

# Television, Violence, and Children

---

**Author: Carla Kalin**

Master of Science, Synthesis Paper, June, 1997

Dept. Educational Leadership, Technology, and Administration

College of Education, University of Oregon

Copyrighted 1997 by Carla Kalin

All Rights Reserved

---

## INTRODUCTION

The setting for my first four years of teaching was a school of 1,400 students in the inner city of Oakland, California. One of the many challenges I faced as one of the eight kindergarten teachers on staff was attempting to curb the violent and aggressive behavior of my students. During my first year of teaching, a kindergartner from another classroom shot his younger brother three times in the stomach. The following year a first grader was suspended for bringing a knife to school and using it to threaten children on the playground. Not only were these children violent, but they understood the language of violence. Students with underdeveloped oral language skills nonetheless could interpret the gangsta rap which belled from the cars that slowly drove by during recess. Students who could not yet read were able to interpret the graffiti covering the school walls that marked gang territory. My students lived in a violent world.

I invested a great deal of time learning about how to combat this violence by teaching conflict resolution skills to my students. We practiced using our words instead of our fists, with some positive results. I soon realized that these nonviolent messages were in direct conflict with the lessons being taught by another influential teacher in my students' lives -- television. Although my students were improving and beginning to solve interpersonal conflicts with less violence, they spent recess pretending to be Ninja Turtles and Power Rangers.

I determined that television programs served as a springboard for violent and aggressive recess behavior. I soon adopted a "no tolerance" policy about "pretend violence" which I believed often lead to the real thing: No pretend shooting, no pretend kicking, no Power Rangers, no using legos or clay to make weapons. Although the students' social skills did improve, I did not win my battle against the Power Rangers. It was a constant struggle and one which, looking back, I believe confused my students. What was so wrong with doing what they saw on TV?

I took a two-year hiatus from teaching to pursue a masters degree, and began to research how to best teach conflict resolution skills to young children. During this period of exploration I enrolled in a course called "Children, Youth, TV and the Media" at the

University of Oregon. I began to learn about media literacy and decided to investigate ways I might use media literacy as a tool for reducing the aggressive behavior of my students. I framed some key questions upon which to focus my research: How much television do children watch? How much televised violence do children watch? Is there research evidence of a link between TV violence and aggressive behavior in children? If so, what can parents and educators do? The following are the results of my investigation, which took the form of library research and interviews with six elementary school teachers.

---

## **HOW MUCH TELEVISION DO CHILDREN WATCH?**

Typically, U.S. children begin watching television at a very early age, sometimes as early as six months, and are fervent viewers by the time that they are two or three years old (Murray, p.1). The amount of time that American children spend watching TV is astounding: an average of four hours a day, 28 hours a week, 2,400 hours a year, nearly 18,000 hours by the time they graduate from high school (Chen, 1994, p.23). In comparison, they spend a mere 13,000 hours in school, from kindergarten through twelfth grade (Chen, 1994). American children spend more time watching TV than any other activity, besides sleeping (Chen, 1994). By the time the average American child is six, she will spend more time watching TV than talking to her father in her lifetime (Devore, 1994, p.16).

Television viewing is the primary activity for American children in the hours between school and dinnertime. Nearly 80 percent of the 1,200 children surveyed by the Yanklovich Youth Monitor in 1993 reported TV viewing as their usual activity during this time (Chen, p. 99). Children living in poverty watch even more television than average -- some up to seven hours a day. By the time a poor child graduates from high school, he or she may have watched as many as 22,000 hours of TV (Sweet & Singh, 1994).

## **DOES TELEVISION TEACH?**

Time spent in front of the television is time a child is not doing something else, such as playing, running, reading, drawing, or helping out with chores. But children are learning while they watch TV. (Copyrighted 1997 by Carla Kalin) In fact, television has been called the teaching machine. What children learn depends on what they watch. In 1958 Edward R. Murrow said about television:

"This instrument can teach, it can illuminate; yes, and it can even inspire. But it can do so only to the extent that humans are determined to use it to those ends. Other- wise it is merely lights and wires in a box." (quoted in Chen, p.33)

Other prominent media experts have expressed similar views about this notion of television as teacher:

"Television is teaching all the time. [It] does more educating than the schools and all the institutions of higher learning." - Marshall McLuan

"Everything on television is educating in the broadest sense of the word." - Dorothy Singer, Ed.D. Yale University

"Television is basically teaching whether you want it to or not." - Jim Henson, Muppets Creator

Does TV teach? Those who spend billions of dollars on television advertising seem to believe television has an impact. If commercials teach, is there any reason to believe that television programs do not?

### **WHAT ARE CHILDREN WATCHING?**

Not all television viewing is bad. There are quite a number of excellent programs dedicated to young children. Some programs combine entertainment and education to help children learn to identify characters, shapes and colors, sequence numbers and letters, practice beginning phonics skills, learn the vocabulary and sounds of foreign languages, and more. Programs such as Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood and Sesame Street also help promote prosocial behavior and cooperation. Dr. Ernest Boyer, President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and former US Commissioner of Education, stated:

"Television sparks curiosity and opens up distant worlds to children. Through its magic, youngsters can travel to the moon or the bottom of the sea. They can visit medieval castles, take river trips, or explore imaginary lands. . .With selective viewing,television can richly contribute to school readiness." (Chen, p. 122)

Unfortunately, a great deal of children's programming does not teach children what most parents and teachers want them to learn. A child spending Saturday morning in front of the television will most likely be learning about violence, consumerism, and stereotypes. To borrow a phrase from the video documentary TV, Violence and Youth, "Violence is a major course in TV's curriculum." Furthermore, approximately 90 percent of the time, children watch programs which are not specifically designed for them at all (Sweet & Singh, p.2). In fact, only 14 percent of the programming on television is designed for children (Full of Sound and Fury, p.3). Surprisingly, the programs which are especially designed for children, such as cartoons, are the most violent of all programming. The level of violence in prime time television is about 5 violent acts per hour, whereas the level of violence in children's Saturday morning programming is about 20 to 25 violent acts per hour (Sweet & Singh, p.2).

### **HOW MUCH TELEVISION ARE AMERICA'S CHILDREN WATCHING?**

For the purposes of this paper, I would like to borrow the definition of violence used by the Mediascope National Television Violence Study. They defined violence as "any overt depiction of physical force--or the credible threat of such force--intended to harm an

animate being or group of beings." American television is the most violent in the world (Chen, p.47). The word "action" is practically synonymous with violence on TV. The typical American child witnesses 12,000 violent acts on television per year. "In 1986, there were 43 hours of war cartoons weekly. In war cartoons there are about 48 violent acts per hour, with murder or attempted murder occurring almost once every minute" (Devore, p.18). The average American child will see 8,000 simulated murders before s/he finishes elementary school (Walsh, p.1). Although contemporary programming has seen a reduction in violent content, cable television gives children access to violent reruns such as *A Team* and *The Dukes of Hazard*. The Center for Media and Public Affairs recently surveyed a day's TV programming in Washington D.C. They identified 1,846 violent scenes. The most violent periods were between 6 to 9 a.m. with 497 violent scenes and between 2 to 5 p.m. with 609 violent scenes. These are the times of highest TV viewing by children. (Murray, p.2). "Children are considered more vulnerable to these violent portrayals because they are in the early stages of developing behavior patterns, attitudes and values about social interaction" (Berry & Asamen, 1993, p. 13).

