such as Bing-Canar & Zerkel, 1998; De Block & Buckingham, 2007; Vargas, 2006), the scope of these studies is still limited and only a few media literacy scholars are interested in media education for immigrants and refugees. Therefore, not only to expand knowledge in media literacy education but also to better accommodate young immigrants and refugees, media literacy instruction with students from various cultural backgrounds needs be initiated across various educational settings with detailed documentation of these practices for educators and scholars.

Concluding Remarks

North and South Korea have shared the same history for more than five thousand years, but their separation for the last sixty years has created a huge discrepancy between the two countries in most areas like lifestyle, culture, education, politics, religion, and economic systems. Although many Koreans want reunification, most Koreans also worry that such large discrepancies will create chaos if the two Koreas were to be reunited. They even think that reunification would be disastrous if the two countries are not ready for this change. In order to better prepare for the merger of these countries, scholars, politicians, and those who have worked

with North Korean refugees have argued that North Korean refugees would be the best indicators to show what we need to do to assure a smooth transition when the two countries are reunited. Therefore, people in various fields have strived to learn how they can support North Korean refugees to acculturate successfully into South Korea society. Media literacy, however, was never on anyone's radar before; thus this study is the first to demonstrate that media literacy can be an effective intervention for North Korean refugees.

Nonetheless, as the first media literacy research project to target North Korean refugees, this dissertation seems to leave homework to be done rather than a completed list of how educators can use this tool with an immigrant population. Yet as a pilot study, this research may inspire educators to see the potential educational power of media literacy education for North Korean refugees and to initiate such programs. At the same time, this research is not only for educators who work with North Korean refugees, but also for any scholars, educators and practitioners who help to guide emigrated students. This dissertation thus is along a continuum of the previous studies on media literacy education with emigrated students or with students who are in the second generation of emigrated families. Furthermore, beyond media literacy education, the findings suggest future avenues of research for scholars and educators in various fields, such as social work, immigration/refugee studies, media studies, education administration, and education leadership, by demonstrating how media literacy education for emigrated students cannot be successful without the understanding and support of school leaders and educators. One of the most important contributions that this dissertation has made would be the demonstration of the complexities of initiating media literacy education for North Korean refugees or for any underrepresented groups of students, and the importance of the support of school leaders and educators in this process. There may be less chance of success if media literacy educators are the

only ones involved in the effort to initiate media literacy for immigrants and refugees. Therefore the incorporation of media literacy instruction may be possible only when school leaders and other educators have a shared understanding of the educational goals associated with media literacy education for their students.

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