

Visual Representations of Literacy in the Press
Final Report to the Leverhulme Trust
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Visual Representations of Literacy in the Press: Final Report to the Leverhulme Trust September 2000

Mary Hamilton

.....These are the days of miracle and wonder
This is the long distance call
The way the camera follows us in slo-mo
The way we look to us all.....

Paul Simon, The Boy in the Bubble from “Graceland”

1. The Grant

1.1 Background and Aims

For some time members of the Literacy Research Group at Lancaster University have been collecting visual images of literacy from a range of cultures as part of our ethnographic studies of literacy practices (Barton et al, 1993; Hodge and Jones, 1996; Barton and Hamilton, 1998; Ormerod and Ivanic, 1999). Our work has also led us to develop a critique of the public images of literacy put over by the media and government agencies. The current study further develops this critique by examining the ways in which literacy practices are portrayed visually in a range of British newspapers. The project was based at Lancaster University and funded by the Leverhulme Trust with a grant of £28,734 (Ref F/185/AJ). The project ran from March 1st 1999 to 31st March 2000.

This is intended to be the first of a series of studies analysing public and policy discourses of literacy. As well as extending our theoretical understanding of literacy as social practice, this project is developing computer-based methodologies for analysing visual data that will be of relevance to social research more generally.

1.2 Sources

The Lancaster Literacy Research Group is an internationally recognised, interdisciplinary research group. It is a forum for the development of theory, practice and research in the new literacy studies (Barton, 1994; Hamilton et al 1994; Clark and Ivanic, 1997; Barton and Hamilton, 1998). Our work is informed by a theory of

literacy as part of socio-cultural practice and focuses on the uses, meanings and values of reading and writing in everyday activities (Street, 1984; Gee, 1993; Lemke, 1995). This contrasts with dominant views of literacy that frequently present reading and writing as neutral, technical skills practised by individuals in educational settings.

Pilot work carried out with funding from the Nuffield foundation (Hamilton, 2000) suggests that text-based stories about literacy in the press are usually informed by these dominant views and focus on skill deficits among both children and adults. However, the *visual* representations of literacy prevalent in the media offer a very different view of literacy as embedded in social practice and as carrying powerful ritual and symbolic as well as functional meanings. Photographs capture moments in which people interact with written texts. They reveal some of the diverse roles that literacy plays in society and show how it develops as part of a broader cultural process of learning and media use.

1.3 The Policy Context

This project was designed to coincide with the National Year of Reading (NYR), a national initiative in which the media were mobilised to put across promotional messages about literacy to children and adults. Both newspapers and TV ran campaigns and features. In addition, the activities of the NYR generated news coverage throughout the year in both the general and the specialist educational press. These activities were orchestrated by the National Literacy Trust with funding from government and business. They made a great deal of use of the media (soaps such as *East Enders*, *Coronation Street* and *Brookside*), advertisements, features and competitions). News Corporation (*The Times*, *Sun*, and *The Daily Record*) along with Walkers Snack Foods sponsored a promotional campaign “Free Books for Schools” for 3 months from Nov 1998 to February 1999.

The NYR was part of the wider policy context of the National Literacy Strategy, with its emphasis on improving standards of reading and writing, strong guidance on curriculum, pedagogy and assessment and teacher training. Publication of a major review of adult basic skills, the Moser report with subsequent promise of a new policy strategy for adults called “Better Basic Skills”.

Given this concerted use of the media to put across policy messages, there is still surprisingly little educational research that analyses the way that the media represent social policy issues like literacy. In his study of *tabloidisation* Peter Golding identified a number of common frames used for discussing educational issues in the media (Golding 1999). Falling literacy standards is one of these and in many text stories about education, literacy is used as a lynchpin for discussions about school failure and international competitiveness in the arena of training and vocational skills. It was the existence of such stories in the media that initially prompted interest in the current study, along with ethnographic research that suggested that everyday experiences of reading and writing among adults present a somewhat different account of the contemporary role of literacy. Investigating this disjuncture and using visual images of literacy to illuminate it, was the broad starting point for this study.

2. Objectives

This project had three aims, two theoretical and one methodological:

to explore visual representations of literacy in the media, and their interaction with educational policy discourses about literacy. This will be a contribution to the small body of existing work on the representation of educational issues in the media and could serve as a model for future studies of other educational topics.

in the course of this exploration to extend and refine existing theory of literacy as social practice by documenting the range of the literacy practices visible within the public sphere of the media and through this process, to test and refine existing explanatory concepts.

to develop methodological frameworks for the computer indexing and analysis of visual images alongside verbal texts which will be of use to social researchers more generally.

The following specific questions guided the data collection and analysis:

- * What kinds of literacy practices are represented in visual images appearing in the UK press? What are the underlying themes and narratives about literacy presented and what do these tell us about the significance of literacy in our society?
- * Are there consistent differences between newspapers in the themes presented?
- * How do these visual representations relate to textual stories about literacy carried in the media and to policy discourses of literacy?
- * How are elements of literacy practices used in the construction of the media narratives, and especially, what is the role of the visual images of literacy practices in these processes?
- * What are the perspectives of media professionals on these data and how can they be used to extend the analysis of media images?

3. Research Activity

The project involved two main kinds of activity: (1) selection of a corpus of images in which literacy practices were represented, applying agreed coding categories to each image and entering these into an Atlas-ti project. (2) Interviewing and shadowing photojournalists and editors of national newspapers. In addition, we collected supplementary contextual information about the policy initiatives and

media coverage of literacy during the National Year of Reading, both text stories and visual images.

We created a website for the project, with basic information about its activities and a discussion space for the advisory group. The index of the 400 images can be found on the web site at

lancs.ac.uk/users/edres/research/departmental/net/vislit.html

In order to keep in touch with the wider context of literacy, visual and media analysis we set up an advisory group that met six times during the course of the project. Members of the advisory group consisted of external experts (Theo Van Leeuwen, University of Cardiff, Brian Street, Kings College London, Gemma Moss, University of Southampton, Anita Wilson, University of North London) and internal colleagues members of the Lancaster Literacy Research Group (David Barton, Kathy Pitt, Greg Myers). We also had regular meetings with the ESRC funded project analysing children's multi-media texts (A Corpus of Writing for Learning Ref #R000222856) to compare the methodologies and templates for visual coding that we were each developing.

I will comment on these activities in turn, explaining what we did, issues that arose in the process of doing the research, and modifications that took place in the course of the project.

3.1 The Image Corpus

We aimed to create a systematically sampled corpus of images of literacy in the UK press during the NYR. Creating the corpus involved several steps, each involving significant decisions about how to define and limit our activities. In some cases we carried over decisions and conventions we had adopted in our pilot work but inevitably these were further developed and in some cases rethought.

In our central sample of papers, we collected 400 images of literacy practices, defined in terms of our theoretical approach to literacy as part of socio-cultural practice.

Literacy events have been identified as constituents of literacy practices. Literacy Events are occasions when social activities are mediated by written texts: “any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of participants’ interactions and their interpretative processes” Heath (1982, pp.93)

Literacy Practices are the general cultural ways of using reading and writing that people draw on in a literacy event. Brian Street employs the term to refer to a broader concept than the literacy event: it is “pitched at a higher level of abstraction and referring to both behaviour and conceptualisations related to the use of reading and/or writing. “Literacy practices” incorporate not only “literacy events” as empirical occasions to which literacy is integral, but also “folk models” of those events and the ideological preconceptions that underpin them.” (1993, p.12-13)

One consequence of this definition of literacy is that literacy in an educational context is just one subset of the images: many other representations of literacy appear incidentally. One of the powers of this approach is that it picks up not just the educational narratives about literacy (which tend to be very explicit and predictable) but a whole range of other narratives that perhaps tell us a great deal more about the values, meanings and uses of literacy to contemporary society in general including some of our unexamined assumptions about the role of written language. It focuses our attention on what Langer (1998) calls “the other news” – sports, entertainment, celebrity lives, catastrophe and human interest stories - that sells newspapers and attracts vast audiences.

The orchestrated campaign mounted for the National Year of Reading is part of the educational narrative and the interest of the project was to look at what messages about literacy it was putting across and how these messages were constructed; but also to look at how these didactic, campaigning messages compare with the incidental messages about literacy to be found simultaneously in the press.

Selecting the Images

We took four national papers in order to provide a range of contrasting approaches to news photography: the Daily Telegraph, the Daily Mail, the Sun and the Guardian. The Telegraph and the Guardian are both “serious” broadsheet papers, but with different ideological approaches to the news and very different typographic styles. The Telegraph (although changing considerably) is still rather traditional in format and style, whilst the Guardian has experimented with a variety of layouts and visual effects. The Mail and the Sun are both tabloids, though with distinctive features. The Mail is currently aiming at women readers, and has always had a serious, if narrowly ideological coverage of educational issues. The Sun is the best-selling daily newspaper, appeals more to male readers and is renowned for its entertainment, sport and celebrity focus at the expense of “hard” news. This brief description here already shows the complexity of making generalisations about the UK press

We selected 100 images from each, counting every example contained in the issues we examined. The maximum number of issues any of the papers we needed to reach this target was 16. This selection process was not straightforward, as the question of what counts as an image, and of what counts as a representation of a literacy practice, both required discussion and justified decision-making. The category “Writing on the Body which is described below created particular problems in this regard. The details of this stage of the process are given in the Technical Report.

We decided to limit our sample to photographic and news related images, not features or ads, but there is coverage that is very difficult to classify. “The Free Books for Schools” campaign in the SUN was a good example of this blurring of genres using features of news, entertainment and advertising genres in order to create its messages)

Based on our pilot work we included four categories of image:

Literacy events: our criterial category of images containing interactions between people and texts or other literacy artefacts (e.g. graffiti removal – see Fig 1).

Literacy in the environment: images where written texts or other literacy artefacts appear in the visual context surrounding human participants but without any physical contact or interaction appearing to take place between them (e.g. Pinochet – see Fig 2)

Writing on the body: the wearing of texts on the skin or clothing (see Figs 3,4)

Reproductions of Documents: images of literacy artefacts without people or other surrounding visual context (see Fig 5).

Images were photocopied from each newspaper together with all the textual material which surrounded them. So for each image we had: a reproduction of the image itself, a reproduction of the whole "item" (image + caption + headline + text), and a reproduction of the whole page on which it occurred. These data were stored in binders for searching, categorising and coding.