### **ARE THERE PARALLELS BETWEEN TELEVISION VIOLENCE AND REAL-LIFE AGGRESSION?**

Graham Melville-Thomas (1985) defines aggression as "behaviors intended to injure a person or object physically or verbally." Given the heavy diet of TV violence, is there a relationship between TV viewing and the rising crime rate? One million people die annually in the U.S. as the result of homicide or suicide. The leading cause of death (1992) for teen-age boys, black and white, is homicide, specifically gunshot wounds.

This propensity for violence is uniquely American. Homicide rates are approximately 20 times higher than in most other first-world nations. The arrest rates for boys ages 14 to 17 steadily increased from a level of 0.4 percent in 1950 to a level of 13.2 percent in 1990. Homicides for white males ages 15 to 24 in 1960 were reported at the rate of 5.9 per 100,000, and steadily increased to 19.9 per 100,000. (Copyrighted 1997 by Carla Kalin) Non-white males in this age group are notably at risk. In 1960 there were 43.7 homicide victims per 100,000 non-white males; by 1990 the rate was to 109.1 per 100,000 (Shannon, p.3).

Recently the crime rate has begun to drop. Still, Marian Wright Edelman of the Children's Defense Fund declares that "the crisis of children having children has been eclipsed by the greater tragedy of children killing children" (The National Forum On Television Literacy, video #3).

While media professionals would rather believe that television has no effects other than those intended, thousands of studies have pointed to a causal relationship between TV violence and real life crime. In the mid 1980's, FBI reports showed that crimes committed by children, the poor, and women had increased by over 300 percent since 1950. Although crime has multiple causes, researchers have found that people in these groups tend to watch more TV than other people do. Dr. Leonard Eron of the University of Illinois studied 400 viewers for 22 years. His research found that people who had

watched the most violent TV between birth and age 8 had committed the most serious crimes by age 30 (Megee, 1984).

The U.S. Surgeon General initiated an investigation of TV violence in 1972. The investigators concluded that "the causal relationship between televised violence and antisocial behavior is sufficient to warrant appropriate and immediate remedial action" (Megee, 1984). A second investigation was conducted by the National Institute for Mental Health in 1982. The survey repeated and amplified the conclusion reached 10 years earlier, that there is a causal connection between televised violence and true life aggression (Megee, 1984).

In August 1993, Democratic Senator Paul Simon called for an independent study of violence on American TV. The National Cable Television Association selected Mediascope--a non-profit media education organization--and four universities to conduct an independent investigation of violence on cable television. The broadcast TV networks chose the UCLA Center for Communication Policy to explore and examine violent content in broadcast television. The *UCLA Television Violence Monitoring Project* monitored nearly 3,000 hours of TV programming for violence during the 1994-5 season. Cable television was found to be far more violent than network TV.

## **WHAT EFFECTS DOES TV VIOLENCE HAVE ON YOUNG CHILDREN?**

Three primary types of harmful effects associated with viewing violence appeared repeatedly in the course of my review of the research literature. These are the same three effects identified by the *Mediascope National Television Violence Study*:

- Learning aggressive attitudes and behaviors.
- Becoming desensitized to real world violence.
- Developing a fear of being victimized by violence (also known as the "Mean World Syndrome).

Each of these three effects is considered in the next section.

### **Learning aggressive attitudes and behaviors**

The first step in learning aggressive attitudes and behaviors is accepting violence as a way to solve problems. On television, violence is the attractive, effective, and preferred solution to most conflicts. Dr. David Pearl of the National Institute of Mental Health argues that "television tells people to be violent" (Devore, p.21). Because heavy viewers watch so many violent acts on television, they come to see violence as a normal and accepted way of life. These people are the ones who use violence more often and more quickly in their lives (Devore, p.21).

A recent study investigated the effects of the popular children's program, "The Mighty Morphin Power Rangers" on aggression. It found that young children in a group who watched a televised Power Rangers episode committed seven times more aggressive acts in a subsequent two-minute play period than did a control group (Boyatzis, 1995, p.53).

In fact, studies following groups of children over long periods of time indicate that perpetual heavy doses of violent television during childhood contribute to violent behavior into adulthood (Featherstone, 1985, p.3).

### **Becoming desensitized to real world violence**

Children who are heavy viewers of violence on television may lose the ability to empathize, protest and to become distressed by real life acts of violence. Children who watch a lot of TV are less aroused by violent scenes than are those who only watch a little. They are less bothered by violence in general and less likely to see anything wrong with it. For example, in several studies, children who watched a violent program instead of a nonviolent one were less quick to intervene or to call for assistance when, soon afterwards, they saw younger children fighting or playing destructively (Featherstone, p.3).

### **Developing a fear of being victimized by violence**

Dr. George Gerbner of the University of Pennsylvania's School of Communications believes that one of the real dangers of pervasive TV violence is viewers' growing perception that the world is a mean and dangerous place. In their 1994 TV Violence Profile, Gerbner and his colleagues found that long-term, regular exposure to television can contribute to people's sense of vulnerability, dependence, anxiety, and fear (Chen, p.52). Of the children they observed who were heavy viewers (6 hours per day), most are not violent and aggressive as adults, but they have grown up with the idea of a very "mean world." They feel a need to protect themselves. They buy more guns, more watchdogs, and more burglar alarms and locks. Compared to light viewers (3 hours per day) in the same neighborhoods and with similar life styles, they are more insecure and more apprehensive about their safety (Megee, 1984). These same individuals grossly overestimated the national crime rate.

Gerbner found that when teenagers were asked how many times in the course of a shift the average police person draws a gun, 18 percent of heavy viewers estimated that it was more than five times. In actuality, most police officers never use a weapon during a lifetime on the force (Featherstone, p.2). Gerbner's investigation, as well as other studies, have shown that those who are heavy viewers do believe that the world is a more violent place than it is in reality, that the possibility of meeting with violence is greater than it is in reality, and that they should take some precautionary action to protect themselves against this perceived imminent danger.

