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research update

Measuring media literacy in local schools

by Reginald Owens

Visiting scholar **Vera Walker** nearly stumbled on the cracked tile and uneven floor when she entered the classroom of an elementary school in the Carrollton section of inner-city New Orleans.



Vera Walker

—Isaac Singleton photo

“I was shocked at the condition of the classroom and the school,” she said. She expected to see some things lacking in this low-income neighborhood. But she was surprised that the school did not

have basic things.

This was a school where children brought their own toilet paper and paper towels. Most came from single-parent homes. Almost all qualified for free federal breakfasts and lunches.

“I wondered what I would find out about the attitudes of these children on technology,” she recalls.

Thus began Walker’s research journey to find out about the state of technology in schools located in low-income communities. What were the children’s attitudes toward technology? In a world where information is power and prestige, how can these children compete without experience with computers? Would these children be able to elevate themselves from their impoverished environments and emerge into positions as communication brokers in a digital world? Do they even have computers?

Answering these and other questions has brought Walker to MIT’s Comparative Media Studies where she is working with **Henry Jenkins** on what she calls “the Storyteller Project.”

“The Storyteller Project examines the role of media and technology in literacy development in urban schools,” Walker explains. “The Storyteller Project seeks to create educational programming for children that is socially and cultural relevant and promotes critical thinking skills.”

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Story conference in the works for may

CMS is accepting proposals for papers for the fourth Media in Transition conference, “The Work of Stories,” to be held May 6-8, 2005. The conference will explore storytelling as a cultural practice, a social and political activity as well as an art form.

The conference will address why some stories endure, and how they migrate across media forms within their own societies as well as other cultures and historical eras; the ways in which stories are deployed in periods of media in transition; and the way some stories easily inhabit different media simultaneously while other stories seem less adaptable.

As with all Media in Transition conferences, CMS aims to stimulate a conversation among scholars, journalists and media professionals who may often only speak to their own tribal groups.

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MIT4: the work of stories

May 6-8, 2005
MIT, Cambridge, MA, USA
Abstracts accepted on a rolling basis until January 1, 2005
web.mit.edu/comm-forum/mit4

Marks presents new scores for old films

Martin Marks, senior lecturer in Music and Theater Arts, is the music curator for a new three-DVD box set, *More Treasures from American Film Archives: 50 Films, 1894-1931*.



This cover from *The Witmark Picture Album for Piano and Organ* (1913) appears in the *More Treasures* program notes courtesy Martin Marks.

The follow up to 2000’s *Treasures from American Film Archives* was released in September and showcases American motion pictures during their first four decades and includes not only narrative films but newsreels, industrial films, and home movie clips.

All the silent films in the set have been given newly recorded music, with more than 35 piano scores created and performed by Marks, as well as a dozen new scores contributed by MIT composers.

The release of *More Treasures* will be celebrated with a program of films and music in Killian Hall on Oct. 27 beginning at 8 p.m. The event is free and open to the public.

director's chair

CMS well positioned for cutting-edge role in media literacy studies

by Henry Jenkins, CMS director

At the first colloquium this term, we brought together students from the Comparative Media Studies Program with peer leaders from the Youth Voice Collaborative, a YWCA-based initiative focused on giving high school students skills at dissecting the ways that the media shapes our understanding of our identities.



It was fun sitting back and watching the graduate students entering the room and finding so many chairs occupied by the predominantly African-American adolescents who were there to help lead us through some of their educational exercises.

For both sides, there was a moment of misrecognition and confusion about what kind of person engages in media analysis. And then, the walls started to break down as the two groups got to know each other better and learned to respect what we each brought to the conversation.

This was one of several events planned this term to introduce students to people working in the Boston-area community around issues of media literacy. We began the year with an orientation session that included demonstrations of the videogame *Revolution* and the Metamedia project; presentations by **Shigeru Miyagawa** about studying visual culture and **Tommy Defrantz** about performance studies; and culminating with a session with James Valastro from ACME, a group that goes into schools and helps kids learn about how media works by having them design and produce their own responses to alcohol and cigarette advertisements.