Our final corpus had the following numbers of images in the four key categories:

events (122)
environment (168)
body (113)
reproduction of artefact (document) (57)

Scanning and Cataloguing the Images

Image and caption were then scanned into the computer for access within the Atlas-ti software. Our experience during the pilot phase had led us to find software that could enable us to work on-line with the original images, during the coding and analysis software, and Atlas-ti is one such programme that allows this. Our evaluation of the Atlas-ti capability can be found in the Technical Report. Briefly we found that the software could do what we wanted in terms of storage, retrieval and output although the procedures were sometimes clumsy and time consuming. We had to go through several editing stages to achieve output formats that were clear and easy to use. We discovered that we were effectively pioneering the use of Atlas-ti for a mainly image-based on-line project, so we were unable to get guidance from other users or from the developer and had to invent ways of working as we went along.

Developing the Coding Map

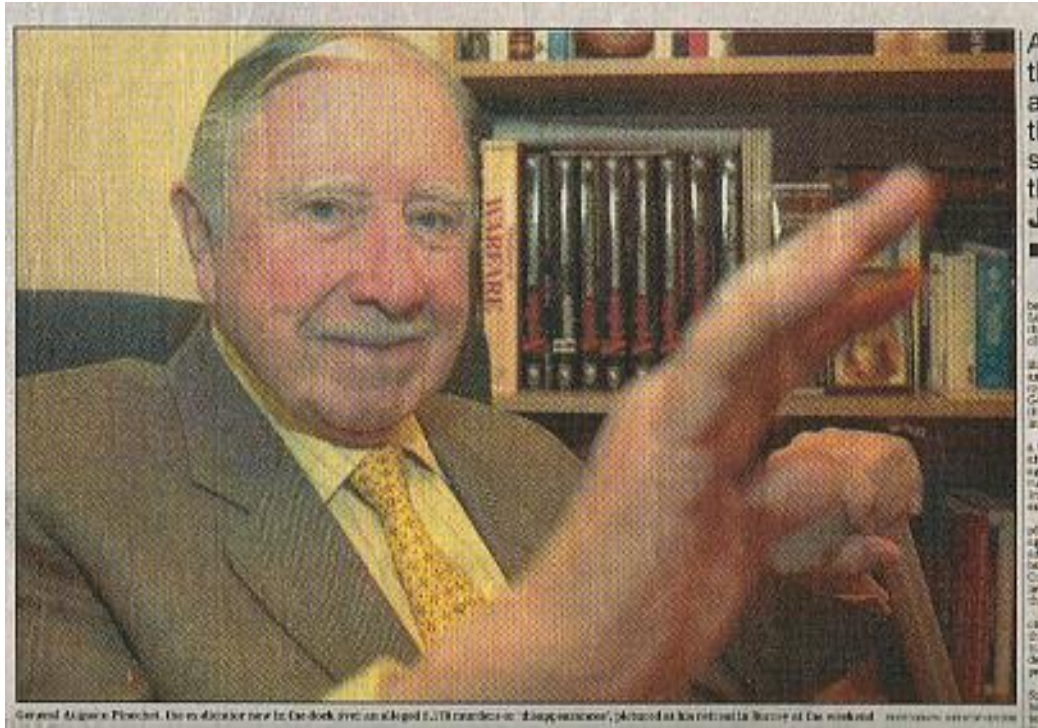
In order to catalogue the online images we had to develop a coding and indexing system for representations of literacy practices in the corpus. This would then enable us to search the the corpus for narrative themes about literacy

**Figure 1: Example of a Literacy Event:
T60 Graffiti**



This is a somewhat unusual example of an image categorised as a literacy event. It has been selected to make the point that literacy occurs in a variety of places, writing is done on a range of surfaces and with different degrees of legitimacy. These are rules about the use of public space in terms of reading and writing, and these are policed by state authorities. The activities of erasing and controlling writing are as important to recognise as the activities of creating and circulating it.

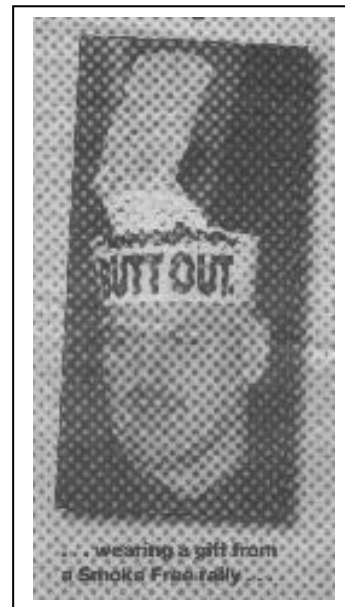
**Figure 2: Example of Literacy in the Environment:
G28 General Pinochet**



This picture is an example of LITERACY IN THE ENVIRONMENT. The caption on this picture reads: “General Augusto Pinochet, the ex-dictator now in the dock over an alleged 3,178 murders or 'disappearances', pictured at his retreat in Surrey at the weekend”. The books on the shelf in the background function as a symbolic attribute, signifying the military identity of the main participant in the image, but also his status as a man of culture, not simply a practical soldier. The walking stick, the clothes and the gesture add even more to the character. Is Pinochet waving with a friendly gesture or controlling the camera? The props, including the books, are vitally important in this image and this kind of background literacy is very common in press photographs.

The Guardian ran an article about this image in a later issue (Jan 19/99: p.4) describing the circumstances under which the photograph was taken and particularly referring to the way the books function in the picture. This account confirms our analysis. General Pinochet was photographed in his room in temporary accommodation in the South of England whilst awaiting the outcome of a legal decision about prosecution for crimes committed during his time as a military dictator of Chile. The journalist, Decca Aitkenhead, notes that Pinochet insisted on sitting down to be photographed and that this had the effect (intentional on his part or otherwise) of prominently revealing the books on the shelves behind him. The titles of the books reinforce the manner in which the reader should think about Pinochet. Even if you didn't know who he was you could pick up from these that he is a military man: they include *the History of Warfare*, the *Encyclopaedia Of Warfare*, *Great Commanders And Their Battles*, and a full set of French reference books about Napoleon. The books are in English, French and Spanish. Decca Aitkenhead suggests that books are “a window into the soul” that we draw all sorts of conclusions about people from the books they read and she cites many other examples where public figures contrive to use books to enhance their public image.

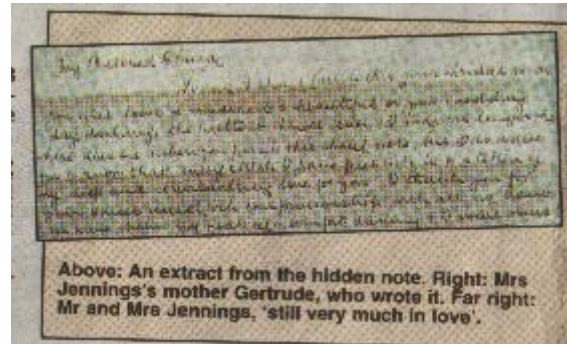
**Figures 3 & 4: Examples of Writing on the Body:
T48 Marlborough Man. G97 Butt Head**



These are two clear examples of rather different uses of WRITING ON THE BODY. What they have in common is the function of displaying identity. In the case of the racing driver, his body is being used to promote his sponsors' brands. In the case of the maverick politician, it is his self-chosen political identity that is on display.

Both these uses of writing on the body are commonplace in our corpus, though varied and creatively expressed.

Figure 5: Example of Reproduction of a Document
DM 42 Wedding Dress

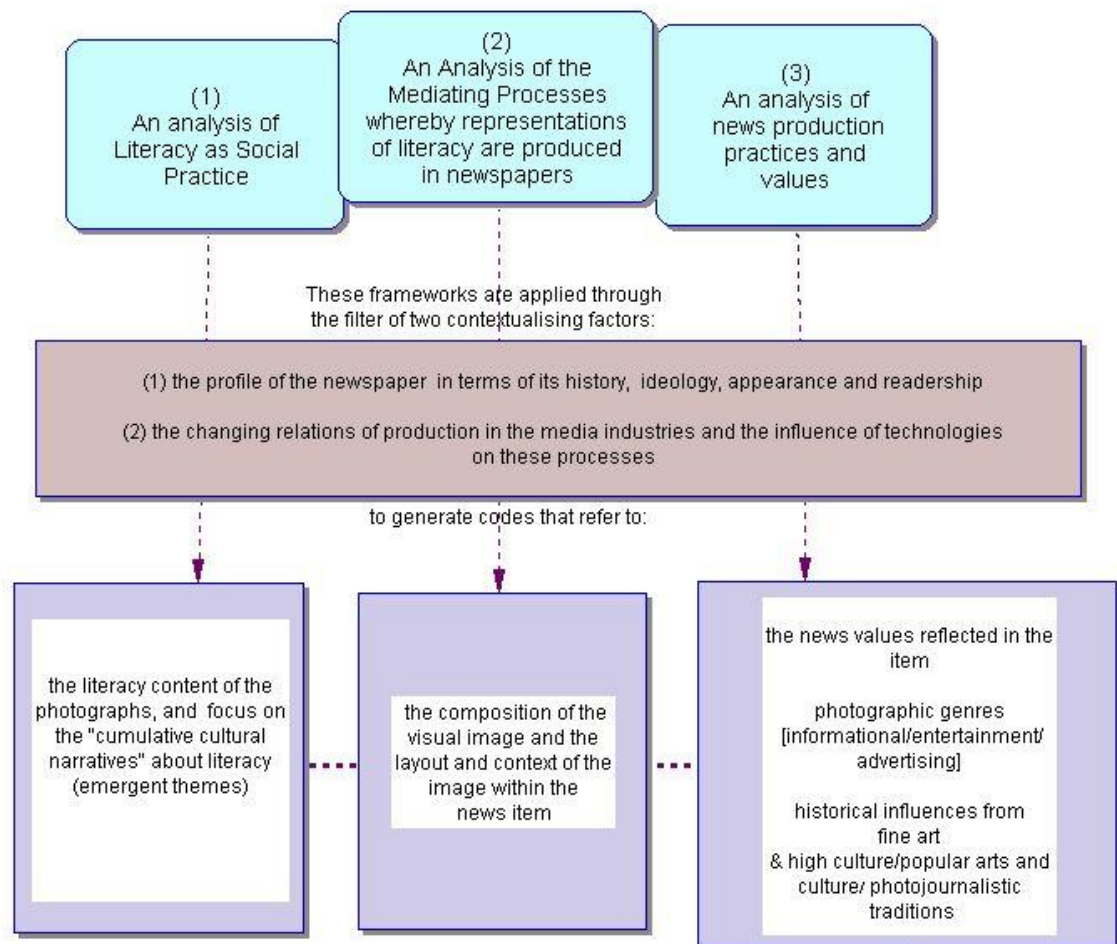


This is an example of the REPRODUCTION OF A DOCUMENT - in this case a letter hidden in the hem of a wedding dress (but there are many other variations). This was part of a photo-story including a textual narrative, so the meaning of this story cannot be found in the image alone. The full news item and its layout have been preserved in the corpus. It is possible to contrast the treatment of the story by the Daily Mail with the same story run in the Telegraph (T31 below) where a single image was used depicting the bride, the letter and the woman for whom it was intended all in one frame. We classified the Telegraph image as a literacy event because the document is being held up for display by one of the participants.