### **THE CATHARSIS THEORY**

A few researchers and theorists have claimed that televised violence does not have negative effects. Seymour Feshbach in the early 1970's, proposed that viewing violence on TV provides an opportunity for the discharge, or catharsis, of aggressive feelings and therefore reduces the possibility that the viewer will participate in aggressive or violent behavior. The word "catharsis" comes from the Greek word meaning cleansing or

purging. The theory underlying the catharsis hypothesis proposes that a child who views violence on television indirectly experiences the violence and thereby harmlessly discharges his or her pent-up feelings of anger, hostility, and frustration. In other words, viewing violent fantasy may serve nearly as well as actual violence in ridding people of their hostile impulses. These conclusions, however, differ from the bulk of the research findings. The accumulated experimental findings on the effects of TV violence do not support the catharsis theory and conclusions (Report to the Surgeon General, p.107, Fowles, p. 124).

## **IS ALL TELEVISED VIOLENCE HARMFUL TO CHILDREN'S MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING?**

Does all TV violence cause aggressive behavior in children? Dr. George Comstock believes that certain kinds of TV violence make abnormal behavior seem normal. Based on his review of over 3,000 studies, Comstock identified a variety of factors that increase aggressiveness as a result of exposure to violence on television or film:

- Rewarding or lack of punishment for those who act aggressively.
- Portrayal of violence as justified.
- Cues in the portrayed violence that have a similarity to those in real life.
- Dramatic situations that encourage identification with the aggressor.
- Portrayal of violent behavior as motivated by the intent to inflict harm or injury.
- Violence in which consequences are lowered, such as no pain, sorrow, or remorse.
- Violence that is portrayed with sufficient realism as to evade classification as fiction.
- Violence that does not stir distaste.
- Violence that is extreme in relationship to the events leading up to it. Protagonists who display great strength and power to defeat weak villains.
- Violence with numerous victims.
- Violence that erupts among friends, allies or members of a gang. (Megee)

In my review of portrayals of violence that may be harmful to young viewers, three themes in Comstock's list appeared numerous times. These are: the modeling of poor conflict resolution skills, the lack of consequences for aggressive behavior, and the portrayal of violence for its own sake (i.e., out of context and for no purpose in relation to the plot). The following is an explanation of each of these factors.

### **The modeling of poor conflict resolution skills**

Violence on American television is often represented as an effective and acceptable way of resolving conflicts. Violence is usually portrayed as justified, that is, the good guys win, and the bad guys lose (Manley-Casimir & Luke, p.59). Problems very often are solved rapidly and violently, and violent or other anti-social behaviors go unpunished. The good guys are very often no more appropriate role models for young children than the villains themselves. The result is that many American children are more familiar with violent, aggressive, and anti-social approaches to solving problems than they are with nonviolent and prosocial ones (Sweet & Singh, p.6).

In fact, a mere 4 percent of violent programs emphasize an anti-violence theme (Mediascope, p.4). The dilemma is not only that children learn inappropriate behavior, but that they often adopt the evaluative standards that the programs project (Sweet & Singh, p.6). Elizabeth Thoman of the Center for Media Literacy points out that "at the very least, media violence is influential in modeling the use of deadly force as a first choice to solve interpersonal conflict" (Thoman, 1995. p. 48).

Many of the programs that children watch send the message that a conflict always involves a winner and a loser. There is a good side that is one hundred percent good and a bad side that is one hundred percent bad. The message is that fighting is cool and glamorous and fun (Carlsson-Paige and Levin, 1992, p.35).

Along with the theme of using violence to resolve conflicts is the vast amount of weapons depicted on television. The representation of guns on television is one of easy availability and of fast and simple solutions to problems. It seems as if everyone has a gun. If the gun is in the hands of the protagonist, then it solves the problem (Megee). According to the Mediascope National Television Violence Study, 25 percent of violent interactions on television involve handguns.

### **The lack of consequences for aggressive behavior:**

Rarely are the long-term consequences of violence portrayed on television. The results of real-life violence usually involve someone going to jail, the hospital, or the grave. Television violence is clean with little blood, pain, or suffering. On TV, perpetrators go unpunished 73 percent of the time. This gives young viewers the message that violence is a successful method of resolving conflicts. Forty-seven percent of all violent interactions on television depict no harm to the victims, and 58 percent show no pain. In fact, only 16 percent of all broadcast programs show the long-term negative psychological, financial, and emotional consequences of violence. Children's programs on TV only depict the long term negative effects of violence 5 percent of the time (Mediascope, p.4). Everet Koop, Surgeon General in the 1980's said:

"The real world of violence is a nightmare. One from which a victim might never truly awake. The victim of an assault may be hospitalized, they maybe bandaged and immobilized and be in no shape to chase off the attacker for at least the rest of the year if ever. On the screen, one person will physically assault another and run away. In seconds,

the victim appears in hot pursuit of the attacker. The entire field of emergency medicine stands as a rebuke of violence and its very serious after effects." (Megee)

Children's programs often portray violence in a humorous context -- 67 percent of the time according to the Mediascope National Television Violence Study. Slapstick violence has long been a part of American entertainment from the Three Stooges to Bugs Bunny to Home Alone. Dr. Gerbner believes that violence is a demonstration of power. Its effects have nothing to do with whether it is perceived to be serious or presumed humorous. Violence in a comical context also teaches. Much of real-life violence among children is done in a joking manner--often with serious consequences (TV and Kids).

### **The portrayal of violence for its own sake**

There is a vast difference between gratuitous violence and a depiction that reflects the realities of the human condition and the horrors of suffering. Programs that portray violence without context or judgment as to its acceptability, and that are mean-spirited and feature violence for the sake of violence, are among the most dangerous to the young viewer. On the other hand, Dr. Jean Killbourne, a media analyst, says that "appropriate TV violence teaches that violence is bad. In particular, that violence hurts, violence does damage and that violence isn't the way to solve problems" (Megee).

Violence is not new and it is not always bad. Violence in art, music, painting, and drama can be positive if the artist has the ability to make us care about the character and about the dilemma the character faces before the violent act occurs. One of the things that is striking about the violence, the killings, and the suicides in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is how it instills an awareness in the viewer that it did not have to happen, that it was unnecessary. The viewer feels a sense of loss (Megee). A program about the Holocaust would necessarily portray violence and inhumanity in order to convey the atrocities the Nazis committed. This can become a statement against violence (Walsh, p.1).

