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An analysis of educational films: An African-American perspective. (Volumes I and II)

Hatfield, Brenda Garibaldi, Ph.D.
The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col., 1991

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AN ANALYSIS OF EDUCATIONAL FILMS:
AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE

VOLUME I

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Curriculum and Instruction

by
Brenda Garibaldi Hatfield
B.A., University of New Orleans, 1965
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December, 1991
Dedicated to my husband, Charles J. Hatfield, Jr.
and my sons, Eric and Richard
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ABSTRACT

Historically African-Americans have been marginalized and subordinated in critical discourse and research in curriculum studies and educational media. There is a vital need for research directed toward African-Americans as subjects and viewers of media used in school curricula. Cultural theorists in curriculum and educational media studies are interested in knowing how social, political and ideological messages are produced and circulated in society, and how student audiences use them to make sense of their experiences.

The purpose of this research is to contribute to a better understanding of how racial representations and social identities are coded and produced in educational films, and how African-American student audiences respond to these media texts in the context of schools. This investigation involves a critical analysis of two contrasting films widely used in Health and Family Living Curriculum on the subject of AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome), and a study of African-American high school student audiences'
readings and responses to the messages embedded in these films.

Research methods include (1) a textual analysis of the films, (2) ethnographic classroom participant observations, and (3) open-ended and focused interviews with students. The study draws on critical curriculum theories and research approaches in cultural studies of film media. It is based on assumptions of audience reception theories in cultural studies which state that communities of viewers will read or interpret media texts differentially depending on their backgrounds, cultural and social experiences. Key concepts in reception theory stress the investigation of links among author, text and socially situated viewers. In this context, the study focuses on African-American students in three high schools described as (1) suburban, (2) magnet college preparatory, and (3) urban inner-city, located in a large urban public school district in the southern United States. Conclusions from this research are directed toward the goal for a more socially conscious, liberatory and democratic education for African-American students. These research findings result in recommendations for
the production of instructional film texts focused on African-American student audiences, and reconceptualized criteria for the evaluation, selection and utilization of film media in schools.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION
Autobiographical Reflections

Reflecting on my African-American childhood in the South during the forties and fifties, vividly I recall the memories of going to a racially segregated neighborhood movie theater with family and friends on a Sunday afternoon. Among my most memorable cinematic experiences were those rare occasion when an African-American appeared on the screen. The surprise of seeing ourselves racially represented on the commercial movie screen stirred a sort of mass reaction among us. Our reactions were expressed in various forms of silent tension, nervous giggles, boisterous laughter, imitative language, triumphant cheers and applause. Such representational moments were always significant, no matter whether the African-American characters were singers, dancers, bit players, or even a belittling "Mammy" or "Uncle Tom." We were so deprived of seeing anyone of our own racial group represented in the media that even the most fleeting appearance of a Black actor's face could grasp our attention and rivet our eyes on the screen.
as we tensed, nudged, smiled, or maybe cried. Eventually, someone in the audience would break the tension and invariably proclaim our mutual moment of identity with the refrain, "Hey, look, (s)he's colored!"

During those early movie going experiences, we in the African-American audience were confined to the upper balcony of our neighborhood theater, while whites were a privileged audience seated in the downstairs orchestra section. Simultaneously watching the same film, the two separated audiences seemed to struggle in an effort to determine whose cultural or social experiences would gain hegemonic ascendance through the textual discourse of the film. This became apparent as the racially segregated audiences responded in near counterpoint patterns of separate and distinguished voices from above and below the balcony. Our responses to the films were so often incongruent that one could actually discern differentiated patterns of coded responses operating as indicated by our shouts, whistles, cries, laughter, applause, protestations and silences. Yet there were also revealing moments during our shared cinematic experiences, when the often counterpart audiences
responded in collective agreement. Those occasions were bittersweet reminders that a dominant ideology still prevailed among all of us living in the South.

My autobiographical reflections of experiences with film media are pivotal to this research because I have been enabled to connect with social and public experiences. Indeed there is no unified African-American perspective in response to media texts because responses to media are multiple and complex, based on class, gender and social experiences. Although there is commonality in the experience of African-Americans being positioned by dominant racial representations in media, responses to such representations of course vary as this study will demonstrate. Significantly, in this research the once silenced voices of African-American students were rendered free to respond to media, hopefully demonstrating the possibilities of transformative and liberatory praxis in schools.

Overview of Study

The field of educational media in curriculum studies is impoverished by an absence of African-American representation in critical discursive practice and research pertaining to issues of class,
race and gender. Sociologists of education, critical curriculum theorists, cultural theorists and cultural ethnographers recognize and accept the premise that praxis is not accomplished through neutral approaches to research directed toward oppressed people. Instead, there is general agreement among these scholars that the autobiographical process and self-reflexivity have value in facilitating the developmental process of theory construction, particularly as it is directed toward reconceptualization of the curriculum (Grumet, 1981, 1988; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Pinar, 1981, 1988a, 1988b; Pinar & Grumet, 1976). Therefore, it is significant that I contribute subjective reflexivity to this study from the standpoint of an African-American woman who has forty-eight years of social, cultural, and educational experiences with film media in schools and society. These experiences connect my research as an authentic racial and educational text.

The purpose of this research was to contribute to an understanding of how racial representations, social identities and ideological messages were coded and embedded in instructional films; and how these images and messages impacted African-American student
audiences through their readings and responses to the films. The study was undertaken in three public high schools, located in a majority African-American urban school district in the southern portion of the United States. These schools were classified as (1) suburban, (2) college preparatory, and (3) urban inner-city. In each school, a minimum of three Health and Family Living classes participated in the study. The selected classes were studying units on AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome). The study focused on two selected instructional films on AIDS that were approved by the school district for use in the Health and Family Living curriculum. The films were entitled 'Til Death Do Us Part (Durrin, 1988), and Sex, Drugs and AIDS (ODN Productions, 1987). The films were presented to the classes within the context of their Health and Family Living course; students were observed in classes while viewing the films; and immediately following the film viewing, students were interviewed in small groups about the films. The study at the three schools consisted of approximately 237 senior high school students enrolled in a tenth grade Health and Family course. From this audience,
119 students participated in small group interview sessions (79 females, 40 males).

Methodological approaches included (1) a critical textual analysis of the selected films, (2) ethnographic participant classroom observations, and (3) open-ended and focused interviews with students directed toward the films. These approaches drew on theories of critical curriculum and methodologies of cultural studies in media. Methodologies employed in this study were based on the research approaches of critical cultural ethnography and critical textual analysis of media. Procedures were as follows:

1. Two pre-selected films on the subject of AIDS were textually analyzed using the techniques of semiotics, structural analysis, ideological analysis and deconstruction of texts.

2. Classes in Health and Family Living were observed and analyzed through critical ethnographical techniques of participant observations and interviews with students, teachers, support staff and administrators.
3. The two selected films on AIDS were presented to a minimum of three classes in each school within the context of their Health and Family courses.

4. Voluntary groups of students were interviewed using unstructured and focused interview methods, immediately following film presentations.

5. Reflexive analysis based on ethnographic observations and interviews, juxtaposed with critical textual analysis of the films, formed the basis for drawing inferences and conclusions.

Research findings indicated that students across differentiated school populations generally responded with similar readings of the films, and concurred in their responses related to informational needs, interests and preferences for instructional film media on the subject of AIDS. Significantly, however, there were differentiated thematic categorical responses among students at the three school that related to their unique learning styles and the teaching practices in their classrooms. Significant also were consistent and distinct audience readings and responses to the film texts at each school that reflected the students' unique lived cultural and
social experiences in their individual classrooms, schools and communities.

This study resulted in reconceptualized approaches to the evaluation, selection and utilization of film media in the classroom, particularly as these media were targeted toward African-American student audiences. The research also recommended a more dynamic and interactive model for film criticism and analysis directed toward the inclusion of more transformative knowledge in classrooms. Conclusions from the research were directed toward the goal of a more socially conscious, liberatory and democratic education for African-American students in this nation.

Need for Study and Significance of Research

Historically, African-American have been represented in electronic media as projections of various and shifting dominant ideologies of white racial majority groups. African-American representations in early cinema reinforced and perpetuated racial and social myths that assured the continuation of their oppression in society. Television as a popular mass medium also marginalized African-Americans' full participation and
representation in contemporary society. Similarly, instructional film media followed these popular cultural patterns by reflecting the hegemonic ideology of white America, and reinforcing the distorted and stereotyped images of African-Americans as well as other racial and ethnic minority groups. Today these experiences with various forms of electronic media continue to confront African-Americans in our multi-dimensional roles as film producers, subjects, viewers, actors, critics, educators, students, and consumers of film.

For the most part, African-American representation in film media has been neglected in educational research. An in-depth search of retrospective and current literature in education, the humanities, and the social sciences revealed a paucity of research effort directed toward African-Americans as subjects and viewers of media texts. It is particularly problematic when African-Americans find themselves marginalized, subordinated and absent in critical discourse and research directed toward their own cultural, social and racial representation and identity in electronic media. Therefore, there is a vital need for discursive criticism focused on
African-Americans in media texts by African-Americans. Discursive criticism is significant as a social, political and educational process that serves to deconstruct or probe texts in an effort to understand how they operate to promote or oppose the representations of various social or racial groups in society. Critical discursive practice can contribute to a better understanding of how social and political ideologies are produced and circulated in texts to serve various interests of society. These are compelling reasons why African-Americans must become engaged in educational research and discursive critical practice in educational media and curriculum studies.

The problematic of marginality and token representations in media discourse is underscored by Afro-centric film critics, Julien and Mercer (1988):

Marginality circumscribes the enunciative modalities of black film as a cinematic discourse and imposes a double bind on black subjects who speak in the public sphere; if only one voice is given the "right to speak," that voice will be heard by the majority culture, as "speaking for" the many who are excluded or marginalized from access to the means of representation. This of underlines the problem of tokenism; the very idea that a single film could "speak for" an entire community of interest reinforces the perceived secondariness of that community. (p. 4)
Many Afro-centric critics in cultural and media studies are becoming more vocal and critical of "Others" acting as privileged speakers for oppressed racial, ethnic and gendered groups in society (Dyer, 1988; Gaines, 1988; Hooks, 1984, 1989; Julien & Mercer, 1988; McCarthy, 1989); Williamson, 1988). These critics recognize that the voice of the white, middle class male has dominated critical discourse on issues related in minorities, with the exception of gender issues, which have been almost exclusively spoken by white middle class women. Minority critics argue that this form of token or marginalized representation only produces unitary texts of monologic discourse whose authenticity cannot be validated (Hooks, 1989; Julien, 1988; McCarthy, 1988c).

In a criticism of Neo-Marxist accounts of schools and society that subordinate the histories and experiences of minority and oppressed people, McCarthy (1988c) refers to texts of white new middle class intellectuals as "bastardized" or "counterfeit" representations of third world societies. McCarthy views this problematic as a challenge for African-Americans and other minority educators to contribute
to political theory and action in a new arena of social, cultural and educational struggle, as he states:

Our project in the classroom might involve, first, submitting these representations of social relations to deconstruction and critique and second, reassembling new images that reflect our new political understanding of the relationships in which we are embedded. (McCarthy, 1988a, p. 199)

Thus, McCarthy (1988a, 1988b, 1988c) makes a case for what he terms a nonsynchronous theory of race relations in school and society. According to McCarthy (1988a, 1988b, 1988c, 1989, 1990), non-synchrony argues for minorities to be their own representative agents as spoken subjects of their own texts. McCarthy's theory is based on the following assumption:

Individuals (or groups) in their relation to economic, political, and cultural institutions such as schools do not share similar consciousness, needs, interests or desires "at the same points in time." (McCarthy, 1990, p. 83)

Through arguments of non-synchrony, McCarthy urges minorities to develop their own social and political space to deconstruct and critique texts that represent and reflect their own understandings of the discursive practices of electronic media and other
products of popular culture (McCarthy, 1988a). Indeed non-synchrony positions minorities to ground their own racial, cultural and social histories and experiences into critical discourse, especially as it pertains to their representativeness. These arguments undergird this research by focusing on African-American student subjects and their responses to film media texts in the context of their schooling, and further through an analysis of these texts to deconstruct racial representations and social identities embedded in media as they impact these through the curriculum.

Significance of AIDS in the Curriculum

Currently, AIDS has been seriously targeted across the nation in schools' Health and Family Living curricula, sometimes referred to as sex education. AIDS education also has been greatly supported by the federal and state legislatures, and local school boards. AIDS is a disease caused by a virus which destroys the body's immunity system and often results in death. The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) which causes AIDS is spread mainly through (1) sexual contact with an HIV infected person, (2) sharing hypodermic needles or syringes with an infected person, (3) transmission from an infected mother to
her child before or during childbirth, and (4) blood transfusions from infected whole blood or plasma. These are high risk behaviors and activities that are being addressed in the Health and Family Living curriculum to prevent continuous spread of the disease.