We hosted a joint event with the Computing Cultures group in the Media Lab and the Center for Reflexive Technologies focused on technologies for community building. We hosted a Communications Forum event about MIT's OpenCourseWare initiative, and we are planning an event where visiting scholar **Roberto Aparici** talks with local teachers about the challenges of learning and researching in the information age.

Through these and other conversations this year, there is a growing recognition that Comparative Media Studies has something significant to contribute to media literacy education.

Because we understand media in a broader sense (as encompassing not simply digital or modern mass media, but also traditional forms of expression and storytelling) and because our fac-

ulty come from so many disciplines, we have a chance to demonstrate what it would mean to see media literacy not as an added-on subject but as something that can be integrated across the curriculum.

Even though many recognize the importance in giving students knowledge of how media operates, they often don't know how to fit such learning into a school day so rigidly defined by state and national educational standards. What if media literacy was understood as a paradigm shift (like multiculturalism) which impacted how we taught history, literature, government, art, even math and science? The projects being developed by Metamedia and the Education Arcade offer models for how media education goes hand in hand with the study of Melville, Shakespeare, and

"What if media literacy were understood as a paradigm shift?"

the American Revolution. We need to expand access to these tools, seeing teacher training and outreach as a central part of the research and development process.

Because of our own emphasis on the blurring between theory and practice, we have a chance to model approaches to media literacy which include hands-on activities and teach children how to become media makers. We would not accept a definition of print literacy that taught students how to read but not how to write, and we should not accept a definition of media literacy that emphasizes discerning consumption but not expression.

And because of our interest in the communities that form around games and other popular culture, we are ideally positioned to examine the informal learning that occurs outside of school spaces, a theme increasingly central to debates about education.

To have this impact, we must first develop an understanding of the kinds of work that is already taking place in media education and identify groups with whom we can partner in ways that will have a real impact on our local community and beyond. Many of our students and faculty are already doing work that touches the Boston community. For example, this issue of *In Medias Res* foregrounds the work that **Vera Walker** has been doing to better understand what kinds of teaching and storytelling resources should be developed to meet the needs of minority and inner-city youths.

I am eager to hear from any member of the CMS community who has thoughts about how we can do more in this area.

Henry Jenkins can be reached at henry3@mit.edu.

Story conference from cover

Abstracts and proposals for full panels can be submitted until January 1, 2005. See web.mit.edu/comm-forum/mit4 for full submission details.

Conference topics include:

- The nature and function of storytelling practices in specific cultural contexts
- How the skills of storytelling are transmitted within a folk culture or industry

- The historic evolution of genres
- The migration of specific stories, characters, or themes across different media systems
- Why certain stories persist against social, cultural, political, economic, or technological changes
- Do new or distinctive forms of storytelling emerge at moments of media in transition?
- Television stories

- War narratives and their delivery systems
- Theories of storytelling and contemporary media
- Narrative uses for emerging technologies
- The ways specific media – print, orality, cinema, television, digital platforms – alter the nature of stories
- The aesthetics and practices of transmedia storytelling

people, places, things

From royal shakespeare co. to studio 54, cms has it covered

Faculty

Ed Barrett will write a book titled *Digital Poetry* for the MIT Press, based on the class of the same name he first taught in spring 2004.

Odile Cazenave will be at Boston University for the next year as visiting faculty. The English translation of her book *Afrique sur Seine* (2003) is forthcoming from Lexington Books. During the summer, Cazenave wrote an article on African women writing memory and history; another on African authors and political writing today; and is currently writing a chapter on the novel and global Africa for an anthology on African fiction.

Ian Condry published an article "Cultures of Music Piracy: An Ethnographic Comparison of the U.S. and Japan," in the *International Journal of Cultural Studies*.

John W. Dower and **Shigeru Miyagawa** received the MIT Class of 1960 Innovation in Education Award for their work on Visualizing Cultures. Visualizing Cultures will be on Broadway, when the remake of Steven Sondheim's "Pacific Overtures" will open November 12 at the landmark Studio 54 theater. Visualizing Culture's "Black Ships and Samurai," which is about Commodore Matthew Perry's arrival in Japan in 1853-1854 – the theme of "Pacific Overtures" – will have a special installation in the lobby of Studio 54 for the run of the show.