It would be simplistic to propose that televised violence is the sole cause of this nation's ills. However, there is growing evidence that a relationship exists between what children see on television and what they do and believe. In his testimony on behalf of the American Psychological Association before the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs in 1992, Dr. Leonard Eron argued that:

There can no longer be any doubt that heavy exposure to televised violence is one of the causes of aggressive behavior, crime and violence in society. The evidence comes from both the laboratory and real-life studies. Television violence affects youngsters of all ages, of both genders, at all socio-economic levels and all levels of intelligence. The effect is not limited to children who are already disposed to being aggressive and is not restricted to this country. The fact that we get this same finding of a relationship between television violence and aggression in children in study after study, in one country after another, cannot be ignored...We have demonstrated this causal effect outside the laboratory in real-life among many different children. We have come to believe that a vicious cycle exists in which television violence makes children more aggressive and

these aggressive children turn to watching more violence to justify their own behavior. (Murray, p.6)

My review of research confirms my experience as a teacher that televised violence has some effect on how children perceive the world and on how they behave. The impact of television violence is, in fact, greater for younger children than for older children (Chandler, p.4). These findings raise the question: what can parents and educators do to help children navigate the torrent of violent images they live with? I have divided the following section of this paper into suggestions for parents and suggestions for educators. These are ideas that have surfaced several times throughout my research and in talking to parents, teachers and others who work with children. The suggestions for parents are those that might be difficult for teachers to achieve because they are not with their students when they watch TV. The suggestions for educators, however, can be used by both parents and teachers alike. Also, I would like to clarify that for the purposes of this project, I am focusing on how adults can help children cope with television violence. There are many other concerns about television that we would like children to learn about; advertising, stereotyping and sexism, to name a few. Some of the suggestions I have are broad enough to address these concerns. However, these issues are important enough to merit separate attention as well.

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR PARENTS**

"Shall we just carelessly allow children to hear any casual tales which may be devised by casual persons, and to receive into their minds ideas for the most part the very opposite of those which we should wish them to have when they are grown up?" - Plato

"Parents have to realize that there is a stranger in your house. If you came home and you found a strange man...teaching your kids to punch each other, or trying to sell them all kinds of products, you'd kick him right out of the house. But here you are; you come in and the TV is on; and you don't think twice about it. -Dr. Jerom Singer, Yale University." (Chen, p.29)

Once parents are aware of the potential influence that television violence has on their children, what can they do? The first thing that parents can do is find out what their children are watching. About half the time a child spends in front of the television she is alone or in the company of other children (Sweet & Singh, p.3). By placing the television in a central location, for example in the living room and not in the child's bedroom, parents can better monitor what their children are watching. Parents can simply turn off the set if what their children are watching does not seem appropriate. However, it is important to explain to children why the set is being turned off. In his book *Taming the Wild Tube*, Robert L. Schrag declares that:

"Free access to television programs is *not* a feature of the Bill of Rights. Children do not have an inalienable right to watch sleazy TV...There are a lot of programs out there, sleazy and otherwise, that are just not suitable for children. You would not hesitate to control your children's access to substances that might harm them: drugs, alcohol, tobacco,

twinkies, etc. You need not hesitate to control their exposure to television programs you deem objectionable either." (Schrag, 1990 p.42)

Parents should watch and evaluate programs before allowing children to watch them. Parents forget that they can forbid any program they find offensive.

In the documentary film, *Does TV Kill?* an eight-year-old boy was asked if he would give up television for a million dollars. The boy immediately responded "No way." When asked why, the boy replied, "What would I do?" If the television is going to be turned off, parents can help children think of alternatives. Of course, the ideal thing to do would be to spend time with the children instead, but if that is not an option, parents can encourage sports, hobbies, or time with friends. Both parents and teachers can help children generate a list of alternative activities to television.

Parents also can assist their children in creating a schedule of after-school activities where television has a specific block of time (Sweet and Singh, p.6). Having a supply of art materials, books, magazines, clay, musical instruments, jigsaw puzzles, and board games can help wean kids off TV.

Parents and their children can jointly plan weekly television schedules. By teaching their children to make thoughtful choices about what they watch on television, parents can deter children from automatically switching on the set as soon as they wake up, or as soon as they come home from school. (Copyrighted 1997 by Carla Kalin) By planning ahead, parents also can encourage children to watch programs that are educational or at least benign. In addition, they can set an example by not leaving the television on constantly, but deliberately deciding what to watch themselves.

Finally, parents can talk to their children. I discuss this further in the section on suggestions for teachers, but I believe it important enough to write about in both sections. Parents should ask children about what they're watching. What do they like about the program? What don't they like? Do they think the characters are behaving like people do in the real world? Parents should ask children to compare their experiences to those of the characters on the TV program. The long-term goal is having children begin questioning these things on their own.

Good parenting is perhaps the greatest defense against potential negative effects from the onslaught of violent images that children watch on TV. In fact, Dr. Ronald Federici, a child and family psychologist, believes that "children and youth can handle violent content if they are raised in an environment where they have a solid identity, solid moral standards and are taught the differences between reality and fantasy" (The National Forum On Television Literacy, video #2).

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHERS (AND PARENTS): MEDIA LITERACY FOR CHILDREN AT RISK**

But what if children are not raised in such an environment? The teacher's role in a young child's life is magnified when the child is considered at risk and the other adults in the child's life are negligent. Greg Shannon, who studied violence as a public health problem found that, "the children most at risk for the aggressive behavioral effects of media violence are also very possibly those that are at the greatest risk for delinquency due to parental behavior" (Shannon, p. 8).

At risk children are more likely to spend a greater amount of time watching television, are more likely to be unsupervised while they watch television, and they are more likely to witness behavior (off the screen) that supports the notions of violence as a conflict resolution tool. Also, the parents of at risk children are less apt to naturally incorporate the aforementioned suggestions as part of their parenting style. They probably are not going to take advantage of the new government interventions that are meant to assist in managing television content for young viewers. They are less likely to pay attention to the new ratings that now flash on the screen for 15 seconds before a television show begins. Furthermore, they are less likely to make use of the "V-Chip", a device that will allow parents to block certain programs. In fact, Frank Rich, a writer for the New York Times, says that the new ratings and the V-chip "will solely benefit parents who are already attentive to their children's TV diet..."

The majority of my students in the inner city were at risk children. My next teaching position will involve working with children from a low socio-economic background, which is an indicator of being at risk. Therefore, I believe my role as a teacher is crucial, and my aim is to do all I can to curb and diminish the impact of television violence on my students. As I approached the topic of television violence, my goal was to find and create ways to teach media literacy skills in order to help children become more critical viewers, and therefore less influenced by media violence. Dierdre Downs, a leader in the media literacy movement, defines a critical viewer as one who "thinks critically about and understands the medium, programming, content, technology and economic system of the television industry" (The National Forum On Television Literacy, video #2).

I believe that media literacy skills can be helpful and useful to students in deciphering television messages. I also believe that the effects are optimal when the students are learning alternatives to violence. Conflict resolution skills, anger management skills, and impulse control are vital to a young child. Yet, it is expecting a great deal of children to ignore the multitude of violent messages they get from television and use only the nonviolent ones we propose. With this in mind, I have gathered and developed media literacy ideas that I expect will assist young students in becoming more critical viewers and thus less heavily influenced by television and televised violence. I have concentrated on three of the core principles of media literacy: television messages are constructions; television uses predictable techniques; and audiences negotiate meaning. These principles as well as other media literacy suggestions are incorporated in a media literacy curriculum web that I created (see Appendix A).