Since AIDS was initially recognized in 1981, the disease has become a worldwide epidemic. It is estimated that by 1991, over 270,000 cases of AIDS will have developed in the United States from a present pool of one to two million HIV-infected individuals (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1987, p. 7). The number of cases of AIDS among adolescents between ages 13 to 19 has doubled annually, and it is projected that by 1991 an estimated 3,000 children will have suffered from the disease and virtually all will die (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1987, p. 3). The incidences of AIDS cases is disproportionately high among African-Americans (3.0 to 1), compared to American Caucasians in the United States (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1987, p. 10). According to the Center for Disease Control, this disease is spreading even more rapidly in African-
American communities (U.S. Department of Health Services, 1987).

The construction of AIDS through the media has significant social, political and economical implications for African-Americans and other racial minorities in society. The creation of myths on the origin and representations of AIDS has been fostered greatly in the media (Aggleton & Homans, 1988; Cantwell, 1988; Douglas, 1989). Many widely disseminated theories have placed its origins in Black world geographical locations, particularly Africa and Haiti. There have also been obvious biases against certain racial and ethnic groups in reporting the disease, such as blaming "sex positive" promiscuous cultures as those located in the tropics of the Caribbean, Haiti and Africa for generating the disease in epidemic proportions (Aggleton, Hart & Davies, 1988; Cantwell, 1988; Douglas, 1989; Shoumatoff, 1988). After considerable investigation, these origination theories have proven unfounded and worthless (Shoumatoff, 1988), but the situation still signals a need to be vigilant about the prevailing racial, social and political connotations of the disease in media.
The study of AIDS presents even broader implications in relation to media representations for educators who are committed to social transformations in schools and society. Commitment to notions of empowerment and transformation in health education related to AIDS is elaborated by Aggleton (1988) and Homans as follows:

Self-empowerment is a term which is frequently used in health education but rarely defined. We use the term to describe the process by which people develop skills, understandings and awareness so that they can act on the basis of rational choice rather than irrational feelings (Satow, 1987). A self empowerment model of health education is one in which the individual uses her or his personal resources to the full, thereby maximizing their chances of leading a healthy life. (p. 163-164)

Thus in this research, emphasis is placed on seeking strategies that might be directed toward self-empowerment of students through their classroom experiences with film media in the health and family living curriculum. Educators who are working within a socially transformatory ethic will also need to combat ignorance, as well as challenge some of the distorted ideas that have been reported and disseminated through various forms of media targeted toward students in classroom. Schools perform significant roles in the distribution of knowledge and information imparted to
students in the classroom. Studies in the sociology of school knowledge demonstrate that curriculum is not neutral; rather it embodies social, political and economic interests in various forms of knowledge (Anyon, 1981, 1983, 1988; Apple, 1979, 1983; Apple & Weis, 1983; Bernstein, 1977; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Freire, 1988; Giroux & Penna, 1981; Taxel, 1983). Classroom knowledge is seen as selective, chosen to privilege the interests of the most powerful social and racial groups. Therefore, curriculum scholars and sociologists of education are encouraged to direct their research efforts towards the question of how curricular knowledge is created, distributed and taught in the classroom (Apple, 1979; Apple & Weis, 1983). In this pursuit, particular emphasis is placed on school knowledge as it occurs interactively between students and texts in schools as authentic lived classroom experiences (Apple, 1979; Apple & Weis, 1983).

Only recently has there been any movement in educational film research in which students are focused upon interacting with media texts in an actual lived classroom experience (Buckingham, 1990; Ellsworth & Whatley, 1990; Trudell, 1990a, 1990b). It
is noteworthy, however, that none of the early research has focused specifically on African-Americans in large urban school districts. Thus, this research affords the unique opportunity of a study that addresses (1) ethnographic observations of African-American students interacting with media texts in the classroom; (2) African-American students' responses to educational film media on the subject of AIDS; and (3) a critical discursive analysis of racial and social representations embedded in selected films on AIDS.

In summary, this research is significant for the following reasons:

1. It contributes to a gap in educational research and media criticism pertaining to African-American racial representations and social identities in educational film media that until now has not been included in the discourse of curriculum and media education.

2. It provides the opportunity for a minority voice situated as a middle class African-American woman to articulate a racial and gendered perspective on racial representations, social identities and ideological assumptions embedded in film media.
3. It creates a space which previously has been silenced and rendered ineffectual for African-American high school students to have a voice in media criticism as it pertains to their class, race and gender, and their actual lived experiences with media texts in school and classrooms.

4. It provides an opportunity to examine, revise and thereby reconceptualize the ways that educators go about the process of evaluating, selecting, utilizing and distributing curriculum knowledge through film media in schools.

5. It focuses on Health and Family Living, a curriculum area that has far reaching implications in preparing African-American students for their class, race and gendered roles in society.

6. It addresses the subject matter of AIDS, a serious socially and sexually transmitted disease that poses a threat to lives of youth, particularly those in the African-American community.

7. It creates an exemplary model in educational media discourse for critical analysis and discursive practice in deconstructing film text, particularly as these media produce and reproduce racial
representations and social identities of oppressed racial and ethnic groups in society.

8. It provides socially and politically enlightened guidelines in the creation of films for African-American student audiences.

Finally, this study was significant for its potential contribution toward transformative and liberatory education for African-American students. The concept of liberatory and transformative education in this study is especially influenced by Freire (1988) in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. According to Freire (1988), to be liberatory, education must include a problem posing concept, include material that is mediated by the students' world, and recognize the student as incomplete and conscious of his incompletion, yet capable of attempting to become fully human within and through their own conscious powers. Dialogics and the dialogical encounter of students with their own world becomes the essence of a liberatory and transformative education. This implies the necessity of the educator or teacher to investigate language and generative themes of the student's mediated world in order to bring forth critical consciousness and cultural action toward
liberation and enlightenment. Freire (1988) contends that there is no neutral education, and subjectivity is important in the process of transforming the world. Furthermore, liberating education is viewed as an act of praxis, not the singular transferral of information. Most meaningful in the context of my research is Freire's statement:

Political action on the side of the oppressed must be pedagogical action in the authentic sense of the word, and therefore, action with the oppressed. (Freire, 1988, p. 53)

Therefore, it is hoped that this research will transformatively impact students and teachers of all races for the betterment of our entire society.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This curriculum research was conducted in the framework of cultural studies, a discipline that traces its contemporary origins in the 1970s to the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Great Britain. Cultural studies focuses on economic, political, social, and ideological structures and practices in society. Themes of class, race and gender are consistent and central in the focus of cultural studies is based on elements of Marxism, semiotics, structuralism, post-structuralism, and ethnography (Fiske, 1987a; Hall, Hobson, Lowe & Willis, 1984). The cultural studies framework has made significant contributions to contemporary educational research in Great Britain, Australia, and the United States through investigations of lived culture, cultural practices, literary and media discourse, social construction of reality, social interactionism, and analysis of ideology (Aggleton, 1987; Everhart, 1983; McRobbie, 1978; Roman, 1987; Trudell, 1990a, 1990b; Valli, 1986; Walker, 1988; Weiner, 1985; Weis, 1985, 1988; Willis, 1977). In television and film research, the cultural studies
framework has been useful for addressing questions concerning how ideological messages are constructed and produced in media texts, and how these texts are read and become meaningful to various audiences. Until recently, these research approaches have been used mostly in media studies of television with nationwide audiences; but there is now a current movement in educational media research directed toward the study of educational films used in the classroom (Buckingham, 1990; Ellsworth & Whatley, 1990; Trudell, 1990a, 1990b). Thus, this research is predicated on the assumption that the culturalist approach can contribute more profoundly toward an understanding of how media texts are created and produced, and how they are read or responded to by African-American high school audiences.

Approaching the study of educational media from a culturalist perspective, it is necessary to distinguish it from mainstream and traditional media research. Traditional and mainstream media research are positivistic, based on scientific analytical theory involving empirical methodologies such as statistical analysis, program content analysis, questionnaires, surveys, and other forms of
quantitative data. Post-structural theorists of cultural studies consider these methods limited in their ability to account for the subtleties and complexities of meanings in electronic media texts (Allen, 1987; Becker, 1986, 1987; Fiske, 1987b; Hall et al., 1984; Masterman; 1985; Morley, 1980). Cultural theorists of media advance qualitative audience research methodologies which combine the theoretical frameworks of cultural ethnography with textual analysis and semiotics. These were the methodologies that informed my study, as they did the film and audience research of Morley (1980), Ann DeVaney (1987); Becker (1986, 1987), and Trudell (1990a, 1990b). Through qualitative approaches, it is possible to work toward an understanding of how meanings are structured in media texts, and how audiences struggle to represent their own cultures and experiences in the creation of meaning from those texts.

In this chapter, first I shall review the relevant theoretical approaches to media studies that inform this research, historically tracing and differentiating the frameworks of mainstream and critical cultural studies. Second, I shall construct
the specific theoretical arguments of critical cultural studies in media that undergird my research. Third, I shall present a theoretical overview of the methodologies of critical cultural ethnography including the techniques of (1) participant observations, (2) unstructured and focused interviews and (3) reflexivity in analysis. Fourth, I shall introduce post-structural approaches to textual analysis and semiotics, including textual deconstruction, ideological analysis, and representational codification and signifying practices in media texts as these techniques applied in the research. Fifth, I shall review three exemplary models of audience reception research that methodologically informed this research. Finally, this chapter concludes with a summary of how these methodologies were applied in the research.

Mainstream versus Culturalist Approaches to Media Studies

Historically, various theoretical approaches to mass media studies have been informed by the ways researchers perceived the power of the media within different intellectual, social, political and historical contexts. These different theoretical
approaches to the study of media have been informed by distinctions between (1) the mass society tradition, (2) the liberal-pluralists, and (3) the Marxist tradition, and (4) the Frankfort School. Generally, these distinctions breakdown into categories of difference between the liberal pluralist and Marxist traditions in communications research, also distinguished as empirical and critical theories respectively. These movements will be briefly discussed with respect to their epistemologies, methodologies and current influences on media communications.

The Mass Society Tradition

The mass society tradition can be traced as far back as the mid-nineteenth century. This view of the media was generally reflected as "pessimistic mass society" theory (Morley, 1980). While media were considered by some as a threat to the integrity of elite cultural values or to the viability of the political institutions of democracy, there were others who considered media as a primary threat to the masses, rendering them vulnerable to the social and political manipulation of the elite (Bennett, 1982). The mass society tradition did not constitute a
totally unified or integrated body of theory, as Bennett (1982) states:

It [mass society tradition] should rather be viewed as a loosely defined "outlook" consisting of a number of intersecting themes—the decline of the "organic community," the rise of mass culture, the social atomization of "mass man." Taken collectively, these have articulated a polyphony of negative and pessimistic reactions to the related processes of industrialization, urbanization, the development of political democracy, the beginnings of popular education and the emergence of contemporary forms of "mass communication." (p. 33)

Thus, the research that developed out of the mass culture tradition was empirical in its work involving message effects on audiences, and behaviorist with emphasis on cognitive factors of audience responses to the media.

The Liberal-Pluralist Tradition

The liberal-pluralist tradition of media theory emerged from within the mass society tradition during the 1940s and 1950s. The concepts of this tradition were based on democratic diversity and free political competition of capitalism. It sought to analyze relationships within the structure of democratic society, rather than between media organizations within the society, in the belief that mass communications did not serve as a necessary cause of
audience effect; people manipulated the media rather than were manipulated by it (Curran, Guerevitch & Woollacott, 1982). Thus, it repudiated the mass thesis by assuring the lack of media influence on which mass media power had been based, and ended conventional belief in the power of the media (Curran et al., 1982).

In mainstream research, the search continues for a single comprehensive theory that will explain the effects of mass communications. The theories seem to appear in cycles, with one replacing the other, such that over the past fifty years communications models have been known in succession as the Bullet Theory, the Limited Effects Model, the Moderate Effects Model, the Uses and Gratification Approach, the Agenda Setting Function, the Cultural Norms Theory, Powerful Effects Model, and so forth (Severin & Tankard, 1979). The two areas of greatest interest within these paradigms of the viewing media have been those pertaining to the effects of political and social behavior, and violence and mass communication on television aimed at children. There is also renewed interest in the powerful effects of media on the
formation of public opinion, public service campaigns and health communications.

Mainstream research in mass communications, particularly as it is practiced in the United States, is based on the liberal-pluralist paradigm. This paradigm is based on the "scientific method" of the natural and physical sciences for its model of how knowledge about media-audience relationships might be generated, and uses empirical techniques to acquire data in a systematic manner. Scientific investigators rely on statistics to aid them in making inferences from the objects of their studies to the populations they seek to generalize about. These scientists seek to make generalizations about the way people communicate, so as to make predictions about the outcomes, processes and effects of communication. All of this is directed toward the building of theory which will provide explanations and allow for predictability about how human beings communicate.