Joseph Dumit's book, *Picturing Personhood: Brain Scans and Biomedical Identities*, was recently published by Princeton University Press. Dumit will be speaking on neuroethics at an upcoming bioethics conference and at the American Academy for the Advancement of Science. This fall, he is teaching a new graduate course on Science, Media and Social Movements.

Kurt Fendt presented at the Annual Conference of the Association for Literary and Linguistic Computing in Göteborg, Sweden and at the ED-MEDIA 2004 Conference in Lugano, Switzerland. He was an invited speaker at the Summer

Academy on the two Swiss Writers Friedrich Dürrenmatt and Max Frisch at the Centre Dürrenmatt in Neuchâtel, Switzerland, organized by the Swiss National Archives. This term, Fendt is teaching a new course, German Culture, Media, and Society.

Michael M.J. Fischer published *Mute Dreams, Blind Owls, and Dispersed Knowledges: Persian Poesis in the Transitional Circuitry* (Duke Univ. Press, 2004), about the widespread appeal of Iranian cinema. Approaching film as a tool for anthropological analysis, he examines how Iranian filmmakers have incorporated and remade the rich traditions of oral, literary, and visual media in Persian culture.

Diana Henderson spent three weeks in England, participating in the International Shakespeare Conference in Stratford, meeting with MIT's Royal Shakespeare Company associates, and seeing plays. She wrote two, related articles on money, words and war, and interviewed filmmaker Campbell Scott (*Hamlet*) for an article on the artistic process in *Blackwell's Concise Companion to Shakespeare on Screen*, a volume she is also editing. Henderson's chapter on "Theatre and Controversy, 1572-1603" in the *Cambridge History of British Theatre* will be published in October.

Henry Jenkins completed a first draft of his new book, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Intersect*, and is currently revising it for an early January deadline. This book, along with two anthologies of his collected essays and columns (*The Wow Climax* and *Fans, Bloggers, and Gamers*) will be published by New York University Press.

Doug Morgenstern, along with **Ellen Crocker**, **Kurt Fendt** and **Gilberte Furstenburg**, traveled to Göteborg, Sweden in June to present at the joint conference of the Association for Computers and the Humanities and the Association for Literary and Linguistic Computing. Morgenstern went on to Valencia, Spain afterwards and to Colombia in July where he gave a workshop on the MITUPV Exchange at the EAFIT University in

Medellin, and a presentation on that and on OpenCourseWare to the Harvard-MIT Alumni Club in Bogotá.

Jeff Ravel helped organize a workshop titled "Impostors: Identity and Pretense in Europe and the Atlantic World, 1600-1800" that will take place October 8-9 at the Clark Library in Los Angeles.

Irving Singer finished a book of memoirs this summer, together with an expanded edition of his book *Sex: A Philosophical Primer*, which includes a new essay entitled "Marriage: Same-Sex and Opposite-Sex" and will appear in print in October. In addition, he wrote a chapter for a new book of his on the philosophy of film. The chapter is entitled "Jean Cocteau and the Poetry of Film."

David Thorburn, editor in chief of the Media in Transition book series, reports that the first three volumes in the series — *Rethinking Media Change*, *Democracy and New Media* and *New Media 1740-1915* — have been reprinted as paperbacks this fall. **Henry Jenkins** and **Edward Barrett** are the series associate editors.

Edward Baron Turk spent three weeks in July in residence in Avignon, France, for the annual Theater Festival. With literally hundreds of plays to select from every day, beginning at noon and ending at midnight, he says he saw 57 productions in 20 days. "My exposure to unfamiliar contemporary French and Francophone playwrights was the big revelation," Turk says, "and I hope to integrate some of these writers and plays into a new undergraduate course I'm planning on modern French theater."

William Uricchio, based in the Netherlands during his Guggenheim and MIT-sponsored research leave, is exploring the wonders of 19th-century television as part of a book project. He'll spend the first few weeks of October on a lecture tour in the UK, Holland and Germany, and then get back to the completion of the manuscript. Uricchio is also editing the results of his research team's investigations into media and identity in Europe, part of a 5-year European Science

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Communications Forum and CMS Colloquium Schedule

September 16
5-7 p.m.
2-105

Colloquium: *The Youth Voice Collaborative Model*

YWCA Boston's Youth Voice Collaborative presents a new after-school program model for using media literacy as the vehicle to engage youth in exploring issues of race and gender. Workshop participants will be introduced to the Youth Voice Collaborative model, meet young people working to implement the program for their peers, and learn effective ways to connect media literacy education to the complex issues of race and gender.