### **TV messages are constructions**

One of the most important principles of media literacy is that media messages are constructions. An effective way to teach children that what they watch on television is created by people is to allow them to spend some time behind a video camera. The conclusion of the first video in the series called *The National Forum on Media Literacy* struck me as a wonderful example of this principle. It is a scene between a preschool girl and her parents. The parents are asking the girl what she like to watch on TV and she talks about Barney. When asked how Barney comes to be on TV, the little girl has no response. Then the little girl, with the help of her mother, video-taping her father. As this is happening, the mother explains that they are taking pictures of Daddy. They record the mother and the little girl as well. We then see the family watching the video that they just shot. The girl is asked how Daddy got on TV and she responds confidently that she took his picture. When asked again how Barney comes to be on TV, she pauses only a moment before answering that someone took his picture. In my opinion, this is a wonderful illustration of how important it is for children to have the experience of constructing some media on their own. Students can record class productions, view them and also show them in other classrooms.

To illustrate the idea that cartoon animations are drawn by people and are put together to look like they are moving, teachers can bring flip books into the classroom. Students can experience manipulating the "cartoon" to go fast and slow. Then teachers can encourage and help students to make flip books on their own.

Another effective method of teaching children that television programs are constructions is to take a field trip to the local TV station. Children can go on a tour of the station, ask questions, and hopefully watch while a program is taped. Children will witness the origins of some of what they watch at home.

Children also can learn that TV messages are constructed by deconstructing them. Teachers can survey the class to find out what the most popular television show is and then tape an episode of that show. The children can help to break the program down into parts. These are some questions that might help guide the discussion (adapted from DeGaetano & Bander, 1996, p.137):

- Where did the story take place?
- What was the plot?
- Were there sub-plots?
- Who are the characters?
- Are they always good or always bad? Sometimes? When?
- Do the characters remind them of anyone they know in real life?
- What was the problem or conflict in the story?
- How was the conflict solved?
- Would these solutions work in real life?
- If it is a violent program:
  - How do the students think the victim feels?
  - Did the TV version of violence leave anything out?
  - What would happen if people did this in real life?

- What would have been a way of solving the problem without anyone
- getting hurt?
- Did the characters think about alternatives before becoming violent?

Simple conversations about actors, scripts and stunt people can help children to understand that what they watch on television is not spontaneous, but thoughtfully planned out. An actor is pretending to be a character. After watching a video, the teacher can stop the credits and explain that the actors have their own names. Perhaps the same actor pretends to be another character on different program. Teachers can show children a script from a television program (available at *Drew's Script-O-Rama* <http://www.script-orama.com>) and explain that the actors have to memorize all of those words. Actors go to special schools to learn to pretend so well that we can let ourselves believe them while we are watching. Stunt men and women learn and practice carefully planned fake fights.

Another technique that teachers can use is to "reconstruct" the program by sequencing the plot (adapted from DeGaetano & Bander, p.135). While the class watches a video, the students tell the teacher the main events of the plot. Afterwards the teacher writes these main events on large sheets of paper and has a group of students illustrate each event. The teacher then mixes the cards and has groups of students sequence the plot. As a variation of this idea, the students can change the story by changing the order of events. Once the children understand the game, the teacher can leave these cards at a station for small groups of students to work with independently.

The fact that TV messages are constructed assists in teaching children the difference between TV fantasy and reality. The problem lies with whether or not children understand that most of television is "just pretend". Teachers can continually ask the children to compare what is on TV with real life. How is it different? How is it the same? One way to illustrate this idea is to ask a policeperson to visit the classroom. Before the guest arrives the teacher has the children brainstorm what a policeperson's life is like on television. The teacher reads the list and has the children select those items that they believe a policeperson actually does in real life. When the guest arrives, she presents the list and asks the guest to compare his/her actual life at work with the children's predictions. The children most likely will be surprised.

### **TV uses identifiable techniques**

A second important principle of media literacy is that television uses techniques that help convey ideas. One important technique is framing the shot. The person behind the camera decides what the audience will see and what will be excluded from view. Teachers can help convey this idea by having the class make "viewfinders." These are made by gluing two toilet paper rolls together (and decorating if they chose). When children peer through the viewfinders their peripheral vision is eliminated. If they want to get a good picture of what's going on around them, they need to back up and use a "wide angle." On the other hand, to examine something more closely they need to move in for a "close up." In order

to get a sense of what is going on without backing up, they can slowly turn their heads and "pan" the scene. After the children have had some experience with viewfinders, the teacher can bring in a video. Can the students use their new vocabulary to identify some of the camera shots?

Sound, music, laugh tracks, and special effects are other techniques used in television production. With another video, can the students interpret what is happening when the sound is turned off? What kind of programs are easy to understand without sound? What kind of programs require sound for understanding? Change the background music during a scary scene. Is it still scary? How does music help tell the story? Laugh tracks are a subject worth discussing in the classroom. Who is laughing? Do the students think the scene is so funny? Where do they think the laughter is coming from? Why would the people who make TV programs put in the sound of laughter?

A closer look at special effects also helps to demystify television. How did they make that scary monster? The erupting volcano? The dinosaur? How did they make the people fly? Teachers can find videos that analyze special effects from the Center for Media Literacy. Again, learning different techniques used in television programming can help students understand that what they see on television is planned and produced.

### **Audiences negotiate meaning**

We help create TV as we watch it. While watching television, children are trying to connect what they are seeing on the screen with everything else they know. Everyone experiences television differently. One way to convey this to children is to facilitate a discussion about a short video they have seen in class. Did everyone enjoy it? Did everyone have the same favorite part? Did they all like the same characters? These discussions can help children realize that everyone has a slightly different point of view.

Exposing children to variations of a story illustrates both the principle of media as a construction and the principle of interpreting meaning. One suggestion is to read four different versions of a common story over the course of a week. *Cinderella* works well because there are so many versions available. For example, *Prince Cinders*, by Babette Cole, presents a male version of the main character, *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*, by John Steptoe, is an African version of the tale and Ai-Ling Louie's *Yeh-Shen* is a Cinderella story from China. In her book *Cinderella*, Judy Sierra presents a collection of multi-cultural Cinderella stories.

After reading several versions to the children, the teacher can ask them to brainstorm about how the stories differ and how they are the same. One of the first things children will notice is that the illustrations are different. But authors also make changes to the plot, describe the characters differently, change the sequence of events, and even change the ending. Thus the same story can be told in countless ways and this helps the children to realize that the story depends a great deal on who tells it.