Figure 6: Visual Representations of Literacy in the Press

The Project Requires three overlaid frameworks for analysis:



We created an initial coding map, using the graphics software INSPIRATION (See Figure 6), then entered the codings within Atlas-ti, which allows for the creation of a series of parallel and nested codings for any data set and also unstructured networks of links between the codes. Our main groups of coding categories were the **literacy content** of each image, **mediational processes** of visual construction of the image, including its relationship to other elements of the item, **news production processes and values** and **emerging themes** (see Coding Map, Appendix 1).

As in all qualitative research, these codes required a series of passes through the data. As new insights or themes emerged at one point in a coding system, they led to modifications elsewhere and to re-thinking of earlier codes. In the process of developing the coding system our intention was to refine our model for understanding representations of literacy in public narratives. The resultant “map” is the basis of our refined theoretical framework which should be regarded as one of the significant outcomes of this project. The framework we developed is therefore summarised in Section 4 of this report “Conclusions and Achievements”

3.2 Interviews with Media Professionals

The second part of this project was to interview a small sample of media professionals responsible for producing the kinds of images we had sampled (editors and journalists, including photographers and picture editors) The aim of these interviews was to complement the researchers own analysis of the corpus of images with a production perspective. The focus of the interviews was on production rationales and processes and awareness of the ways in which literacy elements are used in the creation of the visual messages. A sample of media items were presented and discussed during the interviews. The interviews took place during Stage 3 of the project (months 5-7). We planned to carry out 12 interviews and to shadow the process wherever possible. Although we did achieve this aim, obtaining ample and revealing information for our study, access to a planned sample of media professionals was much more difficult than we had anticipated and extremely time-consuming for the research associate. Some of the lessons we have learned from this experience are documented below.

There are a few very useful published sources of information on the production of news photographs, notably Kobre (1995) and Evans (1997) and we made use of these to supplement the information obtained from our interviews and observations. There was much in these sources that confirmed what our interviewees told us: their main limitation from the point of view of this project, however, is an American bias and the fact that the technology of newspaper production is changing by the day. Other supplementary information on the production process was obtained from occasional newspaper items dealing explicitly with dealing with photojournalism and the role of images in the press (in one case, there was an item that directly referred to one of the images in our corpus - see Figure 2). One of the salient features of the UK press and media is their self-referentiality, with constant cross-referencing across different media sources, comments on their own coverage both contemporary and historical. All of this is useful data for the media analyst interested in media professionals’ perceptions and evaluations of their own activities.

Finally, the presentation we made to the Media, Culture and Communications Association Annual Conference about our preliminary findings from the interviews in January 1999 enabled us to engage in dialogue with practising journalists and to check our interpretations and conclusions with them.

Access Strategies and Issues

We drew up a list of contacts that we wished to make, starting from personal contacts, ideas generated during the pilot phase, and information from directories and internet sources about key staff on the four papers in our sample. Our original aim was to contact three professionals in varying roles with respect to image production for each paper, to interview and shadow them where possible. In fact the premise on which this sampling strategy was based was flawed, because of the increasingly widespread use of freelance (as opposed to staff) photojournalists by national newspapers and the prevalence of syndicated photographs obtained from picture libraries and agencies. The idea of being able to match interviewees to a single paper, much less to track down the professionals responsible for a particular image occurring in our corpus, proved to be impossible, at least within the scope and resources of this project.

We contacted named media professionals by letter or Fax and then followed this up with phone calls. In some cases (the Sun and Telegraph, for example) we were unable to make any positive contacts with relevant professionals. In others, we received helpful responses but still had often to make several appointments before finally obtaining an interview, due to the unpredictable working routines of the photojournalist, with last minute assignments and tight time schedules to meet. One very helpful photographer on the Daily Mail made many appointments with us which were subsequently cancelled and we ran out of time before we were able to interview him. However, due to the persistence and flexibility of the research associate, Iain Shaw, the interviews and shadowing we did obtain produced excellent data, showing the high value of this research approach despite the difficulties.

Our final list of contacts is shown below.

Table 1: List of Photojournalism Contacts

Role	Past and Current Affiliation with newspaper	Interview	Shadowing
Photographer/Picture Editor	Local Paper	Yes	
Photographer	National Tabloid	Yes	
Photographer	National Broadsheet and Tabloid, various local papers	Yes	Yes
Picture Editor	National Broadsheet	Yes	
Colour production/Printing	National Tabloid	Yes	Yes
Photographer	Local Paper	Yes	
Photographer	National Tabloid	Yes	
Freelance Documentary Photographer	None Specific, also TV and community development work	Yes	
Media Education Unit	Regional newspaper Group		Yes
Documentary picture archivist	Library	Yes	Yes
Journalist	National Broadsheet	Yes	
Photographer	National Tabloid	Yes	

Interviews and Shadowing

The interview guide we used is attached as Appendix (2) along with some sample transcripts. It covered introductory questions about the background and training of the interviewee, and then focussed on the activities involved in bringing images to the newspaper page, the constraints and challenges encountered by photographers and editors in this process and the intentions that lie behind the images that are produced. The interviews were structured so as to find out about 1) the decision-making sequence in producing and editing pictures for publication 2) the effects on this process of the different technologies currently in use 3) media professionals views of what makes a good news photograph, and how different pictures are likely to be received by readers. Finally, there was a discussion about some specific images.

We began by choosing six images from our corpus that we hoped all interviewees would comment on, chosen to represent different kinds of image that we had identified (e.g. event, environment, reproduction, writing on the body) and particular issues that concerned us (e.g. candid, posed). However, the Research Associate quickly discovered that a much fuller and more animated response to these issues could be obtained by taking a selection of images appearing in the current news (where possible, the paper that the interviewee was most closely connected with).

This strategy, whilst it did not allow us to consistently compare responses across a standard set of images as we had planned, did enable us to discuss with media professionals the common issues raised by the images in our corpus, using specific examples.

In short, we had to substantially adapt our research strategy to fit the routines and working practices of the media industries in ways we had not anticipated at the design stage of the project. It is possible that if we had had closer contacts at the start with particular papers or within the industry in general we would have been more successful in obtaining a structured sample of interviewees as we had planned. We suspect, though, that our experience contains lessons for any researchers who wish to carry out this kind of work. The difficulties of access should not be underestimated – but neither should the high value of the data that can be obtained by a persistent interviewer.

The main issues and themes that came out of the interviews are summarised below in Section 4.3.

3.3 Supplementary material

We also collected supplementary material of the text coverage of literacy during the NYR, both policy related and general. This included

- Published material from the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) and from the National Literacy Trust
- Press releases from the DfEE downloaded from their website.
- All text and image coverage of literacy-related topics during the period covered by our core corpus: Dec 98– Feb 99 carried in Times, Mirror, Independent, Sun, Telegraph
- All text stories referring to literacy and the NYR carried between June 98- Sept 99 by broadsheet papers available on CD-Rom (Times, Independent, TES, Guardian)
- Material generated by the “Brookie Basics” adult literacy campaign carried by Channel 4’s Brookside soap (web pages, videos of programmes, instructional and recruitment materials produced for the campaign).

We were not able to properly analyse this material within lifetime of the current project but we have built up a good archive for future use. A paper dealing with the media coverage of the National Year of Reading was presented at the British Educational Research Association Annual conference Sept 7-9th in Cardiff. It focussed on the detail of the "Free Books for Schools Campaign" coverage from the TIMES and The SUN and looked at how the two different papers promote the issue of reading within the policy context of the National Literacy Strategy. The main arguments presented in the paper are summarised in Appendix 3.

3.4 The Data

As a result of the project activities, three types of data were produced:

- An online corpus of images and interview transcripts, indexed and coded so that it can be flexibly interrogated
- Profile reports for each image, that provide an “at a glance” summary of the coding applied and are stored with the photocopies of the image in the context of its page layout. These contain both closed coding categories and more open-ended “memos” and commentaries on the images. (see example in Appendix 4)
- Coding charts that provide summaries of the incidence and patterns of coding across particular subsets of images, enabling interrogation of the theory on the basis of both minority and dominant codings. Such summary charts make it easy to do quick counts of coding occurrences and to retrieve very specialised subsets of images for analysis – for example: domains of literacy represented in two contrasting papers; or all images in the SUN of women taken with a high angle lens. (see examples in Appendix 5)

4. Conclusions and Achievements

This section summarises the main findings from the project so far, integrating the insights from the corpus and the interviews with media professionals and supplementary readings. Firstly we present the framework that emerged from our activities and explain how it can be used as a practical coding tool. Then we present findings in relation to the production of visual images in newspapers and cultural narratives about literacy.

This project touches on a cluster of related issues - for example debates about the tabloidisation of the media and the nature of news; the nature and definition of visual literacies; social policy analysis in the area of education. This indicates the fruitful nature of data we have collected in the project and I expect to produce papers on all of these issues in due course. However, in this report my intention is to keep close to the original brief and objectives briefly discussing the wider issues where they inevitably impact on the analysis.

4.1 A Model for Analysing Visual Representations of Literacy in the Media

A major achievement of the project has been to elaborate a model for analysing visual representations of literacy in the media that does justice to the complexity of the production processes and transformations of literacy practices that are involved but that can also be translated into an operational coding scheme for indexing and retrieving images so that they can be closely compared and analysed. The framework has been generated from our existing theory of literacy as socio-cultural practice; the grammar of visual design offered by Kress and Van Leeuwen, and theory generated

from the interviews with media professionals and background reading on photography and the production of news.