September 23
5-7 p.m.
Bartos Theater
MIT Media Lab

Forum: *MIT's OpenCourseWare: A Status Report*

Steven Lerman, director, Center for Educational Computing Initiatives (CECI); and **Anne H. Margulies**, executive director, OpenCourseWare

Entering its third year, MIT's OpenCourseWare initiative now offers the course materials from 900 courses, from all schools and departments at the Institute. Available free of charge to anyone with access to the World Wide Web, the site is currently 35 gigabytes in size, containing 11,425 HTML pages, nearly 9,000 images and nearly 14,000 unique PDF pages. The project's ultimate goal is to make MIT's entire curriculum freely and openly available to a global audience of students, educators and self-learners. In this progress report, our speakers will discuss the challenges and false starts of this project, as well as the successes that have marked the development of this bold venture. They will demonstrate a sampling of the material available on OCW and present data profiling the global community that makes use of the site.

September 30
5-7 p.m.
2-105

Colloquium: *Media and Community*

Chris Csikszentmihályi, director, Media Lab's Computing Culture group; **Cesar L. McDowell**, associate professor, Department of Urban Studies and Planning, and director, the Center for Reflective Community Practice.

This joint event will feature demonstrations and presentations by faculty and students from the Computing Cultures Group, the Center from Reflexive Community Practice, and Comparative Media Studies.

October 7
5-7 p.m.
2-105

Colloquium: *The Making of King Gimp with Filmmaker Jon Meyer*

Jon Meyer, a professor at Indiana University, worked with a small team to produce this film about Dan Keplinger, one of his students, *King Gimp* won the 2000 Oscar for best documentary short subject and has appeared on HBO.

October 14
5-7 p.m.
Bartos Theater
MIT Media Lab

Forum: *New Media, Old Politics?*

Henry Jenkins, MIT Comparative Media Studies; **Garret Loporto**, TrueMajority.org.; **Joe Trippi**, Howard Dean campaign manager and author, *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*; Moderator: **David Thorburn**, MIT Literature



Joe Trippi

Many have claimed that the emergence of the Internet and the multiplication of television channels as a result of cable and satellite technologies have fundamentally altered American politics. The current presidential campaign may offer a decisive test of this thesis. How are new technologies enabling new forms of fund-raising and political activism? What is the significance of the fact that Fox News, a cable network, drew more viewers of the Republican National Convention than the traditional networks? What has been the impact of such Internet-based groups as MoveOn and TrueMajority? Are these and related developments helpful to the ideal of an informed and engaged civic society? Or do they encourage polarization and the politics of slander and smear? Co-sponsored by the Technology and Culture Forum at MIT.

October 21
5-7 p.m.
E25-111
MIT Medical Building

Forum: *Media Literacy: Learning and Understanding in the Information Age*

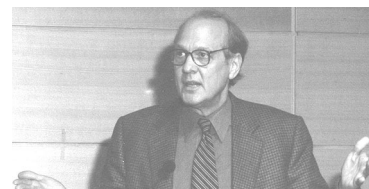
Roberto Aparici, CMS visiting scholar; **Robyn Guin**, Edith Cowan University; **Alycia Scott-Hiser**, TechBoston Academy; **Kim Slack**, HOME Inc.; *Moderator: Alan Michel*, HOME Inc.

Educators discuss how to evaluate students' media environments.

October 28
5-7 p.m.
Bartos Theater
MIT Media Lab

Forum: *New Roles for Established Media?*

Alex Jones, Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics, and Public Policy, Harvard University; **Mark Jurkowitz**, *Boston Globe*; **Amy Mitchell**, Project for Excellence in Journalism; *Moderator: Stephen Van Evera*, MIT Political Science



Alex Jones

See October 14 description. Series co-sponsored by the Technology and Culture Forum at MIT.

MIT's Graduate Student Council has posted a calendar of elections-related events at <http://gsc.mit.edu/US-election>.