Furthermore, children will have differing opinions about which story they liked the best and why. It is a safe bet that the boys' favorite will be Prince Cinders. The teacher should address the idea that although the class listened to the same stories, they each felt differently about them. Who they are affects how they feel about the books. These discussions help children realize that audiences negotiate meaning.

These insights can be transferred to television. For example, a teacher can show students three of the many video versions of Cinderella that are available. Children always enjoy Walt Disney's classic animated version. Platypus Production's Cinderella, narrated by Shelley Duvall, is not animated. Tom Davenport's Ashpet takes place in the U.S. during World War II. Afterwards the teacher can ask the students to compare and contrast the video versions. When they have done this, they can then compare the videos to the books they have heard in class.

The teacher can encourage children to use their new vocabulary (wide angle, close up, plot, setting etc.) in describing the video. This will help students exercise their critical viewing skills in judging the worth and merit of the stories they hear and the programs they watch. If the students have a particularly strong reaction to a program, whether it be negative or positive, the teacher can help the class determine what it is about the program that they like or disliked so much. Afterwards, the class may want to write a letter to the network or cable company praising or complaining about the program. This exercise will reinforce the notion that someone is responsible for what we see on the screen and also help empower the children as members of an active and participatory audience.

The *Cinderella* activities can be further developed by using other constructions such as sound recordings and film strips. The teacher can have children explore and experiment with these activities several times a year using different stories. Oryz Multicultural Folk Tale Series is a useful resource where teachers can find several variations of *Beauty and the Beast*, *Tom Thumb* and other stories.

These suggestions are meant to give teachers ideas for incorporating media literacy instruction into the school day. A heightened awareness on teachers' part will help in determining what television programming is influencing students. These are the very programs that can be brought into the classroom to be analyzed and discussed. Teachers do not necessarily need to create a special time to teach these skills. Media literacy can be incorporated easily into language arts or social studies units. I believe that teaching and reinforcing these skills will help students become more adept at protecting themselves against the barrage of violent images they see every day. They need to know that they can switch the channel or turn the television off. If they do chose to watch, at least they should know that what they see on TV does not necessarily happen in real life.

### **The question of war play**

As part of my research, I talked to three kindergarten teachers and three first-grade teachers to see if, like me, they had problems with their students emulating the violent characters they saw portrayed on television. All of the teachers saw this behavior in their

students and most of them reacted with variations of my "no tolerance" approach. However, one teacher in California, Ellen South, told me she believes it is not developmentally appropriate to disallow students from engaging in war play. She also suggested that once our students are "hooked" on whatever violent program is in vogue, we as educators have a responsibility to bring this material into the classroom and teach our values "through and around it." This teacher suggested some readings for me, and my research took an unexpected turn.

In their books *The War Play Dilemma* and *Who's Calling the Shots?*, Nancy Carlsson-Paige and Diane E. Levin propose that children construct an understanding of concepts and feelings mainly through play, and that play is at the heart of children's learning and development (Carlsson-Paige & Levin, 1987 & 1090). I discovered that children learn through play when I studied child development for my teaching credential. Therefore I have always reserved a portion of the school day for children to free-explore with art materials and engage in dramatic play. However, I had not identified the conflict between encouraging this kind of play and forbidding war play. My students never understood this either, and in fact I suspect that I made playing Power Rangers even more appealing to them by forbidding it. The "no play fighting" rule was one that I constantly struggled to enforce. I went head to head with the Mighty Morphin Power Rangers, and I lost. Carlsson-Paige and Levin propose that:

"...in war play children assume the roles of powerful fantasy characters, express aggression in pretend situations, and engage in 'pretend fighting,' all of which can help them to learn about impulse control as they struggle to stay within acceptable boundaries and receive feedback about their actions from their environment. Young children are also working on constructing boundaries between fantasy and reality. War play provides children with a special forum for understanding this difference because of the dramatic differences between real life and pretending." (Carlsson-Paige & Levin, p.18)

In other words, allowing children to engage in war play provides a time and place for them to test out what they have been learning about conflicts and helps them to form their own ideas about war and peace and about fantasy and reality.

As I pondered these possibilities, I had to admit to myself that I had not put much thought behind my "no play fighting" rule. I realize now that I denied my students access to ways to explore television and other forms of media that are powerful influences in their lives. This did not help my students gain understanding of the violent cartoons they watched, nor did it give them a caring adult's perspective to help them in the constructions of their own perceptions of violence and aggression. I found children's war play personally offensive and also disconcerting. I was frightened that these young students who lived surrounded by violence and who play-fought at recess would grow up to become violent adults. Although banning this behavior does not seem now the most appropriate response, I am not alone in my negative reaction to war play nor in my "no tolerance" approach.

Again Carlsson-Paige and Levin:

"While adults may see connections between the (war) play and violence in society, the content and concepts used in children's war play have a different meaning for children than they have for adults. . . . When young children pretend to shoot and kill another child, it generally means quite a different thing to the child than to adults who have the ability to relate the `killing' in the play to actual killing and violence in the real world. Because children do not fully understand time as a continuum, they do not think about death as a permanent and irreversible condition." (Carlsson-Paige & Levin, p.19)

Carlsson-Paige and Levin observe that, before the age of television, the themes children used in war play often came from their direct experiences and grew from their own personal needs. Today, however, a great deal of the content is coming from the minds of television script writers (Carlsson-Paige and Levin, 1990, p.11). When children imitate the scripts they see on television it is just that--imitation. Imitation is not expressive of the concerns of children and it does not help them work on concepts in the same way as dramatic play. When simply imitating a scene from television, children do not experience the sense of control and mastery that comes from taking charge of play. Many of the benefits of dramatic war play therefore do not occur during imitation (Carlsson-Paige and Levin, p.22).

This distinction between imitation and play brought to my mind the ideas of Jean Piaget. Piaget saw imitation as the opposite of play. He believed that play was a process wherein children work on fitting reality into their own understanding. While they are playing, children use their imagination and creativity; they work on forming new ideas and understandings. When children simply imitate, on the other hand, they attempt to conform to something external in order to duplicate what they have seen. Although imitation can serve as a helpful springboard to dramatic play, it is stagnant in and of itself (Piaget, 1951).

DeGaetano and Bander (1996) present a list of clues that parents and teachers can look for to determine if children's play is imaginative or imitative (p.13). During imaginative, or dramatic, play children create new and varied roles which represent different experiences in their lives. However, during imitative play children repeat stereotyped roles from the screen. When engaged in imaginative play, children generate their own language, using codes and special names. Instead during imitative play children often repeat scripts or sound bites from TV. Children involved in imaginative play use their imaginations to develop a variety of play scenarios. Children involved in imitative play use only screen images as a source for play ideas. Children weave television, life experiences, stories from books into their imaginative play. Children use memory to imitate what they see on the screen when they engage in imitative play.