The model we have developed is presented as Figure 6. The three overlaying frameworks will be elaborated in turn, showing how the concepts are mapped onto the codes we used in the project.

(1) Literacy as social practice

This framework generates literacy content codes and ultimately enables us to identify “cumulative cultural narratives” about literacy. Key aspects of literacy practices as defined by a theory of literacy as socio-cultural practice are **participants**: the people who interact with the written texts, who are involved in the social relationships of producing, interpreting, circulating and otherwise regulating written texts; **activities**: the actions performed by participants in literacy events, structured routines and pathways that facilitate or regulate actions; **settings**: the immediate physical and temporal circumstances in which an interaction takes place; the **domain** of social or institutional practice within which events takes place and from which they take their sense and social purpose; **resources**: the material artefacts, tools and accessories that are involved in the interaction (including the texts); non-material resources brought to the literacy practice including values, understandings, ways of thinking, feeling, technical skills and knowledge; beliefs and representational resources. These aspects can be drawn on to identify the cultural narratives of literacy presented in research accounts or in media documents.

These aspects of literacy practices refer to what Kress and Van Leeuwen have termed the “ideational” signifying system of the visual images in our corpus. In the project we have operationalised them as a set of codes which can be used to analyse the content of the newspaper images alongside the compositional dimensions which Kress and Van Leeuwen have identified as also contributing to the meaning of visual messages.

In operationalising these aspects the following issues have arisen:

Participants – are they human or not.

Activities – events (moments) – the limitations of the once off face-to-face interaction as a model for understanding literacy practices: the model of spoken language from which this derived is misleading. The special property literacy has is the possibility of transcending space and time – the nature of the traces of practices in still photographs, our incorporation into them (e.g. via traffic signs; immigration laws)

Artefacts – should we include not just those immediately involved, but those typically accompanying literacy activities, e.g. coffee cups.

Settings – the degree to which images are contextualised at all is variable. There are many images that focus on particular celebrities and the setting is almost irrelevant. This is discussed below under *tabloidisation*. Whereas Kress and Van

Leeuwen (1996) suggest that less contextualisation signals higher abstraction, in this case it is the *particularity* of the person that is emphasised.

Domains – we have extended our sense of how literacy mediates the range of domains represented in different papers, but these domains are only selectively revealed through the media. They do not give us a statistical sense of the frequency or importance of these domains for everyday life but show the ones privileged by the news discourse. For example, there are very few images in the tabloids showing computers and very few showing political opposition or direct action in the UK news.

(2) Mediational processes

The second part of our framework we have called the **mediational processes**. This analysis covers both the interpretative and technical aspects of the construction of the newspaper photographs: the ways in which literacy practices are re-contextualised within the news discourse of the press, and how semiotic resources are deployed to create the visual messages. This involves both compositional elements within a given image but also the ways that the visual representations are contextualised within news items and on the newspaper page.

In developing codes to describe the mediational processes, we have made considerable use of the grammar of visual design elaborated by Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996, 1998) and although we have used it critically and in conjunction with other concepts to do with the specific nature of press images which it became clear that the original theory could not adequately address.

Based on Halliday's functional grammar Kress and Van Leeuwen identify three "functions" of the image each of which generates a set of elements that we have been able to use in our coding system These are (1) the ideational function of the image (2) the textual function and (3) the interpersonal function. These have been elaborated as follows:

The ideational function of the image

the identification of narrative processes, realised through the actions and reactions of participants in images); the identification of conceptual processes of classification, symbolism and analytical attributes within the image. In the current project this function has been mainly realised as a set of codes describing the literacy content of the image (see coding map)

The interpersonal function

the relationship between the image and the viewer, created by the gaze of the participants in the image, and by camera shot and angle. In the current project this function has been realised by creating codes "stance" and "social distance" both of which contain further elements (see coding map)

The textual function

analysis of the composition of the image, realised through the spatial arrangement of the elements in it; aspects of modality such as colour, contrast and brightness and texture. (clarity of focus). Many of these aspects have been coded directly in the current project (see coding map).

This function operates within individual images, but also involves consideration of the layout and context of the image within the paper. Key dimensions are

information value: the placement of elements that relate them to each other and to the viewer and endows them with the specific informational values attached to the various “zones” of the image: right and left, top and bottom, centre and margin.

salience: the elements are made to attract the viewer’s attention to different degrees as realised by factors such as foregrounding or backgrounding, relative size, contrasts in tonal value or colour, differences in sharpness etc.

framing: the presence of absence of framing devices, realised by elements which create dividing lines or actual frame lines, disconnects or connects elements of the image, signifying that they belong or do not belong together.

We have found these dimensions to be extremely pertinent to the design of newspaper pages and assessing the impact of visual images within them. Our attention moved very quickly from the “within picture” composition (many of the images are very straight forward and of little aesthetic or even narrative interest in themselves) to an interest in the use of pictures within the layout of the pages and item as a whole (see Fig 5).

However, they are difficult to operationalise as a set of categorical codes, since each dimension involves a number of simpler characteristics and “information value, especially involves very subjective judgements about the narrative structure of a news item. We have used the memo function of Atlas-ti to record our assessments of these dimensions as there was not time to develop them further within the scope of the project and its aims.

In terms of “salience”, what counts as visual interest on a newspaper page does not have to include a picture: headlines, typography and framing can all contribute to visual interest and the tabloid press frequently does this to great effect. This is why “tabloidisation” cannot be measured simply in terms of the proportion of pictures in a newspaper. It is a matter of visual appeal more generally to the reader, using a range of different strategies.

We found that we needed to extend the “interpersonal” function to include reference to the complexities of the relationship between participants in the images and the photojournalist. We invented a new code we call “complicity” to deal with this which is primarily embedded in the relations of news production, and then reflected in the compositional elements that can be discerned in the photographs. This is explained in the next section below.

Likewise, issues to do with the relation between image and text are illuminated through the information we gathered about how news items are generated and edited, which can in turn be traced through certain codable features e.g. recording where the image is from stock or where there are contradictions apparent between the image and text (see, for example Figure 7. We were confronted all the time with the issue of the relationship between image and text, and the ways in which the meanings generated by the image and the text are held in tension. Again, this issue was not the central focus of the current project but would be an important direction for future work.

(3) News production values and practices

This framework and the codes we generated for it are grounded in literature on photojournalism (Kobre 1995; Evans 1997) and photographic and media theory

more generally (Holland, 1998; Rowe, 1998; Hall, 1998 Bell, 1991), as well as later incorporating the themes that emerged from the interviews with media professionals. Most of these themes were not operationalised as categorical codes but referred to in text memos attached to the online images, allowing for open-ended comment on relevant aspects of the picture:

The structure and common content of news coverage foregrounds particular functions of literacy. Discussions about the structure of news often refer to the process of tabloidisation. Langer (1998), in relation to television news, has identified a “lament” about the fall of news from some state of grace as a neutral purveyor of serious information about the political and social process. News, it is claimed has become commodified, reacting only to commercial considerations and as a result, dealing increasingly with entertainment values, lifestyle and consumer issues, gratuitous spectacle, trivialities and emotionalism, exploitative and simplified stories.

Whilst evidence of all of these characteristics can be found in the contemporary UK press, research evidence shows the idea of tabloidisation to be quite a complex one (see Dahlgren, 1988; Curran and Sparks, 1991; Thompson 1990) A quantitative study by Golding (1999), for example revealed contradictory trends, with broadsheet and tabloid newspapers moving closer to one another in terms of numbers of pictures included and coverage of serious political news stories. As Langer goes on to point out, the reality is that all news is ritualistic, symbolic and mythic rather than purely informative and relies on sentiment and sensation, and a commitment to story telling. It relies on a formula which makes new stories accessible and recognisable. There is an increasing search for visual impact now that much news is televised and

people turn to the slower distribution of printed news as a second source (Langer, 1998, p. 6).

This project is not concerned directly with the debate about trends in news coverage, it does offer us some useful ways of characterising what counts as “news” and this in turn sheds light on the kinds of functions of literacy that might be revealed and used within press coverage. The staples of the news, serious and otherwise, can be seen to consist of the following kinds of stories with particular implications for the photographer’s work:

DRAMA/TRAGEDY (with high emotional appeal and visual interest)

POLITICS/BUSINESS (serious, but not visually interesting, meetings and talking heads, but can be made more interesting by linking with....)

CELEBRITY (sport, entertainment, many photo opportunities including those sought – and avoided - by the participants)

AWARDS AND CEREMONIES – PUBLIC RITUAL of all sorts (visual but repetitive so challenging to the photographer to maintain interest in them)

Another feature of the media is their tendency to create a self-referential world where stories circulate around the different media and their importance is amplified by repetition and comment. We found frequent examples of visual images that consist of reproductions of previous issues of newspapers, reminding readers of the background to a story or simply promoting the paper through self-publicity. This account for a number of the images in our corpus that were coded as “reproduction of documents”.

We found the discussion offered by Patricia Holland (1998) of genre in newspaper pictures particularly helpful. Although newspaper photography tends to be identified with traditions of photojournalism and reportage, in fact the photographic images in both the tabloid and broadsheet press draw on a range of genres: these include advertising, fashion, popular film and entertainment and the family album. This means that the conventions of visual representation that readers may respond to have a variety of overlapping and competing histories and make it hard to apply Kress and Van Leeuwen’s grammar of visual design in any straightforward way. Our code “Genre” is an open text memo designed to capture a description of these influences for a given image.

Finally, in contemporary news images we see reflected a range of relationships between participants and photographer that need to be captured somehow by our coding system. Both Scollon (1998) and Holland (1998) comment on the different ways in which participants are complicit with the photographer in the act of being photographed. These range all the way from candid pictures with un-posed participants, to active complicity. Public figures and organizations are aware of being in the photographers eye, and sometimes welcome this, sometimes resist and try to maintain control of the ways in which they are represented through staged photo-opportunities. Photographers are often engaged in subverting these. Ordinary

citizens likewise have many motivations for becoming noticed by the media and use a range of strategies to make themselves photogenic - adopting an eye-catching appearance or engaging in activities with maximum visual impact. We aimed to capture some of this complexity through a code we call “Complicity” which has categorical values, and sub-codes such as “Stance” but also an open text commentary.