The most common methods of this paradigm are survey research, content analysis, experimental design and case studies (Severin & Tankard, 1979). Objectivity and neutrality are integral to this
paradigm when media theory is tested in mainstream research, evidenced by the following statement:

If scholarship is to be transmissible across various social classes and political systems it must, to a great extent, be, in the words of one author "detached, objective, unemotional and non-ethical" . . . While every scientist assumes an approach or orientation when dealing with an issue, science concerns itself with what is, what exists, or what happen when, not with the questions of what is right or what should be. (Severin & Tankard, 1979, p. 13)

Application of the scientific method as tied to empiricism and hypothetico-deductive logic in media theory has been attributed to a need to legitimatize media research and earn for it a place within the academic community. It is also noteworthy that broadcast organizations which funded much of the early research on media and media audiences, required that the findings from these studies be "objective" and "scientific" rather than merely the expression of the investigator's opinion. The liberal-pluralist approach with its quantitative research method and statistical data analysis has been criticized for its concern with the structure and content of the message, and its lack of an adequate theory and method for the analysis of signifying systems and media-audience interactions (Allen, 1987; Bennet, 1982; Ellsworth &

The Marxist Tradition

Early forms of Marxist analysis of media were conceived in terms of the economic base and superstructure, and the use of media power by the ruling class to pursue their own interests and disseminate ideologies opposed to the interests of the working class. Marxism is grounded on the theory of labor, production and the role of the proletariat in society. The epistemological framework of Marxism is from the stance of the proletariat in society. From a political and economic perspective of traditional Marxism, there are only two opposing classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

Historically Marxist theory has been anti-capitalistic (currently a changing political and economic ideology in the Soviet Union), rejecting all aspects of capitalistic and positivistic explanations of how conflicts and oppression are to be eliminated in society. Marxism strives to understand how class society operates in its drive for production and capitalist wealth. It is concerned with how society works to maintain an ideology that serves to produce
and reproduce a class system, and serves to create certain forms of material and oppressor consumption. Ultimately, Marxism is concerned with praxis, and the transformation of society through social action. This standpoint can be understood in the early forms of Marxist analysis of media, and later to a certain extent in the tradition of cultural studies as it was developed in Great Britain.

The theoretical perspective of Marxism has shifted somewhat in culturalist studies of media, especially in relation to the concerns of structuralism and political economy. It is possible that the most recent political shifts toward capitalism in the Soviet Union will further influence economic perspectives in cultural studies. Although the two perspectives share a general agreement that the power of the media is ideological, there are distinct differences in the conceptualizations of ideology, ranging from a focus on the internal articulation of the signifying systems of the media within structuralist analysis, through to a focus on the determination of ideology in "political economy" perspectives, and to a culturalist view of the media as a powerful shaper of public consciousness and
popular consent (Curran et al., 1982, p. 28). This cultural perspective of Marxism is articulated by Hall as follows:

[Cultural studies] is opposed to the base superstructure way of formulating the relationship between ideal and material forces, especially, where the base is defined by the determination by the "economic" in any simple sense. It prefers the wider formulation—the dialectic between social being and social consciousness. . . . It defines "culture" as both the means and values which arise amongst distinctive social groups and classes, on the basis of their given historical conditions and relationships, through which they "handle" and respond to the conditions of existence: and as the lived traditions and practice through which these "understandings" are expressed and in which they are embodied. (p. 63)

The above statement represents a significant paradigm shift within the Marxist framework with emphasis on ideology, and the social and political significance of language, the sign and discourse, which Hall (1982) refers to as "the rediscovery of ideology . . . the return of the repressed." (Hall, 1982, p. 88).

The contemporary shift by Marxists in cultural studies of mass communications research has resulted in a direction of attention to those social groups who have and do not have power. It may be looked upon in terms of social relations, social power and social
struggles of groups pertaining to issues of class, race and gender. In audience research the redirection involves reception theories including ideological analysis, textual analysis, semiotics, discursive criticism, ethnography, and psychoanalysis. The present intellectual work on the nature of media power now proceeds within these Marxist approaches of cultural studies.

Critical theory rejects the empirical approach to media communications. Masterman (1985) states that empirical communications research rarely produces important findings that distinguish between the effects of the media and other socializing influences because it separates communications from the social, historical legal and economic contexts in which they are produced, circulated, transmitted and consumed; thus it is doomed to failure. Using as an example, the empirical methodology of content analysis, Masterman (1985) illustrates this point:

Empirical content analyses also have severe limitations. At one level it is useful to know, say, the precise number of blacks or the elderly who appear on current affairs television, but it is also obvious that, again, we need to interpret the contexts with which they appear, to make any sense of what is at stake in representations of these or other groups. (p. 69)
The stance of neutrality and objectivity is particularly problematic for critical theorists, who believe that there must be an ontological standing in the conceptual world of research, as Gitlin (1978) states: "... 'ideology' and 'consciousness' are concepts that fall through the sieves of both behaviorism and stimulus-response psychology. They have no ontological standing in the constraining conceptual world of mainstream media research" (p. 216). From this position of an ontological standing, cultural theorists argue that approaches to inquiry must recognize that knowledge is socially, historically, economically and politically constituted in a material society and cannot be considered value-free (Hall, 1980b, 1982; Lather, 1986). A value-free and neutral standpoint does not allow for social, economic and political criticism or debate that can bring about transformative and emancipatory changes in society.

Cultural theorists note that "value free" empirical research has been used generally to serve the interests of those who are in control of communications processes either politically, commercially or professionally (Gitlin, 1978;
Masterman, 1985). In a critique of the liberal-pluralist paradigm, Gitlin (1978) refers to this position as "the administrative point of view of academic sociological research in mass communications in America" (p. 224). The administrative point of view is seen as rooted in modern capitalism with its concordant marketing orientation and emphasis on useful audience research that justifies a common, hegemonic, social democratic ideology. Furthermore, Gitlin sees the administrative point of view as posing questions from the vantage point of institutions that seek to control any challenges to their social, economic or political functions in society. He emphasizes that these institutions are more interested in how the mass media may increase their reach, and in social obstacles to their extension of media, rather than the reach of media as a social good in consumer culture. (Gitlin, 1978).

In challenging the administrative point of view, Gitlin (1978) recommends a counter-paradigm within the scientific orientation that would scrutinize the exploitative conditions of the culture industry through pluralist procedures with complex methodologies such as life histories and participant
observation. Beginning with a political structure and a media sociology toward what Morley (1980) calls an "ethnography of audiences," Gitlin (1978) suggests showing how distinct class, ethnic, age and other audiences distinctly decode the patterns of media messages over time. This would result in a larger social analysis and a more dynamic media process articulated within the whole political culture.

Although the liberal-pluralist and Marxist perspectives constitute two ostensibly opposing schools, they have exerted reciprocal influence on each other, and offer insights which contribute to a comprehensive view of the practices and structures of media (Curran et al., 1982; Hall, 1982). According to Curran et al. (1982), the differences between the pluralist and critical schools concerning the power of the media to a certain extent seem based on mutual misunderstandings that he explains as follows:

This misunderstanding has been perpetuated by the tendency for researchers in the two different traditions to examine the impact of the mass media in different contexts as a consequence of their divergent ideological and theoretical preoccupations. (p. 14)

Thus, the interest of research in the Marxist tradition may be accompanied by empirical survey-based
research into audience adaptation of media-related ideologies. Yet it is important to bear in mind that those cultural theorists who embrace empirical research for emancipatory purposes in the Marxist tradition, still refute the "value free" epistemology of positivism and scienticism, while adhering to their ontological stance of requisite subjectivity in that "research is praxis," meaning that a researcher must have an interested standpoint for the research to make a significant difference in society (Lather, 1986).

In this social and historical moment, the epistemological and methodological framework of Marxist critical theory within the British culturalist framework is deemed feasible for this research. However, from an African-American racial and feminist perspective, it is problematic that both traditional and neo-Marxist perspectives privilege class structure in their analysis of oppression rather than race or gender. A parallelist theory offered by Apple and Weis (1983), posits that class, race and gender dynamically operate equally in the analysis of what happens in schools and other institutions.

According to McCarthy (1990), the parallelist theory attempts to eliminate the overdeterminism of
class and economic explanations that cut across race and gender issues; thus, McCarthy (1990) correctly argues that the parallelist emphasis on reciprocity and mutuality of class, race and gender in school settings are contradictory or non-synchronous, and lead to the augmentation or diminution of the effectiveness of race and other variables in the school environment. McCarthy (1990) advances the concept of non-synchrony, formulated by Hicks (1981), which introduces a more useful approach to the way these dynamics actually operate among social groups. Hicks (1981) informs McCarthy's position with the statement that "individuals or groups, in relation to economic, political and cultural institutions such as schools, do not share identical consciousness and express the same interests, needs or desires 'at the same point in time' (p. 221)." In this respect, McCarthy's theory of non-synchronous politics is pivotal to this research because it provides an alternative theoretical space within a Marxist tradition for a dynamic study and explanation of the interrelations of class, race and gender focused on African-Americans.

Considering the above arguments, this research employs critical cultural studies to focus on African-
American students within their daily lived experiences and practices of schooling as they interact with film media in the classroom. It is concerned with the nature of African-American students' responses, rather than the quantity of content and responses within this social group. Thus, this research does not attempt to measure attitudes, quantify content, make predictions of audience effects, or present empirical evidence for the purpose of a neutral stance. Rather, this research aims for a fuller understanding of how educational film texts are created and produced, how African-American student audiences interact with these media texts, how this social group struggles to create meaning from media texts within the social context of schooling, and how African-Americans can change or transform their dominant representational meanings for counter-hegemonic or hegemonic purposes. Significantly, the results of this research will be used to guide the selection and use of educational film media with African-American student audiences.

The Frankfort School Tradition

The Frankfort School generally refers to the collective thoughts of the theorists Theodore Adorno, Herbert Marcuse and Max Horkheimer who were associated
with the Institute for Social Research founded in Frankfort in 1923 (Bennett, 1982; Bottomore, 1984; Held, 1980). These scholars were considered an influential group on Marxist mass media theory. Yet unlike many orthodox Marxists who relegated culture to the superstructure of society and derived an analysis of the form and content of the super structure from the "base," the Frankfort theorists insisted that cultural phenomena could not be analyzed within the simple base-superstructure model (Held, 1980). Thus, the importance of political economy diminished, while increased attention was focused on an assessment of the mode in which ideas and beliefs were transmitted by "popular culture."

The Frankfort theorists stressed the urgency of developing a sociology of "mass culture" (Held, 1980). Sociology and critique were inseparable, entailing an inquiry into its formation and reception, and seeking to understand given works in terms of their social origins, form, content and function, or in terms of the social totality (Held, 1980). The new techniques of cultural production and reception were understood in the context of the decline of autonomous art and the rise of the "culture industry." In
contemporary society, this phenomenon was coined "the consciousness industry," and refers to its exploitation on mass audiences in capitalist societies known as "the industrialization of the mind." (Enzenberger, 1974)

It is the Frankfort School's critique of the "culture industry" which Bennet (1982) considers most interesting of the attempts to fuse Marxist and mass society categories. In their critique of the culture industry, Frankfort theorists were most negative in their assessment of the cultural consequences of mass media, which they claimed deprived art of its oppositional or subversive value when it became more accessible within the social and cultural fabric of capitalism. They argued that in capitalism, the culture industry produced for mass consumption, contributed to the determination of that consumption, and integrated consumers from above. These manipulations of the media sustained and reinforced capitalist ideologies, and reproduced and maintained images of reality (Held, 1980). Although most critics agree that the Frankfort School was an influential theoretical group in relation to the mainstream of Marxism (Bennet, 1982; Bottomore, 1984; Held, 1980),
some consider the Frankfort School rather marginal in developing and generating research in mass communications and in providing a theoretical paradigm within which media studies could proceed (Bennet, 1982; Curran et al., 1982).

Cultural Studies and Media Theory

Cultural studies was introduced earlier in this section as an outgrowth of critical theory and Marxist traditions in media communications history. The current theoretical framework of cultural studies is based largely on the work that was developed by the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies under the direction of Hall (1980b) at the University of Birmingham, Great Britain. The term "culture" in this discipline is political, rather than aesthetic or humanistic (Fiske, 1987a, 1987b; Hall, 1982; Hall et al., 1984; Masterman, 1985). The basic assumptions of media theory in cultural studies that inform this study are the following: (1) the social structure is constituted in terms of the meanings that culture produces, and these meanings construct social identities for the living in capitalist societies that enable them to make sense of themselves and their social relations; (2) social relations are understood
in terms of social power within a structure of
domination and subordination that is dynamic, never
static, and always the site of social struggle for
meaning in which the dominant class attempts to serve
its interest by the appearance of neutralizing their
interests into the unconscious and willing consent of
society, whereas subordinate classes resist in various
ways to serve their own interests; (3) culture is
ideological, and ideology is inscribed in the social
practices of classes of people, such that it is a
dynamic process that is constantly reproduced and
reconstituted in the social practices of people in
society; (4) people are socially constructed as
subjects of society in ideology and practice which
constitute self, identity and relations to other
people and society; (5) meanings are produced by
social positions that people occupy in relation to the
dominant ideology (Allen, 1987; Althusser, 1971;
Apple, 1979; Fiske, 1987a, 1987b; Fiske & Hartley,
1978; Hall, 1980a, 1980b 1981, 1982; Hall et al.,
1984; Masterman, 1985; White, 1987).