War toys that are replicas of the ones children see on television are usually advertised during the time children watch cartoons--Saturday mornings and weekday afternoons. In fact, one could view the actual programming as one long commercial. Children can buy Power Ranger weapons "just like the ones on TV." Not only do these war toys limit young children's dramatic play by encouraging imitation, but "today's single-purpose war toys encourage children to stay fixated on fighting, violence, and even mutilation"

(Carlsson-Paige and Levin, 1990, p.61). Also, because the war toys are connected to television characters and plots, children's play is guided toward imitating the violence they see on TV, and not toward the kind of imaginative dramatic war play children need to work out all the violence they are seeing (Carlsson-Paige and Levin, p.62).

When I first began my research, I had not considered television commercials as potential promoters of violence. When selecting the key principles of media literacy that would best help children move away from violence, I eliminated from consideration the principle that "Television has commercial interests." Although important, it did not seem applicable. Now I see that it is appropriate not only to help the children deconstruct the programs they watch, but the commercials as well. When children realize the purpose of commercials, they often feel manipulated and angry (Carlsson-Paige and Levin, p. 77). Those toys that look so powerful on the commercials are usually made of cheap plastic and break easily. The TV commercials make it look as if buying the advertised toy will buy a whole world with music and sound effects. Usually a series of toys is highlighted and children are encouraged to "collect them all."

If a particular toy is popular with children, the teacher can bring it in and have the students compare it to the commercial. Is it really so great? The children can help dictate a letter to the toy company and the advertiser if they feel manipulated or cheated. Learning that the intent of commercials is to sell and nothing else may help students realize that advertisements are also constructions and therefore not real.

The task for educators, therefore, is not to find ways to eliminate war play, but to assist children in moving from imitating what they see on television to a more authentic form of dramatic play. Ellen South, the kindergarten teacher from California, believes that by allowing her students to engage in war play and by taking an active role herself, she has an opportunity to assist her students in working on issues of fantasy and reality and to influence the quality of play.

In her article *Coping With Ninja Turtle Play in My Kindergarten Classroom*, Gaye Gronlund explains that when she watched her students imitating Ninja Turtles, a popular children's cartoon in the early 1990s, their play did not appear to be imaginative, rich, or inventive. She decided to embrace the "Turtle Culture." She began asking her students to explain the characters and the plots to her. She was immediately surrounded by "turtle experts" who were thrilled that she was finally interested in something that was so important to them. She began to ask more probing questions. Did the turtles ever feel sad? Did Shredder (the antagonist) have a mother who loved him? Were the turtles friends with GI Joe? As the children answered her, she wrote down what they said. Children began to dictate stories and put on plays that dealt with the Ninja Turtle theme. Over time, the stories began to represent a more traditional fairy tale structure, which still involved violence and aggression, with good triumphing over evil but "far more imaginative, personalized, and rewarding to the children" (Gronlund, 1992, p.24).

Teachers can use questioning to help children develop ideas beyond the stereotypes they see in media characters. Children often draw characters from television shows in their

journals. This is an opportunity to ask them about the characters. Does the bad guy have a family? Does he have children? Do his children think he is bad? This gentle questioning might help students to begin to look beyond the television representation. This type of questioning coincides with the fifth important principle of media literacy: Television has embedded values and points of view. In other words, television teaches that some people are more important than other people. African-Americans, Asians, Latinos, and Native Americans are often portrayed as crooks, kidnappers, and villains. They are the "bad guys." Women typically are mothers or secretaries. By encouraging children to compare these television stereotypes with their own experiences, we can help to further separate the real world from TV (Davis, 1990, p. 17).

While children engage in war play, teachers can ask questions and make comments that help students get the most from their play. For example, teachers can help clarify boundaries for those tend to confuse the fantasy of play with reality. A teacher might say, "Remember, Marco, Scott is just pretending to be the bad guy; he isn't really bad"(Carlsson-Paige and Levin, 1987, p.56). Teachers also can help expand the concepts of "good guys" and "bad guys." Where does the bad guy go when he is not in a fight? What else does he do? By asking open-ended questions, teachers can create the kind of disequilibrium that can help children find new problems to solve and make new connections (Carlsson-Paige and Levin, 1987). Examples of open-ended questions are: "What can the bad guy do if he's trapped?" "What's it like to be the good guy?"; "Tell me about your special powers"; "How can you get the bad guys to pay attention?" Teachers also can encourage a more human understanding of the "bad guys": "Wow, Shredder is hurt. Should we call an ambulance?" We can also help foster a deeper understanding of the real effects of violence: "I'm happy that you and Jimmy are just pretending to kick, because if you really kick each other you will both get hurt" (Carlsson-Paige and Levin, 1987, p.57).

## **Conclusion**

An 8-week after-school pilot project in media literacy called *Beyond Blame: Challenging Violence in the Media* , was implemented in Kansas City. It resulted in a drop from 17% to 6.9% in children choosing violence as a solution to conflict (Thoman, 1996, p.1). Both Ellen South and Gaye Gronlund report a decrease in their students' aggressive behavior since they have brought the television curriculum into their classrooms and guided children toward imaginative and creative dramatic war play.

I believe these two strategies for confronting television's violent influence on children's behavior are not only compatible, but complimentary. I also believe that they are most effective when more of the influential adults in children's lives are involved. Engaging parents and the community in media literacy would greatly increase its effectiveness because it is at home that children watch TV. However, if teachers are working in a neighborhood school where the community is not receptive to these ideas, they need not work in isolation. I propose that media literacy become a schoolwide program and an integral part of the core curriculum.

Media literacy is more than a tool against television violence. A person who is media literate has the ability to "communicate competently in all media forms, print and electronic, as well as access, understand, analyze and evaluate the images, words, and sounds that make up our contemporary mass media culture" (Center For Media Literacy). Is this not what we want for the adults of tomorrow? It seems to me that becoming media literate is as crucial today as being print literate was for the last generation.

---

#### <CENTERBIBLIOGRAPHY

Berry, G. L. & Asamen, J. K. (1993). *Children and Television; Images in a Changing Sociocultural World*. London: Sage Publications.

Boyatzis, C. J. (1995). "Effects of the 'The Mighty Morphin Power Rangers' on Children's Aggression with Peers." *Child Study Journal* v25 n1 p45-55.

Buena Vista Pictures distribution Inc. (1977). *Cinderella*. (sound recording).

Carlsson-Paige, N. & Levin, D.E. (1987). *The War Play Dilemma; Balancing Needs and Values in the Early Childhood Classroom*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Carlsson-Paige, N. & Levin, D.E. (1990). *Who's Calling The Shots?* Philadelphia: New Society Publishers.

Carlsson-Paige, N. & Levin, D.E. (1992). "When Push Comes to Shove--Reconsidering Children's Conflicts." *Child Care Information Exchange* n84 p34-37.