4.2 What We have learned

Understanding the Production of Images in the news

The impression given from our interviews and from published accounts of photojournalists at work (e.g. Evans, 1997; Kobre, 1995; McCullen, 1990) is of a struggle with a number of challenging constraints that lead to a certain amount of serendipity in producing photographs. These include timing; available light; technologies of the production process (many different factors are important here, from the weight of the camera to the technology of colour printing); access to the subjects and events that are central to the story (many different problems here and are discussed later in this section); finding visually striking ways of presenting routine or “text-based” events such as meetings; lack of communication between the different professionals involved in the production chain; commercialism and “design-led” publishing; overcoming the limitations of the still photograph as a “frozen moment” which cannot easily convey the sequence of a set of events or narrative; coping with visual distractions from the main storyline - avoiding/or removing the detail you don’t want

“for me [photojournalism] is...it’s...when you get somebody who tries desperately to communicate his own feelings, his own philosophy, and to actually communicate it through photography in a very, very subtle way, it is so difficult to do it. Its really a visual language, so really you shouldn’t be talking about it, or writing anything down.....I think a lot of photographers just try and do their best all the time. I suppose in the newspaper it’s always been really difficult because the newspaper ideally just wants the photographer to sum up an event in one instant, image, one frame ideally. Sometimes you can do it, it’s pretty difficult..... quite often it doesn’t tell the full story does it? Which is why I personally like the picture story”(national broadsheet photographer)

Media professionals told us that a good news picture is one that can “tell the story” as defined in the journalistic brief. This is not the same as an aesthetically satisfying picture, nor is it one that necessarily gives voice to the photographer’s own opinion or view of what is happening, though when these all co-incide, perhaps a truly great piece of photojournalism is created:

“It is not always necessarily the best picture that gets used, that’s the point it has to be part of the newspaper...it’s not a photographic gallery. Ideally the best picture you’ve got is the best news story, but it doesn’t always work that way. It is a newspaper not an art exhibition.” (local newspaper photographer and editor)

How Literacy gets incorporated into images

This information about how decisions are made in producing the photographs helped us understand better how literacy practices are deliberately used in the creation of news photographs:

- a) as props (establishing identity and location)
- b) as interactions that help visually “tell the story”
- c) as evidence, documentation of events
- d) as commodity – writing on the body

The literacy event or artefact is used as a common way of visually telling the story, as these are often the material elements of a narrative that can most easily be captured by still photos. However, this is done without any intention to make a point about literacy per se – it is just a means to a different end. Unsurprisingly, the media professionals we interviewed appeared to have no greater awareness of literacy issues or the National year of Reading than any regular member of the general public. Props are routinely used to establish location and identity and help to tell the story visually, either those that can be found at the scene or sometimes ones that are carried to the scene by the photographer or brought by participants for the photo-opportunity. Signs in the environment, props like letters or “giant cheques” are deliberately used (or avoided) depending on whether they contribute to the narrative quality of the photograph. Writing on the body was less often mentioned as being used explicitly in the composition of the picture and appeared to be often just accepted (as in sports photography) as it is unavoidable but not useful to the photographic composition: sports photography par excellence is the domain that focuses on the body in action, there is rarely an environmental element to sports photos (Rowe, 1999).

Image, Text and Technologies - changing relationships

This theme was a general one from the interviews and was so important that it formed the basis of the paper we presented to the Media, Culture and Communication Studies conference in January 1999 (paper to follow). The issue of the physical separation of image and text in the production process has a long history (see Kobre, 1995, Monmonier, 1989; Stephens, 1997) with changing technologies and the corresponding shifting relationships and entrenchments of different professionals involved in the production of both. A comment from our field visit to a regional newspaper production centre, that produces over 50 titles a week illustrates vividly what we mean:

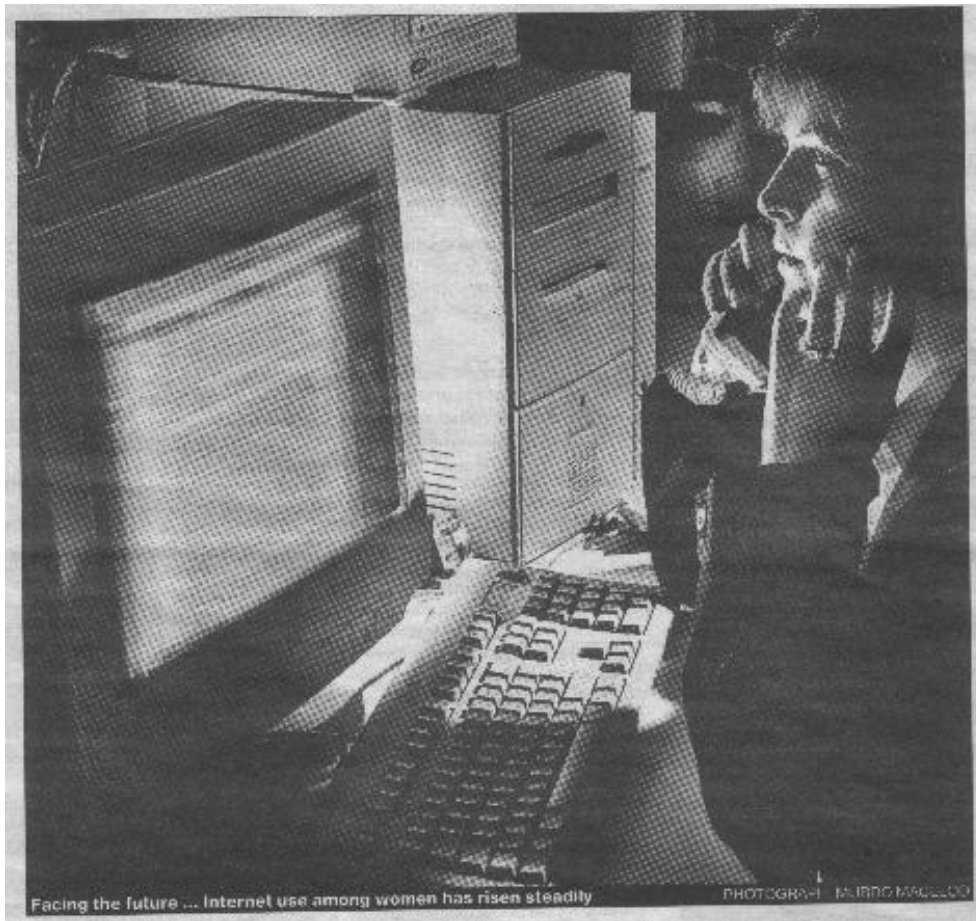
“The next issuewas the visible division of labour. The most acute example of this was the distribution of journalists and photographers....sitting on separate sides of the same room with a gap like the red sea between them”.

The introduction of the new digital technologies is shifting these relationships yet again, and especially in changing the possibilities of transmitting pictures over long distances, already enhanced and captioned and cutting out the negative developing stage. This combined with a cut-throat commercial climate in which national papers are struggling to compete and most photojournalists are “flexible” workers supplying pictures to newspapers or picture libraries and agencies on a freelance basis. The staff photographer is a dying breed, and where they still exist, often fulfil more than one role at the newspaper (e.g. editing, giving technical support and back up, sourcing pictures from agencies and libraries, as well as taking pictures themselves).

Our paper explores this division of labour within the text/image making production process of the newspaper and the way that new technologies are making an ever increasing gap between the production and technical manipulation of the image (the work of the photographer), and the editing and interpretative framing of the image within the news item and layout of the newspaper (the work of the sub-editors and editor). The image is produced from a written brief, often with no contact with the journalist writing the story, and is sent back to the editors, often electronically with factual details and captioning. It is frequently the case that no first-hand contact or discussion ever takes place between the person who has produced the image, the person producing the accompanying story and the editor who welds these together in a seamless whole. The isolation of the photographer is particularly marked in this triangle of non-communication, since the reporter is more likely to be physically based near to the editorial team and editors and reporters share a common bias towards words rather than images as a form of expression. Of course this disjuncture between image and text production is even more pronounced where stock pictures are used or re-used from an archive. The increasing use of stock or syndicated pictures also gives rise to the paradox of more available images, but less variety in those that are published.

We feel that it is important to understand the fractured nature of the production process and relations, since the finished newspaper page now, paradoxically, appears so seamlessly presented. Another result of new technologies is that they allow for much more flexible framing of items on the page and overlay of graphics and text, offering the illusion of a very tightly constructed message, and giving the lie to the multiple authorship the lies behind the production of the text. In some of the items in our corpus we can find traces of this production process: despite this seamless presentation, analysis of the messages conveyed reveals contradictions between the images and the text story that may be the result of the fractured production process (see, Figure 7 for example).

**Figure 7: Contradiction between the Text and the Image:
G8 Email, female**



This picture of a woman sitting at a computer, using a phone, appeared with a positive text story about women's increasing use of the internet for personal communication and domestic tasks. In contrast to the text story, the image appears to be in an office setting possibly at night. The woman is formally dressed in a jacket and shirt. The image is rather sinister with overtones of the "horror" genre suggesting the dangers of new technology rather than its positive benefits. The picture is one of a series we picked up in our corpus from one photographer, Murdo McLeod. He has a very distinctive style involving lighting effects and references to a range of art styles and aesthetics, including Joseph Wright of Derby and Vermeer.

Cultural Narratives of Literacy in the Press

One of the main objectives of our study has been to identify the cultural narratives about literacy that circulate in the public domain. In our earlier work we identified a number of tentative themes. These were our starting point for the current study and many were confirmed, although the frequency with which they appeared in the corpus differed from earlier work. New themes were also identified in the current project.

Educational Narratives about Literacy

Literacy is good, fun, exciting, opens doors, is associated with positive emotions;
Literacy is Books; therefore Books are good
Literacy is a central symbolic attribute of education
Literacy is a device for synchronising group behaviour
A teacher is..... someone who stands at the front of the class and explains
things written on a blackboard
A model pupil is..... one who sits quietly and seriously working alone with
books

In our corpus there are very few images of either children or teachers in classrooms, and they are most likely to appear in specialist educational sections of the papers or, increasingly, in the computer/ICT sections.