November 4
5-7 p.m.
2-105

Colloquium: *Web in Transition: An Example from Southeast Europe*

Mirko Petric, University of Split (Croatia)

This presentation illustrates and contextualizes the uses of the Web in the transitional society of Croatia, which was part of Yugoslavia from 1945 to 1999. Croatia connected to the Internet in 1992, and its first steps as a nation-state coincide with the advent of the medium in the 1990s.

November 18
5-7 p.m.
E25-111
MIT Medical Building

Forum: *Copyright Wars*

Wendy Gordon, Boston University School of Law
Michael Meurer, Boston University School of Law

In August, the Congressional Budget Office released a report titled "Copyright Issues in Digital Media." The report defined copyright as an instrument "for allocating creative resources," not "an absolute, inviolable set of rights to which either creators or consumers are entitled." But how do such apparently even-handed principles work out in practice? And what are the constitutional and intellectual principles that lie behind the idea of copyright? What lessons for current arguments over the downloading of music or films are embedded in the history of copyright? How is patent law different from copyright law? As part of this ongoing conversation about creativity, ownership and the powers of technology, the Forum is planning a series of panels on specific aspects of the copyright wars. Prof. Wendy Gordon of the Boston University School of Law will anchor the discussion.

December 7
Begins 7 p.m.
6-120

Colloquium: *Adventures in Illegal Art: Creative Media Resistance and Negativland*

Mark Hosler is a founding member of Negativland.

In the last 23 years, Negativland (www.negativland.com) released 19 CDs, two books (*Fair Use: The Story Of The Letter U And The Numeral 2* and *Deathsentences Of The Polished And Structurally Weak*) and have been sued twice for copyright infringement. They have become outspoken artists/activists, particularly in the world of intellectual property.

All Communications Forum events are free and open to the public. For more information, see web.mit.edu/comm-forum.

Faculty from page 3

Foundation project. He'll return to MIT and his role as associate director of CMS in the spring.

Jing Wang spent two months in Beijing, working as a visiting consultant for Ogilvy & Mather, and designing a MotoMusic project on Chinese youth and music culture for Motorola. She reports her biggest adventures this summer were "clubbing at Sanlituanr, a famous bar street in the capital, for my MotoMusic project; and a lecture given at IBM in Beijing on 'Academia as a Medium.'" In May, Wang presented "Bobos in China? Neo-Tribes and the Urban Imaginary" at a conference in Hong Kong.

Graduate students

Vanessa Bertozzi (2006) is producing and directing a documentary entitled *Second Hand*, which explores various subcultures' uses of second-hand clothing. At MIT, she will investigate how new technology is helping documentary to shape and represent cultural identity, and how that might be translated into political action and education. After graduating from Harvard with a B.A. in Visual and Environmental Studies in 2001, Bertozzi worked in New York City as associate producer and editor for The Sonic Memorial Project (www.sonicmemorial.org) – an online collaboration of more than 50 independent radio and new media producers, artists, and historians covering The World Trade Center.

Joellen Easton (2005) has been working with Alex Jones, director of the Shorenstein Center for the Press, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard, conducting research on media consolidation and the relationship between public relations and journalism in preparation for Jones' upcoming book on the state of the news media. She continues her work with the BBC and PRI, where she identifies news stories by public radio stations around the country that address global trends. Easton and **Rekha Murthy** will be developing a new radio-production curriculum for a class to be taught in spring 2005.

Amulya Gopalakrishnan (2006) spent early summer covering India's exhilarating general election and the last couple of

months wrapping up research on the mutating arts-journalism scene in India. As she begins study in CMS, she is interested in how information communication technologies impact development; in associated issues of equity and voice; how local heritage collides with global media; and in the accompanying ferment in the film and publishing worlds.

Andrea McCarty (2005) used a fellowship from the MIT Public Service Center to spend two months working on a project at the African Film Library in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. She helped the library create a database for their film collection, and worked with a collection of West African news film shot in the 1960s, just after many nations in the region won their independence from France. McCarty is currently trying to raise money to preserve some of those reels of film.

Rekha Murthy (2005) just returned from Paris, where she and classmate **Andrea McCarty** did field research for their PDA walking tour, *Flaneurs Savants*. They received funding from Foreign Languages and Literatures and the Kelly-Douglas fund. Before heading to Paris, Murthy spent June and July at France Telecom's R&D lab in Cambridge, further developing her interest in mobile technologies for personal use. She also managed to fit in two weeks in Bangalore, where, she reports, along with the Internet boom have come coffee shops and auditions for "Indian Idol."