Cultural studies is concerned with the generation
and circulation of meaning in society. Cultural
theorists in media studies are interested in knowing
how ideological meanings are produced and circulated in society, and how audiences use them to make sense of their experiences to become eventually transformed. Media texts are considered polysemic, containing a variety of potential meanings when they intersect with viewers or audiences (Becker, 1987; Fiske, 1987b, 1987b; Fiske & Hartley, 1978; Hall, 1980a, 1980b, 1982; Hall et al., 1984; Kuhn, 1982; Masterman, 1985). Cultural theorists contend that communities of viewers will read or interpret a text differently, depending on the reader's social, economic, or political background and experiences. Media texts are viewed as sites of ideological power struggle over meanings among various audiences to determine whose culture or social experiences will gain ascendancy through interaction with texts (Becker, 1987; Fiske, 1987a, 1987b; Hall, 1980a, 1980b, 1982; Kuhn, 1982; Masterman, 1985; McRobbie, 1984; McCarthy, 1988a; Morley, 1980; Roman, Christian-Smith & Ellsworth, 1988). Significantly, the reader is considered the active maker of meanings from texts, and not just a passive recipient of meanings from texts; thus, it is at the intersection of reader and text that meaning is created (Allen,
1987; Becker, 1987; Fiske, 1987a, 1987b; Hall, 1980a, 1980b, 1982; Hall et al., 1984; Kuhn, 1982, 1985; Masterman, 1985). These are the basic tenants of media theory that emanate from the cultural studies, which are central to this research.

Ideology underlies media theory in cultural studies, under the basic assumption that culture is ideological. In this framework, Hall (1983) refers to ideology as all organized forms of social thinking, including the practical as well as the theoretical, and defines ideology as:

... the mental frameworks—the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and the systems of representation—which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, define, figure out and render intelligible the way society works. (p. 59)

Based on this framework of ideology, media theorists in cultural studies approach film texts in terms of language, signs, symbols, and institutional structures viewed within the dynamics of social group relationships. Indeed this research approached media texts selected on AIDS in the framework of ideology, while studying their structures within a dynamic interaction between the student audiences and the films. Yet this research went further by including the
emotional framework as an important function in the production of ideologies and subjectivities. All considered, how powerful would any media be without appealing to personal emotions.

The construct of ideology in cultural studies is based on the theories of Althusser (1971) and Gramsci (1971). These theories are based on the premise that ideology always serves the dominant interests of society. Althusser's theory of ideology is based on the concept of ideological state apparatuses (ISAs). According to Althusser, ISAs are specialized social institutions in society that operate in the private domain, such as the churches, schools, family, political parties, trade unions, mass media, and cultural institutions, and so forth. Althusser (1971) states that the these institutions function "massively and predominantly by ideology" (p. 1381), while presenting themselves as socially neutral. Althusser emphasizes that it is actually the ideology of the ruling class that presents itself as being neutral, and produces and reproduces in people the tendency to think and behave in socially acceptable ways to the dominant class. Significantly, Althusser (1971) states that the most dominant ISA in
society is education because it takes young children who are entrusted by their parents from every class and drums in them the ruling ideology, all under the guise of being neutral and respectful of conscience and freedom. This is a clear example of how the subject becomes a social construction of the culture and how ideology is socially reproduced in people through language, media and institutions.

The concept of hegemony, formulated by Gramsci (1971), further postulates the formation of ideology in cultural studies and leads to the theory of power struggles among social groups in society. Hegemony refers to the idea of ideology as a power mobilized through the process of consent among social groups. Fiske (1987a) clarifies the contradiction between Althusser's theory of ideology and Gramsci's theory of hegemony as follows:

Indeed, the theory of hegemony foregrounds the notion of ideological struggle much more than does Althusser's ideological theory, which at times tends to imply that the power of ideology and the ISAs to form the subject in ways that suit the interests of the dominant class is almost irresistible. Hegemony on the other hand, posits a constant contradiction between ideology and the social experience of the subordinate that makes this interface into an inevitable site of ideological struggle. In hegemonic theory, ideology is constantly up against forces of resistance. Consequently it is engaged in a
constant struggle not just to extend its power, but even to hold on to the territory it has already colonized. (p. 259-260)

Apple (1979) elaborates on the analysis of hegemony in the context of schools and society as follows:

The crucial idea embedded in this [Williams'] passage is how hegemony acts to "saturate" our very consciousness, so that the educational, economic and social world we see and interact with, and the commonsense interpretations we put on it, becomes the world tout court, the only world. Hence hegemony refers not to congeries of meaning that reside at an abstract level somewhere at the "roof of our brain." Rather it refers to an organized assemblage of meaning and practices, the central, effective and dominant system of meanings, values and actions which are lived. It needs to be understood on a different level than "mere opinion" or "manipulation." (p. 5)

This concept of ideology and hegemony related to consciousness in the above context must not be confused with "false consciousness" of early Marxism which posits that true consciousness is not possible (Fiske, 1987a; White 1987). Indeed, "false consciousness" is rejected by cultural theorists because it contradicts the possibility of powers of resistance and opposition in which people have a true consciousness of their social relations" (Fiske, 1987a).
Cultural theorists use the notion of hegemony to describe the process by which a dominant class wins the willing consent of the subordinate classes that actually ensures their subordination. Hegemonic consent is not a static power relationship, but one that is involved in a constant process of struggle for ideological and social power to be secured and maintained. According to cultural theorists, in the process of struggle, ideological power must be won and re-won, and it is not always the dominant class that wins over the subordinate class (Fiske, 1987a; Hall, 1980b; Masterman, 1985). This concept offers optimism for the possibilities of liberatory transformation in society, as Masterman (1985) states:

The concept of hegemony is an important one for media teachers since it defines the media (along with other civil institutions) as important sites for struggle between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic ideas. For hegemony is never won or lost for all time but has to be constantly fought for in order to be secured and maintained. For cultural workers such as teachers, journalists and broadcasters, the concept of hegemony represents a considerable advance and offers a much more optimistic scenario for counter-hegemonic work than more mechanistic conceptions of cultural and civil institutions, in which they are seen as inevitably determined by society's economic base. (p. 196)
The concept of hegemony is critical to an understanding of media theory related to education and cultural studies. Masterman (1985) elaborates on the importance of hegemony in media education at three levels:

First of all it [hegemony] identifies media and educational institutions, practices and theories as crucial sites for hegemonic struggle. Secondly, it provides a sophisticated conceptual tool for understanding and analyzing the working of dominant ideologies and, finally, it offers a strategic guide to the ways in which major transformations within society may be most successfully accomplished and to the crucial role of educational and media practices in bringing about such transformations. (p. 197)

This positioning of hegemony in the cultural studies context returns us to the Freirian concept that education is not neutral, but society can be transformed through dialogical encounters with people's own culture, language and artifacts such as media (Freire, 1988). Similarly in the context of schools, it reflects Michael Apple's critical questions concerning the distribution of knowledge in education and whose knowledge gets into schools (Apple, 1979, 1981, 1983). Finally, an understanding of the workings of hegemony offers optimism that counter-hegemonic pedagogy can bring about transformative and liberatory practices in schools.
Hall's essay entitled "Encoding/Decoding" is considered a significant turning point in cultural studies that transformed media theory (Hall, 1980a). In his essay, Hall reconceptualizes the process of communication in distinctive moments of production, circulation, distribution, consumption, and reproduction. He recognizes that the discursive form of the message has a privileged position in the communicative exchange, and that the moments of "encoding and decoding," though relatively autonomous, are determinate moments in the communication process.

In describing the process of encoding and decoding, Hall (1980a) addresses the dynamics of audience reception, semiotics, hegemony and the struggles of social groups over meanings of texts. Using the example of television, Hall develops the argument that television programs are polysemic as relatively open texts, capable of being read differently by various audiences defined as social or cultural groups. Hall suggests that there is a correlation between people's social relations and the meanings that they generate from texts. Hall recognizes that the dominant cultural order is mapped
out in the discursive domains of texts, but postulates that the reader is the active maker of meanings from the text and not a passive recipient of already constructed meanings from it.

According to Hall (1980a), the three hypothetical positions of texts from which decodings or readings may be constructed by audiences are (1) the dominant, (2) the negotiated, and (3) the oppositional. These three positions of ideological readings of texts are generally termed "preferred readings," and they refer to the broad reading strategies produced by social positions that people may occupy in relation to the dominant ideology. A useful overview of Hall's theory of preferred readings is discussed at length by Fiske (1987a), summarized as follows:

(1) A dominant reading is produced by a viewer at ease with the dominant ideology, situated to agree and accept the dominant ideology and subjectivity that it produces.

(2) A negotiated reading is produced by a viewer who fits into the dominant ideology in general, but needs to inflect it locally to take account of their social position. It is generally agreed that most readings are negotiated because no one audience is
perfectly situated in dominant ideological centrality. The term "negotiation" is significant, for it implies both that there is a conflict of interests that needs to be reconciled in some way.

(3) An oppositional reading is produced by viewers whose social situation puts them into direct opposition with the dominant ideology.

Focusing on oppositional readings, Hall (1980a) states that one of the most significant political moments is when a normally negotiated reading begins to be given an oppositional reading: "Here the "politics of signification"—the struggle in discourse—is joined" (p. 138).

Hall's theory (1980a) of preferred readings offers significant possibilities in approaching educational media research with African-American student audiences within the theoretical framework of cultural studies. In reconceptualizing theoretical approaches to media studies, the approach appears twofold. First, it is necessary to critically analyze or deconstruct a media text selected for use with a targeted student audience; second, it is necessary to juxtapose the analysis of media texts with the students' readings of the text to ascertain the
readings that they would derive from the text. In reading a media text, it becomes problematic should African-American students consistently produce readings that are derived from the dominant ideology. When dominant readings occur, it is necessary to ask whose knowledge is produced, what messages are produced, and what are the consequences for African-American student audiences. In negotiated readings, it is necessary to question what salient components of the African-American culture is inflected into meaning by the reading subjects, and why are these meanings significant to the culture of this social group. Finally, in an oppositional reading it is important to recognize the dialectics of resistance operating within the culture that create such an oppositional reading.

The significance of studying students' readings for the educator is that it provides opportunities to recognize the ideological formations that dominate students' socially lived experiences, and through a reflection of these meanings how they actually view themselves. Based on these revelations it becomes the educator's work to develop counter-hegemonic strategies that will enable students to question the
ideological assumptions embedded in media, and to think critically and resist hegemonic forces that keep them in a state of social and economic oppression in this society. Thus far, there has been no research in curriculum studies and educational media that focuses on how African-American student audiences derive meanings from texts. The methods of critical cultural ethnography and textual analysis as they are employed in audience reception research are directed toward this problematic, as these approaches are discussed in the next sections.

Critical Cultural Ethnography

Cultural ethnography is a method of social research that is concerned with the observational study of social groups and cultural phenomenon in society. Historically, cultural ethnography has been based on overt or covert participation and observation of the researcher within a social setting, dedicated to writing neutral and value free descriptions of their observations, often characterized as "going native" or "being a fly on the wall." Conceptually, cultural ethnography is qualitative in its theoretical and methodological approaches of social research. While the traditional naturalistic approach of
cultural ethnography shares the scientific model of objectivity and value free neutrality in its forms of inquiries, the qualitative aspect of critical cultural ethnographic research has created an epistemological tension with quantitative social science research practices, particularly as more critical cultural ethnographic inquiries have been directed toward social, economic and political issues that pertain to the problematics of race, class and gender in society.

Critical cultural ethnography is distinguished by its standpoint of reflexivity, and acknowledgment by the researcher that the social researcher and the research act itself are both integral to the social world under investigation. According to Hammersley and Atkinson (1983), recognition of the reflexive character of social research is the most important step toward a resolution of the problems of positivism and naturalism that attempt to neutralize, remove or eliminate the researcher from the data; instead, the researcher is an integral part of the world under study. This position is underscored by Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) as follows:

The first and most important step towards a resolution of the problems raised by positivism and naturalism is to recognize that we are part
of the social world we study (Gouldner, 1970; Borhek and Curtis, 1975; and Hammersley, 1982 in Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983, p. 14). This is not a matter of methodological commitment, it is an existential fact. There is no way in which we can escape the social world in order to study it; nor, fortunately, is that necessary. (p. 14-15)

Thus, reflexivity positions the researcher not only to participate in the world under study, but also to draw inferences from observations and systematically test and develop a theory of the social phenomenon being studied. This positioning of the researcher as a participant provides a distinct opportunity for articulation of previously silenced perspectives in social research. The reconstructed role of the researcher as an active and reflexive participant is particularly significant to racial and ethnic minorities who have been historically marginalized and situated without representational voices as actors in social research (McCarthy, 1988c, 1990).