Chandler, D. *Children's Understanding of What is "Real" on Television. A Review of the Literature*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.aber.ac.uk/~dgc/realrev.html> [1997, March 18].

Chen, M. (1994). *The Smart Parent's Guide to Kids' TV*. San Francisco: KQED Books.

Cole, B. (1988). *Prince Cinders*. New York: Putnam.

Copyrighted 1997 by Carla Kalin. This paper is copyrighted by Carla Kalin and is posted at: <http://interact.uoregon.edu/medialit/fa/mlarticlefolder/kalin.html>

Cumberbatch, G. & Howitt, D. (1989). *A Measure of Uncertainty; The Effects of the Mass Media*. London: John Libbey. Davenport, T. (1989). *Ashpet*.(video recording). Delaplane: Film Ideas.

Davies, J. (1994). "Growing Up on Media." *Connect* n7 p8-12.

- Davis, J. F. (1991). "Five Important Ideas To Teach Your Kids About TV." *Media & Values* n52-53 p16-19.
- DeGaetano, G. & Bander, K. (1996). *Screen Smarts; A Family Guide to Media Literacy*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Devore, C. D. (1994). *Kids & Media Influence*. Edina: Abdo and Daughters.
- Disney, W. *Cinderella*. (video recording). Burbank: Walt Disney Video.
- Dunn, J. L. (1994). "Teaching Television Watchers." *Instructor* v103 n8 p50-54.
- Frontline, *Continuing the Discussion; Does TV Kill?* [Online]. Available:<http://www2.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/fltvkillguide.html> [1997, April 2].
- Frontline, *Examines Impact of Television on Society in "Does TV Kill?."* [Online]. Available:<http://interact.uoregon.edu/MediaLit/FA/MLArticleFolder/front.html> [1997, April 2].
- Featherstone, H. (1985). "What Children Learn from Television." *The Harvard Education Letter* v1 n2 p1-6.
- Foster, B. G. (1995). "Helping Children Cope in the Information Age." *Educational Horizons*, v73 n4 p174-180.
- Fowles, J. (1982). *Television Viewers VS. Media Snobs; What TV Does for People*. New York: Stein and Day.
- Full of Sound and Fury; Is Violence on TV Inflaming our Children?* (1994). [Online]. Available: <http://loki.ur.utk.edu/alumnus/spring94/violence.html> [1997, March 28].
- Gerbner, G. (1995). *Selling all the Stories - The Culture of Violence and What you Can Do About It* [Online]. Available: <http://www.web.apc.org/~pgs/pages/gerb714.html> [1997, March 10].
- Goodwyn, A. & Whannel, G. (1990). *Understanding Television*. London: Routledge.
- Greenburg, J. (1995). "Making Friends with the Power Rangers." *Young Children* v5 n1 p60-61.
- Gronlund, G. (1992). "Coping With Ninja Turtle Play in My Kindergarten Classroom." *Young Children* v48 n1 p21-25.
- Kinder, M. (1991). *Playing With Power in Movies, Television and Video Games*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Kimball, M. M. & Joy, L. A. (1987). "Television Violence: Does it Promote Aggressive Behavior?" *Children and Television; A Challenge for Education*, Edited by Manley - Casimir, M. E. & Luke, C. New York: Praeger.

Louie, A. (1982). *Yeh-Shen--A Cinderella Story From China*. New York: Philomel Books.

Megee, M. (1984). *On Television: The Violence Factor* (video recording). San Francisco: California Newsreel. Mediascope National Television Violence Study, (1996). [Online]. Available: <http://cii2.cochran.com/mnet/eng/med/home/resource/ntvs.htm> [1997, March 26].

Melville-Thomas, G. (1985). "Television Violence and Children." *Video Violence and Children*, Edited by Barlow, G. & Hill, A. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

Murray, J. P. (1997). *Impact of Televised Violence* [Online]. Available: <http://www.ksu.edu/humec/impact.htm> [1997, March 7].

National Public Radio (1981). *TV and Kids*. (sound recording). Washington D.C.: National Public Radio.

National Forum on Television Literacy, hosted by Stan Woodward, (series of five videorecordings).

Piaget, J. (1951). *Play, Dreams, and Imitation in Childhood*. New York: W.W. Norton.

PBS Video, (1995). *Does TV Kill?* (video recording). Alexandria: PBS.

Platypus Production (1985). *Cinderella*. (video recording). Farmington Hills: CBS/FOX Video.

Public Television Outreach Alliance, (1997) *Critical Television Viewing Skills*.

Pungente, J. J. (No date). *Information Packet: Violence and the Media* [Online]. Available: <http://interact.uoregon.edu/MediaLit/FA/MLJCPViolence#Violence> [1997, March 10].

Rich, F. (1996, February 10). *The Idiot Chip* New York Times. sec1 p.23 col6.

Schrag, R. L. (1990). *Taming the Wild Tube; A Family's Guide to Television and Video*. Chapel Hill: The University of Carolina Press.

Sadkowski, C. (1995). *The V-Chip: Is it Safety of Censorship?* [Online]. Available: <http://www.uiowa.edu/~iowajour/95-fall/articles/violence/v-chip.html> [1997, March 27].

Shannon, G. (No date). Violence as a Public Health Problem and a Proposed Public Health Response. [Online]. Available: <http://www.hula.net/~hulaboy/s-tv1h.htm>? [1997, March 27].

Sierra, J. (1992). Cinderella. Phoenix: Oryz Press. Steptoe, J. (1987). Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters. New York: Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Books.

Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior, (1972). Television and Growing Up: The Impact of Televised Violence. Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Sweet, D. & Singh, R. (1994). "TV Viewing and Parental Guidance." Education Consumer Guide. [Online]. Available: <http://inet.ed.gov/pubs/OR/Consumer/tv.html> [1997, April 2].

Thoman, E. (1995). "Media Violence: The Search for Solutions." Momentum v26 n1 p47-49.

Thoman, E. (1996). Wrap Up Report; Center for Media Literacy. [Online]. Available: <http://www.earthlink.net/~cml> [1997, April 4].

Thoman, E. (1996). Center for Media Literacy. [Online]. Available: <http://www.medialit.org/> [1997, April 4].

UCLA Television Violence Monitoring Project (1997). [Online]. Available: <http://cii2.cochran.com/mnet/eng/med/home/resource/ucla.htm> [1997, April 4].

Violence on Television: What do Children Learn? What Can Parents Do? (No date). [Online]. Available: <http://www.sofcom.com.au/TV/violence.html> [1997, March, 18].

Walsh, B. (No date). Our Problem is Defining Violence: The statistics are frightening. [Online]. Available: <http://interact.uoregon.edu/MediaLit/FA/MLArticleFolder/defining.html> [1997, April 4].