The few exceptions that appear in the “news” sections were prompted by politicians’ visits to schools and news about teachers pay. These were striking was the central presence of the blackboard in every picture in this group (DM89, G77, T33, DM52) together with teacher in a very traditional stance at the front of the classroom, talking and gesturing to a listening group of pupils. One shot of Tony Blair captured him in a pose reminiscent of this teacherly stance in front of the blackboard. The image of the teacher presented is reminiscent of the way that comics (like the Bash Street Boys in the Beano) and cartoons in newspapers (like Giles) often use very old-fashioned stereotypes of teachers and pupils as a short-cut to getting over their message – signalled by traditional robes, hats and caps, blackboards, canes etc (see Warburton, 1996). This might be because of the humorous appeal of these trappings, the speed with which such stereotypes can be recognised especially by older people or is perhaps just a time lag.

Images of children as pupils show them sitting down, quiet, serious and working alone, usually with an open book in front of them. Out of the classroom this image continues: two images of girls (is this significant?) doing homework, show them either in a pose which imitates the classroom stance (writing, quietly, alone) or sprawled on a bed/settee reading (T37) in an attitude reminiscent of Victorian novel-readers, signifying leisure, relaxation. The implication is that school-like behaviour should be extended within the home context.

Alternatively, pupils are shown as part of a synchronised group: one image (DM93) in an item about a bilingual programme shows a whole class of children posing standing up for the camera and all holding identical, closed textbooks (some kind of Atlas).

The only images of classrooms that appeared in the Sun were those associated with the Free Books for School Campaign (S11, S17, S25, S31, S35, S48, S49, S59, S68, S69, S74, S81, S82, S86, S94), and the pose is the same as for the bilingual programme – a group of children standing, facing the camera, holding books either open or closed, (not identical ones, however) in a classroom environment that has lots of printed matter and pictures around on the walls. There is certainly a hint here of a theme about **literacy as a device for synchronising group behaviour** which

Karen Tusting has discussed in relation to religious rituals that she has been researching in the Catholic church (see Tusting 2000).

Literacy is a symbolic attribute of education. In general, where a person is identified as a student/pupil or an educational professional then they are likely to be pictured with literacy artefacts: this shows especially clearly in the occasional device of telling a story about someone's dual identities. An example is an item showing the two identities of the "A" level student rugby star, using two adjacent images: one is an action shot in which he is running with a ball (the rugby star); in the other he appears in a neat school uniform, sitting at a desk with pen and book, books on shelves in the background. The other example of this in the current corpus is of a Chinese student who cleans floors in order to finance her studies: the two pictures show her cleaning with a mop and bucket and then in white coat, with pen, papers and scientific apparatus in some kind of laboratory setting. Both the Daily Mail and the Telegraph ran this story and although the pictures were different the device was similar in each.

It seems likely that in time the book will be replaced, or supplemented, by a computer. But for the time being, it is the more traditional literacy artefacts that are doing the symbolic work. (for current narratives about computers and new technologies, see below).

Although none appear in the current corpus, there is another type of education-related images which show students/pupils taking exams (= written tests), consulting exam timetables and results posted up on walls. These re-iterate themes that we have identified in other domains (see below), namely the **association of literacy with negative emotions such as threat/anxiety**; the central role of **literacy as a source of bureaucratic evidence** (in this case of academic achievement); **and the synchronising function of literacy** in relation to group behaviour (as above).

Non-educational narratives about literacy

<p><i>Literacy =Literary culture</i> <i>New (computer, visual, screen-based) technologies are a danger to print literacy</i> <i>Literacy is associated with negative emotions such as threat/anxiety/lack of control</i> <i>Literacy is a symbolic attribute Literacy is in contrast to sexuality/sport/ glamour</i> <i>Literacy is one means of transcending disability (or more generally situations where the spoken word cannot be used</i> <i>Literacy is a powerful source of bureaucratic evidence</i> <i>Literacy as Authority</i></p>
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The narratives we identified in our earlier pilot work were borne out in the current corpus. Our finer coding allowed us to elaborate on some of them and there were differences in how strongly represented they were in the current sample of images, compared with earlier ones – especially **literacy as opposition** and **literacy in public ritual** which were both less frequent. Literacy as Ritual Public Gesture

includes images that depict literacy as icon. These include the “symbolic signature” (symbolic of legal power, autographs, the signing of football players and other business deals) and “commemorative” literacy (wreaths, plaques, graves, rolls of honour). **Literacy as Defiance:** images showing oppositional literacy practices, including graffiti, demonstrations and political protests. There were some of these, but interestingly of the few that showed activities in the UK, three were reproductions of old photographs as part of a narrative about “the bad old days” of strikes and protests. This links with a themes about **literacy and the control of public space: who can use it and how.**

A strong new theme was apparent in the broadsheet press which can be summarised as **new technologies are endangering print literacy.** There are some examples of children pictured with computers, but in home settings rather than school, where the theme in both the pictures and the text is one of **New technologies as threatening print literacy** and to children’s development more generally (see also below). The nearest one to a classroom setting (T36) is actually a row of children sitting at computers in an educational technology exhibition. Perhaps it is still not easy to photograph children using computers in classrooms as they are still a relatively rare classroom resource - or do not yet have the signifying power to stand in for an educational activity.

Literacy is associated with negative emotions such as threat/anxiety/lack of control as well as the positive emotions more often emphasised in education (celebration, excitement, pleasure). Images with this theme depict the “paperwork stress” associated with exam results, child support agency, bills or legal proceedings. These are often, but not always, associated with money.

Literacy as Symbolic Accessory: images in which literacy signifies that a person has a particular status. These are often of professional people: politicians, stockbrokers, businessmen, judges, barristers, doctors, academics, committee members, clerics or media people. Typical pictures show the person carrying papers/newspapers/folders under their arm or posing with papers or books around them. It is particularly used to symbolise affiliation with education or academic life and is frequently used in binary contrast to other characteristics: e.g. sexuality/sport/glamour. This is especially important as the “Free Books for Schools” Campaign was trying to counter these narratives with positive images of celebrities and sporting heroes pictured with children’s books.

Literacy as Evidence: images which show the role of literacy in legal and bureaucratic power structures. Literacy objects are given and received and shown as evidence (cheques, letters, identity papers, lottery tickets, ballot papers, NHS paperwork). This was a very frequent theme in the current corpus and we understand it better in terms of its function in the production of news and news images:

Literacy is one means of transcending disability: There are two very interesting images depicting pupils with special needs, but neither of these use a classroom setting. They both show children who are disabled in one sense, but who use literacy very effectively. T85 – a gifted girl who can’t speak but who reads and writes music DM98 – a deaf girl (shown holding a book) who has refused an

operation to restore her hearing, content to be deaf, using sign language and literacy to communicate.

Literacy as Authority: This theme overlaps with a number of the others, including literacy as a symbolic attribute of identity, literacy as evidence in legal, medical, educational and bureaucratic settings. It was very obvious in the TIMES coverage of the Free Books for Schools Campaign (see Appendix 3).

Literacy as Display: related to identity. A special feature of news photos, but signals a broader function of literacy, cf Anita's stuff on prison literacy; the coffee table book; images where the literacy signifies individual or group identity, showing banners, showing books or newspapers; slogans on clothes (tee-shirts and hats mainly, but also face paint, and badges). This leads onto two very important big areas: the role of literacy in branding (rGoldman and Papson, 1998) and the role of literacy in body modification (Caplan, 2000).

5. Publications and Dissemination

We intend dissemination to take a variety of forms. We will report the findings of the study in papers to be submitted to journals in the area of educational policy, media and cultural studies. We will submit a paper to a new journal, *Visual Communication*. One of the members of our advisory group Theo Van Leeuwen is on the board and has already given us help in framing an article for this new journal.

We will also write a methodology piece which evaluates the software and indexing system used in Atlas-ti and submit this to an appropriate journal such as *Sociology on-line*.

The difficulties we had in accessing and engaging the long-term participation of practicing media professionals in this project meant that the idea of a seminar especially for journalists was not feasible. Instead we opted to take part in an existing conference, the Media, Communications and Cultural Studies Association that draws on both academics and practising media professionals and presented our work there. Our paper will be published in the proceedings of the conference.

We also presented a paper on initial finding about the coverage of the National Year of Reading to the British Educational Research Association (BERA) annual conference in September 2000.

Web-based publicity is an increasingly important form of research dissemination. We will maintain the project website and integrate it into other active web-pages hosted by Lancaster University and groups such as the recent ESRC seminar series on visual evidence. An account of the project has been posted onto the National Literacy Trust web database and will be updated as new publications are produced from our findings.

6. Future Research Plans

We will use the corpus set up in this project to follow up on some of the key themes that have arisen but which were not central to its outcomes: for example, the issue of the commodification of literacy as identified through sports and other product branding and writing on the body.

We will explore the relationship between image and text more systematically than was possible within the scope of the present project: for example how news items are generated and edited, and how this process can be traced through certain codable features such as the use of stock images or where there are contradictions apparent between the image and text. Moving to analyses that deal with the image in its wider context is an important shift for future work.

Finally we will make use of the archive of material collected during this project to analyse the text coverage of the National Year of Reading and literacy policy more generally. The limited work we have already done on this shows it to be a very productive way of demonstrating the power of recurring public narratives about literacy that can be extended to other aspects of education.

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Appendix 1: Code List

Image ID:	This is included in the primary document, assigned from the corpus image directory. IDs run from 1-100 for each newspaper (eg DM1....100)
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Literacy Content [Literacy as Social Practice]		
Type	Event	
	Environment	
	Body	
	Document	
<i>Participants</i>	Male/Female	
	Number <i>P1 P2 P3</i>	
	Ethnic Group eg	White European
		Afro-Caribbean
		Asian
		Chinese
		American
		African
		African
<i>Age</i>	Child	
	Teenager	
	Adult	
	Mature Adult 65+	
<i>Identity</i>	<i>(actor, parent, tax payer etc)</i>	
<i>Appearance</i>	<i>Dress (formal/casual/occupational)</i>	
	<i>Other features (text memo)</i>	
<i>Activities</i>	Writing	
	Reading	
	Display	
	Carrying	
	Wearing	
	Leaning	
	Computing	
<i>Artefact</i>	Many codes (e.g. book, pen, mobile phone, gravestone, banner, t-shirt, letter,)	
<i>Setting</i>	<i>Codes describing where the event is physically occurring e.g. a classroom</i>	
<i>Indoors/Outdoors</i>		
<i>Domain</i>	<i>Codes describing the domain of social activity eg e.g. political, business, sport, fashion</i>	

The Literacy Category deals with the components of the image that actually make up the literacy interaction. First one of the four categories we have established (Event, Environment, Written on the Body, and Document) is assigned to the image, with the quotation for the code being placed in the left-hand corner. The image is then deconstructed into its elements starting with the participants/subjects. Gender, Ethnic origin, and Age are coded around quotations linked to the participant involved. Similarly the participants actions are linked to their personal quotation. The category of Artefact is perhaps the most diverse category in terms of the number of codes. It is felt important to note the props that are employed during the act of literacy. Each artefact code is applied to a quotation surrounding the artefact in question. Equally important is the Setting i.e. where the event is taking place, and the Domain, i.e. the context for the event. Finally a note is made of whether the event takes place in or outdoors. The Setting, Domain codes are placed in the same quotation, in the bottom left of the primary document, as the Literacy Content category.