Participant observation is a primary technique of ethnographic research. This approach involves the researcher interacting in the social world under study and reflecting on that participation; thus the ethnographer functions as both audience and participant within the context of the research. Participant observation involves recording and
organizing data by such methods as field notes, audiotaping, videotaping and filming, depending on the purpose, setting and financial resources available. Field notes are the most traditional means for recording observational data, consisting of relatively concrete descriptions of social processes and their contexts; however, this activity varies also according to the situation, activities and setting (Geertz, 1973; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983).

Interviews, informal questioning and discussions are also valid forms of participant observation for recording and organizing ethnographic data. These approaches may involve tape recordings, as well as note taking; however, tape recording is considered the most concrete, detailed and complete means of compiling accurate data, especially when accompanied by jotted notes on any non-verbal or physical and environmental aspects of the process. In ethnographic studies of media audiences, data which form from interviews or discussions are sometimes referred to as "ethno-semiological data" (Fiske, 1987b). These data are viewed as working to form a collective rather than an individual response to media texts, as a means of understanding the tertiary level of media that results
from viewing of films (Fiske, 1987a, 1987b). Although one must be aware of the threat to ecological validity through approaches such as interviews and discussions with the ethnographer as audience and participant, Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) contend that the possible effects and influences of the ethnographer on the data are nevertheless an important source of information. Furthermore, these ethnographers argue that data in themselves cannot be valid or invalid; rather, what is at issue are the inferences drawn from them (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983).

Ethnographers solicit accounts and information from informants through various forms of interviewing techniques, including unstructured and focused interviews, ostensibly non-directive and directive questioning and informal discussions. There is a significant difference between the standardized forms of interviews that are used by empiricists, and reflexive interviews used by ethnographers. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) explain these distinctions as follows:

The main difference between the way in which ethnographers and survey interviewers ask questions is not, as is sometimes suggested, that one form of interviewing is "structured" and the other is "unstructured." All interviews, like
any other kind of social interaction, are structured by both researcher and informant. The important distinction to be made is between standardized and reflexive interviewing. Ethnographers do not decide beforehand the questions they want to ask, though they may enter the interview with a list of issues to be covered. Nor do ethnographers restrict themselves to a single mode of questioning. (p. 113)

It is also important to note that group interviews are recommended approaches to ethnographic discourse with media audiences, such as in the research undertaken by Morley (1980), Bonnie Trudell (1990a, 1990b). Key among interview techniques in ethnographic media research is the focused interview, based on a model developed by Merton and Kendall (1947).

According to Merton and Kendall (1947), the focused interview is designed to determine the responses of persons exposed to media or communications situations previously analyzed by the investigator. Indeed, the focused interview was initially developed to address communications research and propaganda analysis for interpreting significant effects of mass communication, especially films. The distinctive advantage of the focused interview is that it provides an opportunity for the interviewer who has experienced the media text to play an active role in
the interview such as (1) introducing more explicit verbal clues, or (2) re-presenting it, and thus activating a concrete report of responses by informants (Merton and Kendall, 1947). These factors also contributed to the use of the focused interview in research undertaken by Morley (1980) and Trudell (1990a, 1990b), as in this research.

Criteria developed by Merton and Kendall (1947) for effective focused interviews are (1) non-direction, (2) specificity, (3) range, and (4) depth and personal context. According to Merton and Kendall (1947), these criteria are interrelated, and each category has specific purposes and techniques to be applied in the focused interview process which are summarized as follows:

1. The non-directive approach provides the opportunity for expression of what is on the subject's mind and permits subjects to respond within their individual contexts rather than being forced into a response framework by the interviewer. The criterion of non-direction requires that guidance and direction by the interviewer be kept at a minimum.

2. Specificity allows inquiry into meanings of significant details or scenes of media experienced by
the subject. The criterion of specificity requires graphic "re-presentations," verbal cues, or explicit references to the stimulus material, combined with unstructured questioning procedures sufficient enough to allow the subjects' definition or meaning of the situation to find full and specific expression.

3. The criterion of range refers to the coverage of pertinent data in the focused interview, and requires the interviewer to allow for maximized stimuli and responses by the subject. Sufficient range is achieved through the techniques of transitional questions during the interview. Sometimes achievement of range requires transitional questions, reference to an interview guide or mutational questions that focus on previously unmentioned areas by the subject in the interview (to be kept at minimum). Yet, it should be noted that contrary to structured empirical interviews that require interview guides, in focused interviews the interview guide is considered a serious limitation.

4. The criterion of depth and personal context refers to self-revelatory comments concerning how the material was experienced and refers to the relevant affective and value-laden implications of the
subjects' responses during the interview. The procedures to achieve the criterion of depth stress the individual subject's observations and feelings in the context of the experience.

These criteria and procedures of the focused interview are offered by Merton and Kendall (1947) as instruments of research for studies of audiences and film media, and they continue to be relevant approaches to ethnographic film studies today.

In critical cultural ethnography, it is generally agreed that analysis of data is not a distinct stage of the research; rather, observations, spoken and written discourse, data collection and theory building are dialectically linked (Clifford, 1988; Clifford & Marcuse, 1986; Geertz, 1973; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). Throughout its course of investigation, ethnographic research has a characteristic "funnel" structure, termed progressive focusing, which involves a gradual shift from a concern with describing social events, to a process of abstraction and narrowing the focus toward theory development, described by Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) as follows:

First, over time the research problem is developed or transformed, and eventually its scope is clarified and delimited and its internal
structure explored. In this sense, it is frequently only over the course of the research that one discovers what the research is really "about" and it is not common for it to turn out to be about something quite remote from the initial foreshadowed problems. (p. 175)

Indeed in this research, through the processes of ethnographic observations, interviews, textual analysis, and reflexivity, there occurred a narrowing of focus that generated concepts, developed topologies of general categories of responses, and led to conclusions concerning African-American students' readings and responses to the films.

The works of critical cultural ethnographers have been directed towards emancipatory forms of inquiry concerned with schools and youth in their cultural contexts, their lived experiences, and the structural forces and power relations that create inequalities by class, race or gender in society (Lesko, 1988; Morley, 1980; Roman, 1987; Roman & Apple, 1988; Trudell, 1990a, 1990b; Valli, 1986; Walker, 1988; Willis, 1977). Thus, critical cultural ethnography may be viewed as a form of research praxis. The concept of "research as praxis," is elucidated by Lather (1986) as follows:

Rather than illusory "value free" knowledge of the positivists, praxis-oriented inquirers seek
emancipatory knowledge. Emancipatory knowledge increases awareness of the contradictions hidden or distorted by everyday understandings, and in doing so it directs attention to the possibilities for social transformation inherent in the present configuration of social processes. (p. 259)

Lather's approach to research as praxis suggests democratized methods of shared inquiry between the researcher and research subjects for enlightenment of both social actors.

Transformative emancipatory praxis is the basis of liberatory education and pedagogical strategies for disadvantaged and oppressed people that Freire (1988) developed in his treatise entitled *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Freire's techniques include the use of dialogical encounters with students, thematic investigation of the culture and language, and investigation of the encoding and decoding processes derived from the idiom of the people. Through the people's own vocabulary and syntax, Freire suggests that we can construct situations for the codification of information as a means of effective communication and analysis of their social and political experiences. Finally, through Freire's paradigm of *conscienczamento*, the concept brings with it the possibilities of the oppressed reaching a conscious
understanding of their own oppression as a necessary requisite for their political and social liberation. Ultimately, this might be considered the penultimate consequence of critical ethnographic discourse and inquiry in media audience research with oppressed minorities.

In summary, critical ethnographic methodologies were utilized in this study through participant observation, unstructured and focused interviews and reflexivity. Participant observation took place in the context of selected schools and classrooms, noting student behaviors and teaching practices in Health and Family Living classes on the subject of AIDS. Following film viewings of selected films, unstructured and focused interviews were undertaken according to the criteria established by Merton and Kendall (1947). Prior to student interviews, the selected films were textually analyzed so that discussion could proceed unstructured and focused on the film texts and subject matter to achieve the greatest depth and understanding of students' readings and responses to them. Reflexive analysis was undertaken throughout all the research stages in an effort to draw conclusions about the study. Finally,
the emancipatory tenets of critical ethnographic practice were demonstrated in this study, from the standpoint of shared dialogical encounters and inquiry between the researcher with the researched for a greater understanding of the dynamics of instructional film media in the education of African-American students.

Textual Analysis and Semiotics

Media texts contain a variety of signs and representational codes that reflect social, cultural and ideological practices in society. Textual analysis is a methodology drawn from cultural studies, which aims to uncover the processes and structures that work to produce meanings in film within their social and historical contexts (Fiske 1987a, 1987b; Kuhn, 1982, 1985). While ethnography provides an understanding of how audiences read and create meanings from texts, the ways in which those meanings are structured and produced in texts is the subject of textual analysis. Textual analysis is defined by Kuhn (1982) as a form of reading which aims at uncovering the processes and structures at work in a text that may not be immediately discernible:
Analysis may lay bare the ways in which a text works within, or is an expression of, ideology. It is a premise of textual analysis that the apparently natural qualities of ideology can be brought into question through "denaturalisation"-rendering ideology visible and thus open to critical examination. It is also a contention of textual analysis that structuralist (or post-structuralist) approaches of one kind or another offer a useful set of methods for doing this. Textual analysis, therefore, is founded on an understanding of texts as constructed, as structured by the work of ideology, while at the same time naturalising that - embodying, in other words, a denial or effacement of the operation of ideology. (p. 84)

Throughout the process of textual analysis, the theorist is equally interested in what is seen and unseen, the spoken and unspoken, the silences and absences, as well as the roles and images constructed by films, which Kuhn (1982) describes as "making visible the invisible" (p. 73). These techniques may include a variety of approaches including semiotics, structural analysis, ideological analysis, and deconstruction of film texts.

Ideology may be revealed in media through the signs, symbols and structures of texts. Kuhn (1982) states that "the recovery and examination of the hidden work of ideology with film texts is the project of ideological analysis" (p. 85). In deconstruction, ideological analysis breaks down the film text into
constituent parts, examines and reveals how ideology operates. Belsey (1980) states:

The object of deconstructing the text is to examine the process of its production—not the private experience of the individual author, but the mode of production, the materials and their arrangement in the work (p. 104).

Kuhn (1982) emphasizes that deconstruction directed toward ideological analysis need not take as its object the entire film, but may either concentrate on specific moments of the film which are seen as condensing its ideological process, or foreground particular sequences regarded as "key" and then subject them to analysis indepth. Kuhn (1982) exemplifies this approach by recalling early feminist analysis which refers to "the pregnant moment" of revealing patriarchal ideology and the patriarchal character of a film during the process of deconstruction. Similarly, deconstruction of texts may reveal racist, sexist, or capitalist discourse and ideology. Thus, deconstruction can bring about an understanding of ideological operations in films, especially at the level of racial representations and social identities of minorities, as undertaken in this study with African-Americans.
The process by which a text may undergo deconstruction is based on the distinction between structuralist and post-structuralist textual analysis. Kuhn (1982) distinguishes structural analysis as an approach to deconstruction based on formalist principles that meanings are constituted in the texts themselves and constructed as fixed signifiers within textual practices of meaning construction. Post-structural analysis focuses on meaning production as a process of the reading subject, advances the relationship of subjectivity, and involves psychoanalysis in approaches to textual analysis (Kuhn, 1982). According to Kuhn (1982), the psychoanalytic approach may include the spoken, unspoken, repressed, and unconscious within cultural production; while subjectivity is based on a notion of the subject as producer of meaning. Hollway (1989) relates post-structuralism to subjectivity and psychology as referencing the subject in structuralism, referring to the individuality and self-awareness of subjects in discourse and practices produced by the subject. Indeed, post-structural analysis is consistent with the tenets of contemporary cultural studies because it broadens the field of
signification to take in the moment of reading or reception of the text by the viewing subject, as well as the internal structures and operations of the film text.

In Belsey's Critical Practice (1980), the limitations of positivism and classic realism are revealed while exploring the possibilities for a new critical practice that advances semiotics. Belsey recognizes ideology inscribed in the signifying practices of language texts, and sees the task of new critical practice as (1) to identify the limitations of texts; (2) to seek out the process of its production; and (3) to liberate the plurality of meanings in texts. Through critical practice, Belsey decents the authority of the text, releases the constraints of univocal readings, and allows for new meanings or knowledge to be produced and transformed. These are compelling arguments for racial and ethnic minority critics to engage in their own critical practice through ideological analysis, semiotics and post-structuralism in the deconstruction of film texts.