Ravi Purushotma (2006) hopes to explore how emerging digital media forms can be harnessed to foster learning and help dispel barriers. He is currently working on an article for the journal *Language Learning and Technology* highlighting the possibilities for using video games, web browsing, pop music and other media forms in the foreign language learning process. See his website at www.langwidg.com.

Karen Schrier (2005) worked for Team JASON Online, the online division of the JASON Foundation for Education, a non-profit that creates science and technology curricula for students. She also went to South Carolina with **Brian Jacobson** to work on a multimedia project on the roadside attraction "South of the Border." They hope to present their work, which was

completed with grants from the MIT Council for the Arts and Committee on Campus Race Relations, to the MIT community this term.

Parmesh Shahani (2005) was selected as an MIT Arts Scholar for 2004-2005 by the MIT Office of the Arts. He spent the summer in India working on his thesis dealing with the negotiation of sexuality, identity and community amidst an online/offline gay setting in Bombay city. He also attended a weeklong conference on South Asian Sexualities and Cultures in the south Indian city of Bangalore in June. Shahani's work with Bombay's gay subcultures attracted the attention of NPR's Morning Edition, which interviewed him this summer.

Visiting scholars

Andrew Jakubowicz will examine the interaction between social scientists and new-media designers in explorations of how new media can be used to advance social science research and communication. In particular, he says he wants to see how innovation in web development and software has been utilized by anthropologists, sociologists, historians and related professions in their research, teaching and publication. On the basis of this work, Jakubowicz aims to develop longer-term collaborative projects with American scholars.

Maureen N. McLane returns to MIT after a summer that included a three-week stay in France ("biking in Burgundy can't be beat!" she says), and an August residency at Yaddo, the artists' colony in Saratoga Springs. In June, her article "Tuning the Multi-Media Nation, or, Minstrelsy of the Afro-Scottish Border" was published in *European Romantic Review*, and over the summer she published several reviews of contemporary poetry in *The Chicago Tribune*. This fall, she's looking forward to finishing her book on Anglo-Scottish ballad collecting and mediality.

Curtiss Priest, supported by the U.S. Department of Education and Cisco Academies, continued building a K-12, out-of-school learning website at www.elearningspace.org. He'll be presenting, "A Condensation and Review of Various 'Learning Object' Activities and Efforts" at a November conference.

Measuring media literacy from page 1

"I share sentiments expressed by John Dewey that education should not just be about teaching children how to find a job, but how to have a better quality of life," Walker said. "However, if children are not familiar with critical ways to communicate with technology, they will be labeled as not intelligent, and be relegated to menial or no jobs. In some ways it is ironic. The accepted notion of technology is that it opened up doors of opportunity, but for whole groups of children of color and low income, the doors are closed."

Her concern for too many urban children is that they are not being afforded the same opportunities as others for access to technology via computers in the classroom and computers in the lab.

Besides the hardware, of greater concern to Hawkins is with the manner in which computers are used to foster critical thinking skills. She believes there is hope in the development of tools



such as the ones being created in MIT's Media Lab.

"Using such technology, children can actually build models," Walker said. "They learn programming mechanics, not just drill and practice. They need to become programmers and entrepreneurs. To me, the key to it all is anchored in literacy and computers are an important part of a new literacy."

"I want to use technology to create programs that foster literacy across the curriculum," she said. "But the programming needs to be multi-cultural and multi-ethnic. This is a major concern in my work."

Stopping by cms

Although Walker began her residency at MIT in 2002, the relationship with **Henry Jenkins** actually began in the fall of 1998, she recalls. While in Cambridge presenting a paper at Harvard,

Walker stopped by the CMS office and met Jenkins who urged her to return to Cambridge in the spring of 1999 as a speaker at CMS's *We Wired the Classroom, Now What?* conference.

"**Henry Jenkins** believes in me and my ability to make significant contributions to the field of communication," Walker said. "He has shown me what it is like to have a vision, and turn it into a manifestation. He encourages me to work independently, while providing opportunities for collaboration."