Emergent Themes:	
<i>(examples are given here: the list expands as analysis continues)</i>	Literacy as evidence, Documenting Life
	Literacy as accessory; a symbolic prop
	Literacy as commodity (<i>branding, links to identity and control</i>)
	Literacy and New Technologies
	Literacy as Authority
	Literacy as Threat, anxiety, control
	Celebration, commemoration and Public Ritual
	Organizing Life
	Personal Communication
	Private Leisure
	Sense Making
Social Participation and Opposition	
<p>These categories seek to ascribe the themes evident in the actions of literacy participation. They are the end-point of our enquiry and based on an integration of all the other coding categories.</p>	

Mediational Processes [Components of the News Item] :	
Headline	Yes/No <i>if yes H1 H2 transcription</i>
Caption	Yes/No <i>if yes C1 C2 transcription comment on position</i>
Text Story	Yes/No <i>if yes TS comment on column length</i>

Other Images	Adimage+no
Layout:	Information Saliency Framing <i>(these key dimensions described in text memos)</i>
Size of Image	1-10% 10-25% 25-40% 40-60% more than 60%
<p>The information for these codes is taken from the newspaper original. What differs here from the source data is that use is made of Atlas' memo function. The codes are assigned to a quotation at the bottom of the image, using the caption where available or a square in the bottom left. The Headline and Caption are typed as they appear using the image id number with the suffix H1, C1, H2, C2 as appropriate to label the Memo's. The Text story is represented by the suffix TS and is found in the memo in the following format:- column length, then author of article if available, followed by any comments on the use of graphics and/or quotes taken from the text. Aspects of layout are described in a text memo which could be developed into a set of categorical codes at a future date.</p> <p>For example, saliency could be coded to include foregrounding/backgrounding; contrast, lighting, balance with other elements on the page. Framing could include vectors between elements or repetition of shapes and colours. Judgements about the arrangement of items on the page will give us codes for Information – given/new; ideal and real; use of centre/margin or triptych arrangements.</p>	

Mediational Processes:	
Picture Source	Photographer
	Stock photograph
<i>Authorship</i>	Yes/No attribution <i>if yes annotate</i>
<i>Modality</i>	Colour/ B+W
	Other effects(<i>contrast, brightness, lighting, clarity of focus</i>)
<i>Vertical Angle</i>	Above
	Level
	Below
<i>Horizontal Angle (in terms of main participant)</i>	Frontal
	Back
	Oblique
<i>Lens</i>	Wide
	Standard
	Telephoto
<i>Social Distance (composite code)</i>	Gaze
	Contextualization
	Distance (close/medium/long shot)

Appendix 2: Interviews with Photojournalists and Editors

A. Interview Questions for Photojournalists/Editors

(a slightly different emphasis is given for the two groups, but the interview aims to cover roughly the same issues)

Topic Area 1: Questions about general experience of news production processes and the role of image and text in these. Might start with a “describe your job” kind of opening question

“Decision tree” involved in moving from initial brief for an image to construction of the news item and layout in the newspaper: relative responsibilities of photographer and editor(s) in this process

Topic Area 2: Questions about constructing the images themselves:

candid/posed

idea of the “decisive moment”

what makes a good picture (both from a photographic point of view and from a journalistic point of view. Clashes between these?)

what makes a bad picture?

ethical issues in taking and posing photographs and in altering the image once obtained

Topic Area 3: Questions about the way that literacy practices are used within images:

get reactions to a sample of images (See below for examples)

how much awareness of the literacy-related elements of the images?

views about how far those elements are deliberately included and used by the photographer and why; how far they are incidental to the image, or working within/contributing to the narrative of the image or the news item

Show interviewees a maximum of 8 images, to include the following dimensions:

literacy event/environment/writing on the body/reproduction of document

candid/posed

deliberate/incidental inclusion of literacy element

Possible follow-up questions:

What should be included in a “visual education” ?

Use and importance of context and props in photos; why and how are they important and

How are choices made about what to include?

How do picture editors make their decisions (specific ideas)

Definition of “photojournalist” and how they are different from other photographers.

How do the best pictures work with the text? What’s the relationship? Can pictures ever carry the whole meaning/narrative?

**B. Extracts from Interview with photographer and picture editor,
Westmoreland Gazette 8th June, 1999**

152 Q: So you've got your daily diary, decided which stories your going to cover. What sorts of decisions are made about actually taking the images?

We have an electronic diary, I put on the instructions what I envisage from the job, sometimes another thing we have to do is we have to take a picture to a certain shape, if the sub-editor has left a hole on the paper, on one of the pages, particularly towards the end of the week, and he's only got a certain shape left, it's no good you bringing him a horizontal picture, if he's only got room to put a vertical one in. So another thing we quite often do is take upright and horizontal from jobs, especially early in the week when we don't know where it's going to go, so you can do it either way round.

168 Q: So when you actually get to location, what sort of things would you consider when your taking the picture? How much to you push people into taking certain images or things like props?

Well it depends very much on the event, but I encourage them to think about props before they go. Cause obviously when you get there, let me try and think of an example,..... a straight forward one, a couple who are celebrating....oooh I don't know... a golden wedding something like that, now generally these things they'll have a card, they'll have a cake, or something like that, it's probably not a good example because it's very rare we do have to take props to them, but if it's a celebration you think about, taking wine glasses, I can think of an example actually, we had a save our shops campaign which supported local shops, and when we found out the winners, we were going to do the presentation, but we wanted a brighter picture rather than just a grip and grin handshake; so I went down to the local wine merchants, and got a couple dummy bottles of champagne out of his window display, and nipped up home and got a couple of champagne glasses, so I took them along with me, borrowed some flowers from one of the local florists. One of the guys who taught me many years ago used to joke that on the evening paper he used to always carry a singed teddy bear in the back, just in case he wen to a fire where some kids had been involved. Whether or not it's true or not I don't know, but some nasty practices have been known, not so much these days since the Diana incident.

201Q: So the onus is really on the photographer to make sure the props are there, so if they're presenting a cheque?

We don't actually do cheque presentations we drew a line on that, we say now we'll either photograph what ever the event is your doing, or when they get what your raising the money for we'll photograph someone having a look at it or using it. But that is a good example actually because sometimes they've only raised part of the money towards something, so you have to think of a prop to take. Say they've had a sponsored darts match and they go into say a hospital, the hospital won't have a dart board so you have to taking something along. But I will suggest ideas to photographers.....

08 Q: You said when we first started that there are different sources of images, you don't just use the photographers. Could you talk a little about your use of photo-libraries?

I can give you an example from today actually, we've got a court case, we actually got a picture of this guy going into court, what we call a snatch picture. We heard that, obviously our photographers have to do a lot of jobs a day, where as picture agencies, national papers, they maybe only do one in a day. We heard that an agency had got a good head and shoulders of this guy. So I found out that the picture was in the Times and the Mail, so I rang them both, got the name and number of the agency off them, got in touch with the agency, and found out this image was available, how much it was going to cost, and if we needed to I was going to get it sent to us by their ISDN, on their phone lines. We actually decided we preferred our image as it looks like somebody whose trying, to get into court, look, we call a snatch picture, where the other one is just a facing the camera mug-shot. It almost as a bit of action to it. So we decided we preferred it. We quite often use pictures from libraries, yeah we do have a few picture libraries, newspaper libraries, but they tend to be rather expensive. We do get pictures from nationals, but they use libraries extensively, most times you ring up to ask for one they will put you onto the library.

C. Extract from Interview with Daily Mirror photographer. 4th October 99

[006] Q: The easiest way to start is for you to introduce yourself and go through a rough potted history of your photographic career.

Should have brought a CV with me (laughter) I've done that much. Right originally I left college which was the mid-Cheshire college of art and design and started working on a freelance basis for a local journal which was the Stockport Express, and advertiser. Then I was lucky enough to get a job with the Daily Mail in their darkroom set-up. I was there ten years, just over. I went from there to the Mirror, which was, then in the centre of Manchester, everything was printed in the centre of Manchester then, and got made redundant from the Mirror unfortunately. From there I went a place called The Post which was in Warrington, which was a national newspaper, set up by Eddie Shah, stayed there all of eight months, because that collapsed after fifty three issues (laughter). On from there I became a photographer for the Tonight newspaper which was based in Chester. Which was a provincial evening newspaper, which was in direct competition with the Liverpool Echo, and the Manchester Evening News for that particular area. Sort of northern, north west Cheshire and Wales, north Wales area, big circulation area; which was a grey area for circulation with other newspapers because they couldn't supply a service for, particularly for north Wales. I became chief photographer after two years, responsible for, directly for seven photographic staff, two darkroom staff, and indirectly for about twenty six regional staff. Then on from there, I was made redundant again, that was after nearly three years there, and went freelance, freelance photographer with a varied portfolio, not so much news, quite a bit of sport and mainly commercial work for big brewing retail companies, Scottish and Newcastle, Beefeater, Greenhulgh's, Boddingtons, and as I say some sport, and a little bit of news work all intermingled. I was offered a job here about six years ago, at the Mirror working for Mirror colour print, and Mirror group newspapers, working for all three titles, as a technician really, as a darkroom technician, and that entails other stuff, anything to do with imaging and pictures. We do copies here, we scan here, we do exhibition prints, competition prints, and some commercial work for outside, very little, but some, because it's got to be a profit making department the way it's looked at now. Not just a service department its got to provide a service for anybody that wants it really.

[103] Q: So how many photographers work out of this office?

Out of this particular office there is four. We have satellite offices in Leeds, Preston, and freelancers of course use the facilities we have here.

[111] Q: So has the percentage of freelance work gone up?