Semiotics is bounded by a plethora of definitions, which range from the concrete to the
abstract, all related to the construct of signs, codes and meanings in written, verbal, and visual texts. Hodge and Kress (1988) explain that semiotics is the general study of semiosis, defined as "the processes and effects of the production and reproduction, reception and circulation of meaning in all forms, used by all kinds of agent[s] of communication" (p. 260). Seiter (1987) defines semiotics as "the study of everything that can be used for communication: words, images, traffic signs, music, medical symptoms, etc." (Seiter, 1987). Zakia (1987) also defines semiotic signs as anything that conveys meaning, while using "alphapictorials" (the combination of words and pictures) to illustrate the power of semiotics into a gestalt that produces a synergistic statement stronger and richer than either alone. Finally, the tenability of the very notion of signs is described by semiotician Eco (1985) as follows:

On one side of the discussion, the awareness of the multiplicity of codes and sub-codes has made clear that so-called signs are transitory couplings of expressive and content units that can become differently coupled and correlated in different systems or, within the same system, in different contexts. On the other side, textual theorists have insisted on the fact that signification takes place through contextual and
discursive strategies, through phenomena of
topicalization, presupposition and other
pragmatic paraphernalia. (p. 177)

Media theorists in cultural studies generally
approach the study of signs and codes in films within
the framework of social semiotics, defined by Hodge
and Kress (1988) as follows:

Social semiotics is primarily concerned with
human semiosis as an inherently social phenomenon
in its sources, functions, contexts and effects.
It is also concerned with the social meanings
constructed through the full range of semiotic
forms, through semiotic texts and semiotic
practices, in all kinds of human society at all
periods of human history. (p. 261)

In this respect, Hodge and Kress (1988) emphasize that
social semiotics studies all human semiotic systems
because they are intrinsically social in their
conditions and content. Thus, it is within the
definition of social semiotics that this research is
positioned, by studying the signs and symbols of film
media texts for social and racial representational
meanings.

Social semiotics is consistent with the tenets of
cultural studies and post-structuralism. Social
semiotics acknowledges the dynamic flow of discourse
in constructing meanings around texts. This is a
process that is always negotiated and never imposed by
the notion of an absolute code in the creation of meaning. Hodge and Kress (1988) explain that social semiotics looks at both the micro level and the macro level of the world of signs and symbols by viewing texts in dynamic configurations within the context of time, spatial configurations, cultural style, and perceptions of reality. Social semiotics offers a viable alternative to mainstream or traditional semiotics which views structures and codes as fixed, universal and neutral in the text itself, without recognition of the struggles for meaning or the need for social action directed from those semiotic systems. Thus, social semiotics was considered an appropriate approach for the analysis of racial representations and social identities constructed in instructional films targeted for African-American student audiences.

Fiske (1987b) illustrates semiotic textual analysis in his book entitled Television Culture. Television codes are deemed relevant to instructional film media because they are often borrowed from the popular media of television in attempting to appeal to youth audiences; therefore, Fiske's definitions and descriptions of television codes are indeed
generalizable to instructional films. The workings of these television codes are described by Fiske (1987b) as follows:

Codes are links between producers, texts, and audiences, and are the agents of intertextuality through which texts interrelate in a network of meanings that constitutes our cultural world. (p. 4.)

Fiske (1987b) distinguishes four codes and the ways that they are encoded in television productions to generate and circulate meanings in a culture. These four codes are identified at four levels summarized as follows: (1) social codes encoded at the level of reality such as those of appearance, dress, make-up, environment, behavior, speech, gesture, and expression; (2) technical codes encoded at the level of representation such as camera, lighting, editing, music and sound; (3) conventional representational codes encoded at the level of representation such as narrative, conflict, character, action, dialogue, setting and casting; and (4) ideological codes at the level of ideology such as individualism, patriarchy, race, class, materialism and capitalism. Semiotic analysis attempts to reveal how these layers of codes and messages are structured in electronic media to produce meanings. While
undergoing semiotic analysis, these are the levels of
codes focused upon in the deconstruction of films for
this study.

The social and semiotic power of representational
codes is described by Fiske (1987b) as "the power to
construct meanings, pleasures, and social identities,
and the power to construct a socioeconomic system"
(p. 316). Therefore, it follows, as Fiske (1987a)
states:

A cultural analysis, then, will reveal both the
way that the dominant ideology is structured into
the text and into the reading subject, and those
textual features that enable negotiated,
resisting, or oppositional readings to be made.
Cultural analysis reaches a satisfactory
conclusion when the ethnographic studies of the
historically and socially located meanings that
are made are related to the semiotic analysis of
the text. Semiotics relates the structure of the
text to the social system to explore how such
meanings are made and the part they play within
the cultural process that relates meaning both to
social experience and to the social system in
general. (p. 272)

Indeed, if minority and oppressed people are to
be liberated from the dominant interests of society,
it becomes incumbent on educational theorists and
practitioners to undertake the project of semiotic
textual analysis in an exploration of how the dominant
ideology is encoded in media texts as well as the
meanings that are produced by minority audiences as
they experience the product of that process in relation to their social and cultural experiences.

Semiotics provides a significant opportunity to intertextually study the signs and significations of media texts toward the development of an Afro-centric voice in critical discourse. A compelling semiotic theory of signification in African-American literary criticism has been put forth by Gates (1988) in *The Signifying Monkey*. In his treatise, Gates positions signifying practices in spoken and written rhetorical texts to distinguish a Black voice in the critical discourse of African-American history, culture and literature. Gates (1988) states the following:

What we are privileged to witness here is the (political, semantic) confrontation between two parallel discursive universes: the black American linguistic circle and the white. We see here the most subtle and perhaps the most profound trace of an extended engagement between two separate and distinct yet profoundly—even inextricably—related orders of meaning dependent precisely as much for their confrontation on relations of identity, manifested at in the signifier, as on their relations of difference, signified at the level of the signified. We bear witness here to a protracted argument over the nature of the sign itself, with the black vernacular discourse proffering its critique of the sign as the difference that blackness makes within the larger political culture and its historical unconscious. (p. 45)
In *The Signifying Monkey*, Gates (1988) creates for African-Americans the challenge and power of authentic intertextual semiotic readings, based on African American language, culture, and history. Gates' theory of "Signifyin(g)" affords African-American critics a cultural space for their own critical discourse and representation in the production and consumption of media texts. This theory moves the African-American critic from a decentered and marginalized voice toward a more centered and privileged position in media discourse. In the cultural struggle for representation and production of meaning, decoded signifying messages can create African-American textual revisions.

Masterman (1985) calls semiotics the "bedrock assumption" of media education, which enables educators to link and make conceptual sense of the diverse range of signifying practices employed by each medium. According to Masterman (1985), semiotic analysis reaffirms the basic theoretical framework for media education, as he states: "The media are symbolic (or sign) systems which need to be actively read, and not unproblematic, self explanatory reflections of external reality" (p. 20). This
statement is critical for media researchers and practitioners who are involved in the evaluation, selection and utilization of materials for student audiences. Indeed, it undergirds the significance of this study in its conclusions and recommendations concerning the media texts used in the classroom with African-American student audiences.

Audience Reception Theories and Research

In cultural studies, audience reception research stresses the investigation of links among author, text and reader. The author is the producer or writer of texts. The text is the material presentation, which may be inclusive of all electronic media such as television, instructional film or video; or it may be a picture or photograph, or even a printed medium such as a book. The reading of texts is the process of creating meaning while viewing media presentation, just as one would interpret meaning in the process of reading a book or other written text (Becker, 1987; Fiske, 1987a, 1987b). The reader is situated as the audience or viewer of a text. Communities of readers or viewers are those who share membership in a social, economic, professional or other group whose interpretations agree because of their membership in
that group (Becker, 1987). For example, Becker (1987) states that high school students who have drug problems read drug education films differently than those who do not have these problems. In this case, the reading of the text becomes concretized by readers whose expectations have been determined by their culture and social experiences. This determination of differentiated cultural meaning recognizes the polysemic nature of texts, illustrates the process of intertextuality, and situates audiences as social subjects. These concepts are essential to an understanding of audience reception theory.

In contemporary cultural studies, audiences are situated as social subjects, rather than textual subjects of media. When audiences are defined as textual subjects, they are seen as relatively powerless and inactive at the moment of reading and producing meanings from the text; whereas, as social subjects of media, the social situation of an audience influences its reading of media, rather than the text itself. The premise of audiences as social subjects of texts is argued by Fiske (1987b) as follows:

The social subject has a history, lives in a particular social formation (a mix of class, gender, age region, etc.), and is constituted by a com-
plex cultural history that is both social and textual. The subjectivity results from "real" social experience and from mediated or textual experience. The actual television viewer is primarily a social subject. This social subjectivity is more influential in the construction of meanings than the textually produced subjectivity which exists only at the moment of reading. (p. 62)

Thus, Fiske (1987b) describes the moment of reading as ". . . when the discourses of the reader meet the discourses of the text" (p. 82). This premise is a primary theoretical concept in this research that meanings are constructed out of the conjuncture of the text with the socially situated reader.

The theory of aberrant coding and the reading of texts is attributed to Eco (1972, 1979) by cultural theorists of media in focusing on the social situatedness of the viewer as the producer of meaning (Fiske, 1987b; Hall, 1982). Eco (1972) postulates that when there are significant social differences between the encoder and decoders of a text, then decoding will be aberrant (Eco, 1972 in Fiske, 1987b). Thus, Eco suggests that meanings will be determined more by the social situation of the decoder rather than by the encoder; furthermore, in mass communication, when texts are decoded by a wide variety of social groups, aberrant decodings are
paradoxically the norm. Reflecting on Eco's theory of aberrant coding, Fiske (1987b) stresses that this does not mean a reader's social position mechanistically produces meanings from him or her in a way that would parallel the authoritarian way that texts used to be thought to work; rather it means to delimit or set the boundaries of many experiences inflected with a wide difference of people's social determinations. This is how audiences mobilize their polysomy to serve their cultural interests, by activating one set of meanings rather than any of the others, or responding to some contradictions rather than others, not as a conscious or intentional process, but as an active process of reproduction.

The theory of intertextuality proposes that readings of visual media are determined by viewer's class location and cultural experiences, as well as in a relationship between various genres of texts. Fiske (1987b) explains intertextuality as follows:

The theory of intertextuality proposes that any one text is necessarily read in relationship to others and that a range of textual knowledges is brought to bear upon it. These relationships do not take the form of specific allusions from one text to another and there is no need for readers to be familiar with specific or the same texts read intertextually. Intertextuality exists rather in the spaces between texts. (p. 108)
According to Fiske (1987b), intertextual knowledge pre-orient the reader to exploit the polysomy of media texts in certain ways rather than others. Not only is the text polysemic in itself, but its multitude of intertextual relations increase its potential of polysemic readings. Fiske argues that studying a text's intertextuality can provide valuable clues to the readings that a particular culture or subculture is likely to produce from it. Becker (1987) supports this theory further by suggesting that intertextuality can lend itself to a description of comparative readings over time or across cultures.

The concepts of intertextuality and polysomy combine to formulate a powerful understanding of the readings of texts by social groups in creating and articulating a plurality of meaning organized around textual and social power structures. There are two dimensions of intertextual relations distinguished by Fiske (1987b) that contribute to the polysomy of media texts: (1) the horizontal and (2) the vertical.

Horizontal intertextual relations are those between primary texts that are linked to the formation of the text such as the lines of genre, character or content. Vertical intertextual relations are linked
between a primary text and texts of a different type that refer explicitly to it, referred to as secondary texts and tertiary texts. Secondary texts are exemplified by such means as studio publicity, journal articles and criticisms that work to promote the circulation of selected meanings of the primary text. Tertiary texts are the final or crucial stage of the circulation of meanings that occur at the level of the viewers and their social relationships. Examples of tertiary texts are letters to the press, gossip, conversations or interviews. Tertiary texts form much of the data of ethnographic studies of audiences.

According to ethnographers of media audiences, tertiary texts can provide insights into how the primary and secondary texts are read, circulated and articulated into the culture of viewers (Ang, 1985; Fiske, 1987a, 1987b; Hobson, 1982; Hodge & Tripp, 1986; Morley, 1980). These ethnographic approaches of media audiences may involve an observational study of media situated in social settings; or focus on ethnographic discourse, which is the viewer's verbalization of responses as a result of watching media. The researcher may also effectively combine these two
approaches of audience observations and audience responses.