In Cambridge, Walker is collecting data on children's attitudes towards reading, writing, and technology at The Dr. Martin Luther King School and the Benjamin Banneker Charter School.

She is in the process of transcribing video- and audiotaped interviews with the children that will be used, along with the students' own pictorial depictions of technology, for a content analysis of the children's media literacy.

"My research has revealed that children have better learning outcomes when the characters in the software programs or whatever media they are using look like them and are depicted in a positive manner," Walker said.

"Using the themes that emerge, I will create a new survey instrument aimed at better assessing the role that media and technology may play in motivating learning and developing programming that promotes literacy across the curriculum," she said.

Publishing and publicizing her research findings is Walker's primary goal for the 2004-2005 academic year. This fall, the Storyteller Project will launch www.storyplayground.org, a website featuring research and resources on technology, learning and literacy.



Cambridge grade-school students use paper and crayons (above and left) to express their feelings about the technology in their lives as part of Vera Walker's media-literacy research.

—Vera Walker photos

Reginald Owens is associate professor of journalism at Louisiana Tech University and has worked with Walker on the StorytellerProject.

Vera Walker continues her work in the Cambridge public schools. See story beginning on cover and continued above.

Yuichi Washida returned to Tokyo, where he resumed his duties as research director for the Hakuhodo Institute of Life and Living (HILL). Washida and his Tokyo colleagues are planning a conference in the spring and will invite CMS professors **Henry Jenkins**, **Jing Wang** and **Ian Condry** to discuss the impact of Asian cultural trends on global society.

Chris Weaver spent the summer writing the first chapters in a planned trilogy on the art, the science, and the business of computer games. He also has two patents pending for inventions in computer technology and wireless communications. Weaver plans on teaching at MIT again during spring term, and plans to conduct a career workshop and lecture during the current term.

In Medias Res

is published three times a year by:
MIT Comparative Media Studies (CMS)
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
14N-207
Cambridge, MA 02139
617.253.3599 / cms@mit.edu

CMS

Henry Jenkins, Director
William Uricchio, Associate Director
Tommy DeFrantz, Acting Associate Director
Chris Pomiecko, Program Administrator
Susan Stapleton, Administrative Assistant
Brad Seawell, Newsletter Editor

DeFrantz lands acting and directing gig in cms this fall

Tommy DeFrantz was named acting associate director of CMS for the fall term. DeFrantz, associate professor of music and theater arts, temporarily replaces Associate Director **William Uricchio**, who is on leave until the spring term.

CMS did not name an associate director for the previous term, but Director **Henry Jenkins** said, "Day-to-day operations of the Comparative Media Studies Program has reached the point where we really have to have more than one person on the ground to interact with students, faculty, visiting scholars, applicants, research partners, visitors from other programs, potential sponsors, and the like.

"We need someone who will be close to the CMS program and responsive to the concerns and needs of those various constituencies. At the same time, DeFrantz's role here should signal the growing importance of the arts in general and performance studies in particular to the Comparative Media Studies Program.

"We are hoping what will come from

this association will be a fuller understanding of how we might build even stronger cooperation between CMS and Music and Theater Arts."



Tommy DeFrantz

—Donna Coveney photo

Tommy taps

Three MIT dancers including DeFrantz recently put on their tap shoes and trans-

formed the Ford Room into an international conversation exploring movement, culture, passion and technology's role in teaching, according to a story that appeared in *MIT Tech Talk*.

During the September event, sponsored by the Singapore-MIT Alliance (SMA), the trio in Cambridge exchanged performances and instruction with a group of dancers in Singapore via video conference.

DeFrantz presented a tap sequence with two student dancers, James Tolbert, a senior majoring in computer science, and Bradford Backus, a graduate student in the Harvard-MIT Program in Health Sciences and Technology.

Ten thousand miles away, Singapore choreographer Patrick Loo and six student dancers performed hip-hop movements to Indian music.

Called "Moves Across the Water: Tap and Hip-Hop," the event with the National University of Singapore is the first in a new series of arts collaborations, said Alan Brody, MIT provost for the arts.

CMS

Comparative Media Studies

14N-207

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

77 Massachusetts Avenue

Cambridge, MA 02139