It's sort of stabilises out across the year, to about the same. We do have the hectic moments, the hectic days. I think we'll be using quite a bit of freelance work just recently, the Shipman trial starts tomorrow, that's going to be a very big story, Nationally. So we'll be using a lot of freelance bodies over at least the next five weeks I would have thought. That's how long they expect to be....the initial part of the trial to last. We.... on a regular basis probably serve about a dozen or so freelancers, who are not coming in as regular as they used to cause they have their own scanning systems and their own Nikon digital cameras and they're able to do a lot of their work down the telephone line, just wire it down the telephone line.

[137] Q: So where does the requests for the actual image come from?

It'll come initially from the picture desk in London

[140] Q: And that comes here?

They have a conference in London which decides which stories they should go for, what pictures they require and the picture desk is informed of the requirements for the story and they in turn get in touch with a Northern freelance photographer. They will then either just come into the office, or as I said before they'd use the digital cameras and wire down the telephone.

[156] Q: Could you describe a general working day for yourself?

There is no such beast really, cause everything is totally different. On a Monday you come in on a Monday you would normally run down the machines from the weekend, the minilab machines. It tends to be more of a filing day, and more of an admin day to, we send....we file and send pictures.....negatives to Watford library so that is normally done on a Monday.

[169] Q: So that is where the negative archives are kept?

Yes all the library stuff, we do keep some in Manchester, particularly if it's of Northern interest where we know we'll be using it on a regular basis, it might be Manchester Royal Infirmary, pictures of there that come in handy now and again, and local places of interest, we tend to hold those back, cause they're no great value to Watford, and they're always easy if we need to get an up to date picture, it needs to be tied in with the story, to hand we've got them to hand. On a Monday as I say it tends to be the administration work. The work load builds up nearer to the end of the week, because there is three titles being served here, The Daily Mirror, Sunday Mirror, and the Sunday People. So the Sunday Mirror, and the Sunday People don't actually work Mondays. So of course anything this time of the week is far too early for them....by the end of the week it won't be news. So Thursday, Friday, Saturday, is their big days, and anything late on a Saturday is panic, just....you always get a late job for the Sunday, on the Saturday evening they will be holding space in the paper, so it's very important, we always get sport obviously.

But there are several news stories that come in late on that may well be exclusive to the title that its for. We don't do much for the Daily on a Saturday because their next publication day is the Monday. So if anything does come in on a Saturday that can be held back to Sunday or very, Sunday morning or Sunday afternoon, there's no panic on that. Sunday is not served here.

[220] Q: So you don't work on a Sunday?

Ah ha so we have both the minilab machines up and running for anybody who wants to use them, just in case one happens to breakdown for any particular reason. There's always the spare running. Of course if I'm here we only have one machine, and if something goes wrong with that then I have to get the other one set up. Prints difficult to say about the workload sometimes we get exhibition work and there can be quite a lot of exhibition work to be done in a short period of time, so it can be very very busy on the print side, and other times next to nothing, you go two or three days without anything and then it all comes in at once. Which is a bit annoying, you'd like to spread the workload out a little bit. Cause sometimes when there is very little in your twiddling your thumbs, and of course when there's more prints, you tend cause it's sod's law, you tend to get more photographers coming in and you've got to look after them as well so everything is happening at once. In an ideal world you'd spread it out over the week, but there is no way of predicting what's going to come in, so that's basically the week.

D. Extract from Interview with Don McPhee of the Manchester Guardian (Staff Photographer), accompanied by Denis Thorpe, photographer previously with the Guardian:

DT Old technology was wonderful wasn't it because if I wanted to make them see that there was.....that this picture was a very good...interesting picture I could go into the darkroom and make a very big print 12x16 and spell it out to them couldn't I....you can't spell it out to them now, and when it dropped on the desk...and they'd say Denis again with 15x12 whatever and it would be all crumby agency wired pictures would all be there...at least they'd have to look at it.

[414] Q:So what happens to your images now? You go out you take your images, come back.....do you have some sort of an archive? Or does someone else deal with that?

DM No no, it's all down to me, I archive, I'll do it on the digital camera for this street, I'll pop it into my laptop here, I've got a zip drive, I'll select four or five images put them onto the zip, put them into this machine, whistle them up on the screen here on the desk top, and just tinker about with them, caption them, and send them on the internal line straight to London.

DT But Don has a luxury still though that a lot of the photographers don't have and that is being able to edit at least.....

DMand say what is going to go. A good example of the way in which it's changed is this. Manchester United win all these three trophies, I'm not all that interested in sport, I have to say that, but however, I had to put my hand up and do the parade, when they were going to come down the city centre, and one joy of the digital camera was that it was instant imagery on the digital camera so you didn't have to develop the film. The first edition tends to go about quarter to nine for the Guardian, and they were going to be roughly down this part of Deansgate in

Manchester at about ten past eight and they were. But it wasn't just a case of saying well go and do it and send it to us as quickly as possible, I was told at three o'clock in the afternoon we want a three column wide picture to run from there right the way down the page there right. So all the time, as this bus with the players on the top waving trophies about is coming towards me, I'm not looking at the picture I'm looking at the shape, because I know it's got to fit in that space there. And I thought this is crazy, all I am looking at is...is is design, and that is basically the bottom line, that is what newspapers have become. They have become design.

Appendix 3:

Summary of paper dealing with the media coverage of the National Year of Reading, presented at the British Educational Research Association Annual conference Sept 7-9th in Cardiff.

The paper focussed on the detail of the "Free Books for Schools Campaign" coverage from the *TIMES* and the *SUN* and looked at how the two different papers promote the issue of reading within the policy context of the National Literacy Strategy. The *TIMES* is serious and straightforward in its approach, has a good coverage of the policy context, with a strong literary bent and (I think largely unconscious) authoritarian theme running through the ads and the coverage - despite the fact that they are promoting the message that "reading is fun". For example, one of the ads is in the form of punishment "lines" saying "I must collect more tokens". The *SUN* is funny, interactive and uses role models rather than didactic messages to get over the issues (about boys and reading, for example). In all these ways it is much more successful than the *TIMES* in getting over the spirit of the campaign. However, the *SUN* has almost no coverage of the educational policy issues. It aims to carry readers along on the good feel of the "collecting frenzy" and shamelessly promotes the sponsors' products, assuming that we are all Walkers Snack eaters and *SUN* readers and there is no other way to be..... A particularly fine example of the *SUN* approach is the story of the headmistress who dressed up as a giant packet of crisps in order to promote token collecting at her primary school. Behind the humour of this is a serious question mark for me about what this campaign is really about.

Both papers mention the issue of state v independent schools as beneficiaries of the campaign. This is a difficult one for the *TIMES* as presumably many of the readers it needs to draw in have children in private education. One solution it adopts is to promote the idea of *TIMES* readers collecting tokens for children who are less-well off (for example in special schools) and again this comes over as old-fashioned charity rather than the collective and inclusive jamboree that the *SUN* makes of this campaign.

Appendix 4:

Example of Image Report for T60

Coding List	
Paper: [Telegraph]	Date: [D 26/01/99] Page No: [PG 30]
Headline: [H1] Caption: [C1] TextStory: [TS yes] Memos: [H1T60] [C1T60] [TST60]	Section: [SecFeat]
Photo Source: [PS Photographer] Attribution: [AuthT60] [Author yes]	Photo Type: [PT1 B+W]
Angle: [ALevel]	Lens: [LStandard] Image Status: [Illustrative]
Complicity: [Candid]	Participant Characteristics: Gender: [PM2] Ethnicity: [E European] Age: [Age3] Identity:
Artefacts: [ART hose] [ART sign] [ART dog] [ART graf]	
Type of Literacy Content: [LC Environment] [LC Event]	Setting: [Set outdoors] [Set Public]
Domain: [DOM work]	Emerging Themes: [ET opp] [ET id]
Memo: [reference to commentary, content in box below]	Activity: [erasing]
Stance:	Type of Shot:
Dress:	Distance:
	Size of Image:

Memo Text	
H1	On the button: David Rhodes has seen sales double to £82.7m
TS	Four columns at 3cm anon

Commentary	

Appendix 5: Examples of Output Charts a) Frequency of Images in different Papers

Lit = Literacy related images

All=Total images in issue of the paper

Daily Mail			Guardian			The Sun			Telegraph		
	Lit	All		Lit	All		Lit	All		Lit	All
14/01/99	10	88	14/01/99	9	33	11/1/99	3	54	14/01/99	15	52
15/01/99	14	104	15/01/99	13	75	12/1/99	9	53	18/01/99	8	79
18/01/99	2	93	18/01/99	17	97	13/01/99	7	59	19/01/99	7	60
19/01/99	3	90	21/01/99	8	64	14/01/99	11	69	20/01/99	9	76
20/01/99	5	81	22/01/99	13	72	15/01/99	9	69	21/01/99	9	75
21/01/99	2	94	25/01/99	13	81	18/01/99	5	57	22/01/99	7	84
22/01/99	4	69	26/01/99	13	89	19/01/99	6	57	26/01/99	7	71
25/01/99	7	81	27/01/99	3	60	20/01/99	11	66	27/01/99	8	60
26/01/99	7	71	28/01/99	13	58	21/01/99	11	75	28/01/99	13	84
27/01/99	8	78				22/01/99	7	66	2/2/99	8	65
28/01/99	7	91				25/01/99	6	56	5/2/99	9	86
29/01/99	7	73				26/01/99	4	58			
1/2/99	9	93				27/01/99	11	76			
2/2/99	10	105									
3/2/99	2	73									
4/2/99	3	107									
Total	100	1391		102	629		100	815		100	792

Appendix 5: Examples of Output Charts
b) Three way Summary Coding Chart: Literacy Event x
Domain of Literacy x Newspaper

	SUN	Guardia n	DTel	DMail	Totals
DOM con	0	1	0	1	2
DOM education	6	3	6	3	18
DOM entertainment	2	1	0	0	3
DOM health	0	1	0	3	4
DOM IT	0	1	1	1	3
DOM leisure	4	1	1	3	9
DOM politics	1	3	1	1	6
DOM private	2	1	2	3	8
DOM public	2	3	11	7	23
DOM religion	0	0	1	0	1
DOM royalty	0	0	1	0	1
DOM social	5	1	4	4	14
DOM sport	1	1	2	1	5
DOM work	3	6	13	3	25
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Totals	26	23	43	30	112