Theories of audience reception research focus on the need for an investigation of electronic media based on the links of author, text and reader in relation to the viewer's cultural and social experiences. Such investigations may be refined and illuminated through the combined methodologies of textual analysis, semiotics and ethnographic observations and audience discourse. They are the methodologies that undergird this research. These methodologies have been exemplified by the early work of Morley (1980) in a British nationwide television study; by Ann DeVaney Becker (1986) in her grammar of television (GOT) model; by Becker's later investigation of cinematic films for adolescent audiences (DeVaney, 1987); and recently in studies of educational film media in schools and classroom settings (Buckingham, 1990, Ellsworth and Whatley, 1990; Trudell, 1990a, 1990b). The exemplary studies of Morley (1980), Becker (1986, 1987), DeVaney (1987) and Trudell (1990a, 1990b) will be full described because together they inform this research by demonstrating how the combined methodologies of
cultural ethnography including participant observations, unstructured and focused interviews, and semiotic textual analysis can be employed in audience studies within a culturalist framework.

In a British study entitled *The Nationwide Audience: Structure and Decoding*, Morley (1980) investigated the relationship between audience readings and interpretations of a nationally broadcast British television program and variables of the viewers' social and cultural backgrounds. Morley chose a news program entitled *Nationwide*, showed it to groups of five to ten people, then held discussions with them on their reactions and meanings that they derived from it. The groups encompassed twenty-six differentiated social, political and economic representations of readers defined largely by occupation (e.g., bank managers, apprentices, students, trade unionists, etc.), although race and gender were also noted. Morley chose groups rather than individuals because he was interested in the shared social dimensions of social readings of texts.

Morley (1980) stated his research question as follows:
The problem which this project was designed to explore was that of the extent to which decodings take place within the limits of the preferred (or dominant) manner in which the message has been initially encoded. However, the complementary aspect of this problem is that of the extent to which these interpretations or decodings are inflected by other codes and discourses which different sections of the audience inhabit. We are concerned here with the ways in which decoding is determined by the socially governed distribution of cultural codes between and across different sections of the audience: that is, the range of different decoding strategies and competencies in the audience. (p. 18)

Based on the above research question, Morley (1980) explored the hypothesis that group differences in decodings would be expected to vary with the following factors: (1) basic socio-demographic factors within the variables of age, sex, race and class; and 2) involvement in various forms of cultural frameworks and identifications such as the formal structures of trade unions, political parties, or the educational system; or the informal structures of different youth and student sub-cultures, or racial and cultural minorities; 3) the topic treated in terms of whether distant, abstract or more concrete in relation to the particular groups' own experiences, alternative sources of information and perspectives; and 4) the context in which a program is decoded such as in an educational or work situation, compared with its
decoding by the same respondents in the context of the family or home.

The premises of Morley's approach were as follows: (1) television discourse is problematic; (2) the message is complex in structure, and polysemic, containing more than one "preferred" reading meaning; and (3) messages encoded in one way can always be read or decoded in different ways, depending on the way audiences differentially read and make sense of messages within the context of their situations and experiences (Morley, 1980). Thus the audience was reconceptualized from the traditional "uses and gratifications" perspective of mass communications research model, which situated audiences as selectively consuming the messages of media, to situating audiences as members of sub-cultural formations or groupings of members who share a cultural orientation towards decoding messages in particular ways. Morley conceived the audience not as atomized masses of individuals, but "clusters of socially situated individual readers" whose individual readings were framed by shared cultural formations in the class structure (Morley, 1980, p. 15).
Morley (1980) stated that he adapted his research model from Umberto Eco (1979, using the steps that have been summarized below:

Step 1: Theoretical clarification and definition of the concepts and methods to be used in the research;

Step 2: Analysis of programs' messages by elucidating (a) the construction of the basic codes of meaning; (b) the recurrent patterns and structures in the verbal and visual messages, (c) the ideology implicit in the concepts presented, (d) the categories through which the messages were transmitted;

Step 3: Field research by interview to establish how the messages previously analyzed were in fact interpreted by sections of the media audience in different structural positions, using as a framework for analysis the three basic ideal-typical possibilities: (a) the dominant code, where the audience interprets the message in terms of the same code or dominant ideology employed by the transmitter, (b) the negotiated code, where the audience employs a negotiated version of the code or dominant ideology used by the transmitter, or (c) the oppositional code,
where the audience interprets meaning through a different code from that employed by the transmitter;

Step 4: Collection of data on how the messages were received, compared with the analyses previously carried out on the messages.

Using the above steps, Morley (1980) defined his aims: (1) to construct a topology of the range of decodings made by the group audiences; (2) to analyze how and why they varied; (3) to demonstrate how different interpretations were generated; and (4) to relate these variations to other cultural factors such as the fit between class, socio-economic or educational position, cultural or interpretative competencies, discourses and codes. Morley (1980) stated that his first priority was to determine whether different sections of the audience shared, modified or rejected the ways in which topics had been encoded by the broadcasters, especially in relation to social vocabulary of the program broadcasters and the audiences' vocabularies in response. Next, he was interested in the extent to which the audience identified with the image of itself presented by the program.
In collecting the data of audience readings and interpretations, Morley (1980) used focused interviewing techniques that were based on a model established by Merton and Kendall (1947). This approach involved non-directive interviews in the initial stages, later followed by directed questions about the program material that had been earlier analyzed. Morley stressed that he chose to work with groups of five to ten people rather than individuals in the interviews, using the argument that "much individually based interview research is flawed by a focus on individuals as social atoms divorced from their social context" (Morley, 1980, p. 33). Thus Morley used audiotapes during the interviews to record respondents' actual speech rather than simply denoting the substance of their responses, which he explained was an attempt to deal with the forms of expression and degrees of fit between their vocabularies and speech and those of the media.

Morley decided not to use fix-choice questionnaires in his collection of data, arguing against them as follows:

Most of this kind of research [opinion questionnaires] "measures merely the degree of acceptance or refusal of the ideological content of particu-
lar messages, with respect to quite specific beliefs or issues" [deCarmargo, 1973 in Morley, 1980, p. 31] while failing to touch on the level at which the ideology transmitted by the media may more effectively operate—through the structuring of discourses and the provision of frameworks of interpretation and meaning. (Morley, 1980, p. 31)

Furthermore, Morley argued that it would be a mistake to use a quantifiable questionnaire because not only was the substance of the answer important, but also the form of its language and expression which constituted its meaning, instead of the particular number of "yes" or "no" answers.

The significance of Morley's research project is that he developed a preliminary investigation of an encoding/decoding model, applied to a national television audience. Among cultural theorists, Morley's study is considered a test of Hall's (1980a) encoding/decoding theory of preferred readings (Fiske, 1987a, 1987b). In Hall's theory of preferred readings, occupation was the prime definer of social class and social difference; therefore class was considered the prime factor in producing differences in readings of texts. However, Morley's findings revealed that Hall (1980a) had overemphasized the role of class in the production of differences in
Morley consistently found patterns of decodings among groups that did not correlate with their social positions, but were inflected in different directions by the influence of the discourses and institutions in which they were situated. For example, similarities were shown across classes between bank managers and apprentices, and between university students and trade union officials, despite their differences in class and social positions (Morley, 1980).

Morley (1980) demonstrated that Hall's three categories of readings were too simplistic, based on the single factor of class, so he replaced Hall's model with one based on audience discourse. In this context, a clear definition of discourse is offered by Fiske (1987a) as follows:

A discourse is a socially produced way of talking or thinking about a topic. It is defined by reference to the area of social experience that it makes sense of, to the social location from which that sense is made, and to the linguistic or signifying system by which that sense is both made and circulated. . . . A discourse, then is a socially located way of making sense of an important area of social experience. (p. 268)

According to Fiske (1987a), emphasis on discourse and the reader reduces the prime position granted to
the media text as in critical cultural theory of the 1970s. In the 1980s, the text can no longer be seen as a self-sufficient entity that exerts its own meanings with similar influences on all its readers; rather it is seen as a potential of meaning that can be activated in a number of ways. This standpoint supports Fiske's (1987a) contention that the potential of the text is proscribed and not infinite, and the text does not determine its meaning so much as delimit the arena of the struggle for that meaning by marking the terrain within which its variety of readings can be negotiated.

In summary, Morley's (1980) research represented a break from traditional and mainstream communications theories that were dominated by the basic conceptual paradigm of a mass society theory of media communications. Instead, Morley showed the viability of a theoretical approach that treats the audience as a set of cultural groupings, rather than as a mass of individual categories. He was able to indicate some of the ways in which social position, cultural and subcultural frameworks may be related to individual's readings of electronic media texts. Morley's approach to the study of television and its viewers also
contributed to establishing ethnography and ethno-
graphic discourse as valid methods of studying media.
Finally, Morley's work leaves space for refinement
among various socially and culturally defined racial
and ethnic groups in different environments and social
contexts such as schools.

In 1986, Becker created a semiotic model for the
analysis of educational television, called the grammar
of television (GOT) model. In approaching the
development of this model, Becker (1986) drew on
characteristics that distinguished the structural
differences between film and television, as well as
the differences of each medium's impact on its viewing
audience. The film medium was characterized as taking
place in a dark theater, engaging the viewer's foveal
and peripheral visions, intensifying the viewer's
attention, and resulting in a private reading
although viewed in groups. In contrast, television
viewing was characterized as taking place in a lighted
room, with peripheral vision falling outside the
screen and easily causing distractions, and audience
members in groups easily able to see each other's
reactions. These characteristics envisioned for
Becker different audiences and different forms of communication that must be employed to address them.

Similarly, Becker (1986) argued that structural differences between television and film media also abound in consideration of image, frame, editing, lighting and other characteristics which recognized them as having separate grammars. Becker stated that these differences between commercial film and television could also be located in educational film and video, except that the viewer would not necessarily be envisioned as attentive in either situation. This led Becker to investigate instructional television by seeking out its characteristics, structural elements and encoding/decoding processes in order to analyze and distinguish its own grammar in form and production practices.

The GOT model was developed to study television as it was practiced, by looking at syntactical (actual) meaning in the construction of programs, and describing paradigmatic (derivative) meaning in the social and cultural origins and current context of syntax codes (Becker, 1986). Becker conceived of the units of television construction such as shots, frames and sequences, as signs having two types of meaning--
syntagmatic and paradigmatic. She explained these differences as follows:

Syntagmatic meaning refers to the way in which these units are organized. Among other things, it considers the order of shot presentation and the way in which a frame is constructed. This organization is called syntax, just as the organization of a sentence is called syntax. If within this syntax patterns of use appear, they may be called codes. Codes can be original to the medium in which they are found, but are more frequently derivative and borrowed from other media or other domains. Meaning borrowed from other sources is called paradigmatic meaning (Becker, 1986, p. 11).

Thus, Becker argued that codes could not only be culturally derived, shared, or unique, but the presence of a unique code in a medium would indicate a new grammar. Becker conceived that this combined syntactical and paradigmatic analysis would allow for a simultaneous understanding of the construction of television programs, as well as an understanding of the actual social and cultural relationships in the construction of television images.

Throughout Becker's early research studies, she found that the GOT model was good for textual analysis and tracing of codes in the syntagmatic construction of television texts. Although the paradigmatic aspect of the model appeared to be a powerful tool for verification of social issues within the texts, Becker
(1987) stated that it failed to indicate a systematic method for paradigmatic tracings of social and cultural codes. It was at this point that Becker recognized she had valorized the visual text, but ignored the fact that the text was part of a communication between producer and viewer.

Becker's GOT model was structural in nature, but structural theory did not address senders or receivers. Thus she determined that not only was a different tracing method needed, but also a communication theory which would automatically include the sender and receiver of the visual message. Such an approach would also have to offer a means of incorporating semiotic textual analysis, while analyzing the viewing process, and the viewer's creation of meaning. This led Becker (1987) to post-structural theories integrated with extant reception reader theories that would address these needs and provide the missing link in her GOT model of television analysis. Similar to Morley (1980), Becker discerned that the central concern would be in developing a grammatical description of method since reader theorists offered few methodological guidelines.
In Becker's 1986 model for the grammatical analysis of television, the method was based on a semiotic theory of communications that addressed social and cultural issues presented in selected television programs. The stages of her proposed model of study were as follows:

First stage: Several viewings of the program in question, generation of focus questions by a panel of experts, and identity of program format.

Second stage: A panel of experts, trained as observers, to view and record segmented structures of the program in real time and in slow motion, employing a computer notation program for recording and analyzing interactions called Plexyn.

Third stage: Data analysis involving emergence of patterns within and between programs, comparisons and contrasts of codes, notations of borrowed codes and syntactic tracings, tracings of social/cultural origins to describe paradigmatic meaning, descriptions of new codes, and finally the examination of social/cultural content of any new syntax code to describe paradigmatic meaning.

Thus, Becker's GOT approach combined quantitative and qualitative methods in observing and tracing the
codes used in various formats of instructional television. A significant question that Becker raised during this process, was why were certain messages coded or certain meanings encoded in a certain television program under study. She also attempted to identify social and cultural messages presented in the visual tracks of the programs. Becker claimed that the real power of the method was in its ability to uncover tacit visual messages that student viewers were receiving, and to determine whether they were intentionally or unintentionally built into the production. Furthermore, Becker (1986) stated that the description of this process allowed the teacher to help students decode and critique messages in the visual track of educational television programs, while it offered producers of educational television more control over the inclusion of messages in the visual track.

This analytical model of instructional television was offered by Becker (1986) as a replacement for the method of individual interpretation which was conventionally used in the investigation of social and cultural issues in media studies. Becker (1987) later stated that she incorporated some theory from media
studies by using semiotics, while she borrowed methods of observation from social studies. Thus, she concluded that she was able to study television as it was practiced by looking at syntactical meaning in the construction of programs and paradigmatic meaning in the social and cultural origins and present context of syntax codes. She suggested this model as an appropriate approach to critical questions in cultural studies such as whose knowledge is presented in a television program; what social messages are embedded in a program; and how are social messages framed or structured in the visual track.

While Becker considered her GOT model to be more objective and unbiased in its analysis of the grammar of a television program, it also appeared to delimit the variety of social and economic groups needed for broad audience representation and participation in the process. These limitations were imposed by the need for formally trained observers of the medium, who had to be taught various types of structural and semiotic codes that were employed in television productions. These observers were also had to be taught to use the Pleyxn computer in order to input the their data through the use of learned codes while viewing the
programs. For example, in Becker's research projects, the observers were graduate students of literature, former social studies teachers and media analysts. Thus, this model seemed to necessitate a highly trained and sophisticated audience of media critics, which restricts participation in the process to more privileged audiences. Such restrictions would surely eliminate broad social and cultural representations of viewing audiences that are needed to assure authentic readings of media. Particularly, this approach would eliminate the participative voices of underprivileged minorities. Thus, the question of whose voice is heard becomes problematic in this research approach.

This critique of Becker's GOT model is not intended to diminish its contribution toward an understanding of the analysis of instructional television through technological approaches to audience readings. While working through methodological problems that emanated from her GOT model, Becker provided key concepts from reader reception theory for further study in this area of media research. She recognized the need for an investigation of electronic media focused on the links of author, text and reader in relation to the viewer's background, cultural and
social experiences. Becker (1987) also recognized the theory of intertextuality which proposes that readings of visual media are determined by viewer's class location and cultural experiences, as well as the relationship between various genres of texts. Significantly, she suggested that intertextuality can lend itself to a description of comparative readings over time or across cultures. Thus, it is within the confines of cultural studies and audience reception theory that Becker has positioned her GOT model, appropriately focusing it on the cultural and structural elements of instructional television and video for further educational research studies.

In a later study, recognizing cinema as a cultural artifact which shapes and reflects social practice, Becker (DeVaney, 1987) investigated four popular cinematic films of John Hughes. She noted that Hughes' films were extremely popular among adolescents in 1985 and 1986. Becker ascertained that Hughes' targeted audiences were midwestern, white middle or upper class. Interviews with his audiences indicated that much of the attraction to his films was attributed to the authenticity of dialogue and the characters at whom they laughed and identified. Thus,
Becker was particularly interested in the depiction of characters in the films, and the patterns and codes which allowed adolescent audiences to read these film characters. She wished to uncover the reason for his popularity with teen audiences and to provide insight into adolescent attitudes that were reflected and shaped in the world of Hughes' films.

Becker approached the study of Hughes' film by the use of textual analysis of four popular films. These films were representative of the two forms with which Hughes worked, namely satire and the realist narrative. Becker introduced the films with a summary that emphasized their characters grouped as adolescents and adults, and their encoded dialogues, behaviors and dress to distinguish the groups. The method of critical textual analysis used in Becker's investigation began by describing the manner in which information about certain characters was codified in the visual and sound tracks; continued by comparing and contrasting and contrasting codes; and concluded by extrapolating messages delivered by these codes.

Becker stated her critical textual analysis of Hughes' films revealed several disturbing findings about the messages, attitudes and values encoded in
these popular cinematic media productions (DeVaney, 1987). She found that Hughes' films actually reinforced and perpetuated negative stereotypes about minorities, young women and adults. He also reinforced the negative views of a narrow national group of adolescents (midwestern, white, middle or upper middle class), while reproducing many of the negative social values of their adult world (e.g., money is necessary for having fun). Initial interviews with Hughes' teen viewing audiences also revealed that identity with characters in the films gave them a sense of power in a world where they had little social power, as one young man stated, "These films are good revenge" (DeVaney, 1987, p. 24). Becker concluded that the impact of these films called for intervention on the part of parents and teachers. She suggested that directed reading of these film texts might help adolescents move beyond their amusement and identification to a critical analysis of the films' messages. The significance of this study is that it provided an exemplary model of critical textual analysis for understanding the construction of social messages and meanings encoded in films, and it offered an analytical approach for use in the
classroom with adolescent audiences using a variety of educational media formats.

In an exemplary educational media study, Trudell (1990a, 1990b) investigated the use of a media film on teenage pregnancy, utilizing ethnographic observations and linking ideological analysis with classroom practice. The film, If You Want to Dance (New Dimension Films, 1983) was included in a four-week course in a ninth grade sexuality education class. The research setting was a comprehensive public high school recognized for excellence, located in a homogeneous mostly Caucasian and Christian community in a liberal midwestern city that valued education highly. The 27 students in the classroom study were 17 females and 10 males, of which three students were racially classified as Black (two females and one male). Trudell's study of the film within its wider curricular context, focused on the following broad questions:

1. With what points of view about sexuality and gender relations does the film invite students to identify on the basis of its form, style, and classroom use?

2. What factors influence teacher selection and presentation of the film?

3. What are student classroom responses and interpretations of the film's points of view? Are
these similar across social groupings? (Trudell, 1990a, p. 75)

Data for Trudell's study were obtained by textual analysis of the film; ethnographic observations of the classroom, other schools and district settings; and interviews with the teacher and students. Specific data regarding the film involved formal and informal interviews with the classroom teacher; observations of the class on the day the film was shown, followed by a subsequent private screening of the film involving 23 students who watched the film in open-ended interviews. Interviews with the students explored their interpretations of the film's purpose and messages, as well as clarified the meaning of their classroom responses. Trudell stated that her research questions and analysis were an attempt to gain understandings that can inform action and practice in the classroom.

Results from the study focused on Trudell's textual analysis of the film, the teacher's strategies in conjunction with the sexuality course and the selected film's use in the classroom, the lived cultural responses of students at the level of classroom, and dynamics in the classroom related to
gender, race and class. The film analysis revealed that the points of view encoded in the film were mostly consistent with norms of dominant groups related to issues of sexuality, gender relations, and pregnancy. For example, the film privileged white, middle class heterosexuality; portrayed pregnancy as inevitable; and offered stereotypic gender roles and unbridgeable communications gaps between sexes. Classroom dynamics of teaching styles and students' responses revealed various forms of coping techniques and organizational dilemmas by the teacher, as well as the consequence of reducing potentially rich cultural knowledge to reified knowledge that was irrelevant to the students. The lived cultural knowledge of students in the classroom also revealed tension and contradictions related to gender, race, and class.

The significance of Trudell's study is that it offered a model for media research focused on lived classroom practice within the theoretical framework of cultural studies. Trudell (1990a, 1990b) found that such an analysis of the dynamics surrounding this one film in a sexuality classroom offered a picture of the complex, subtle and sometimes contradictory process by which school knowledge is constructed. Trudell
concluded that whatever the intended purpose or ideological message of educational media, it must work its way through several interconnected organizational factors and imperatives of the school and school district, and may acquire alternate cultural meanings. Indeed her research contributed to an understanding of ideology embedded in media and its inter-dynamic relationship between teaching practices and students' responses, particularly within the context of a human sexuality curriculum.

In summary, this chapter presented a comprehensive overview of the theories that informed this research. The research draws on the framework of cultural studies which focuses on the social, economic and ideological structures and practices in society. The cultural studies has proven itself significant in educational research through investigations of lived school cultures and practices, literary and media discourse, and analysis of ideology in films and other texts. Compared with mainstream approaches to media research, which are empirically based on the scientific method for an understanding of how communication is processed, I contend that the culturalist approach can contribute more profoundly toward an understanding
of how media texts are read and responded to by media audiences.

This research is shaped by both the theoretical as well as exemplary models of cultural studies in media. Influenced by audience reception theory in cultural studies, the research stresses the investigation of links among author, text and reader. The works of Hall (1980) and the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies contributed by providing a framework and understanding of the encoding/decoding process and the theoretical perspectives of preferred readings. In addition, the exemplary models of reception theory research performed by Morley (1980), Becker (1986, 1987), DeVaney (1987) and Trudell (1990a, 1990b) proved significant in contributing toward an understanding of media through the methodologies of ethnography, semiotics, textual analysis and interviewing techniques. Indeed these methodologies can contribute toward an understanding of the production of knowledge in curricula media texts, and the creation of meanings from media texts by various social and racial groups.
CHAPTER 3
DESCRIPTION OF STUDY AND RESEARCH PROCEDURES

This study took place in three senior high schools in a large urban public school district located in the southern United States. Two films on the subject of AIDS, which were used in the school district's tenth grade Health and Family Living curriculum, were selected for the study. The films were entitled 'Til Death Do Us Part (Durrin, 1988), and Sex, Drugs and AIDS (ODN Productions, 1987). Prior to classroom showings and student interviews, these films were deconstructed and textually analyzed to reveal production techniques of racial representations and social identities, instructional messages, social messages and ideologies embedded in the films from the perspective of the researcher. Critical film analysis prior to student viewing was a necessary step in preparation for classroom discussions and interviews with students.

Immediately following classroom showings of the film, voluntary groups of students were interviewed about them through the techniques of unstructured and focused interviews. Finally, interview data in
conjunction with ethnographic data were reflexively analyzed as patterned responses were revealed in the study to indicate students' readings and reactions to the films. Conclusions and recommendations were directed toward instructional film production guidelines, and reconstructed curriculum approaches to the evaluation, selection and utilization of instructional film media in classrooms, particularly as these processes impact African-American high school student audiences. The real names of all schools and persons reported in this study were changed to maintain anonymity, as requested by the school district.

Preliminary Study

During the fall and spring semesters of 1988-89, a preliminary study was undertaken at an inner city high school, to determine students' opinions and reactions to a film entitled 'Til Death Do us Part (Durrin, 1988). The film was created, written and performed by young adult members of the Everyday Theater Ensemble, based in Washington, D.C. The film featured African-American youth in a rap musical theatrical format to communicate messages about heterosexual sex activities, intravenous drug use, and
other high risk activities that were related to the HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) infection and AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome). This film was the focus of discussion in a meeting of the school district's Sex Education Audiovisual Committee meeting, which considered whether it should be selected for use in the school district's Health and Family Living Curriculum. I was a member of the committee, and participated in the discussions. The committee was more divided than usual in its deliberations, with much of the dissention directed toward the question of whether the film would actually be beneficial to its targeted audience of inner-city, African-American students. Arguments of the committee members centered around the film's genre, rap music, popular dances, instructional and social messages. Although the committee ultimately decided in favor of the film, it was the initial divisiveness of the committee, as well as its focused discussion which centered around African-American student viewing audiences, that gave impetus to this preliminary study. Thus, the study was directed toward the targeted student audience themselves (i.e., African-Americans), in an effort to garner their opinions and
reactions to the film, and to ascertain whether the film was of instructional and social benefit to them in their Health and Family Living Curriculum on the subject of AIDS.

The preliminary study included 97 students in an inner city senior high school, grades 10-12, ages 14-19, enrolled in Health and Family Living classes. The majority of students at this lived in one of the city's largest and most deleterious public housing developments, characterized by poverty, high unemployment, social welfare programs, high crime, high drug usage, a large percentage of teenage pregnancies, and many other social conditions so characteristic of economically and racially oppressed communities in this country. According to the film's producers (Durrin, 1988), this group of students was considered the film's targeted audience. Therefore, this African-American population of students was selected to test the assumptions, meanings and contradictions of the film.

The film study began with background research on the origins, social and racial assumptions, and demographic statistics on the subject of AIDS. Background research indicated the need for a study,
and its importance to the health and survival of African-American people as discussed in Chapter 1. Second, the selected film was analyzed and critiqued by utilizing the techniques of semiotics, and social and political deconstruction of its text. Textual analysis focused on racial representations and social identities in the film pertaining to African-Americans, as well as issues of class, race and gender. Third, students' reactions and readings of the film text were approached through (a) open-ended group and individual interviews, and (b) a two-part written opinion questionnaire utilizing survey techniques and open-ended questions. Fourth, the film was critiqued based on students' responses which were juxtaposed with the researcher's prior textual analysis of the film. Fifth, recommendations were made to consider alternative approaches to the evaluation, selection and use of this film genre in the classroom as it related to the Health and Family Living Curriculum on the subject of AIDS.

Results from the preliminary inquiry revealed meaningful insights concerning students' readings and reactions to the film, while posing critical questions concerning certain myths and contradictions in the
film that centered around African-Americans in relation to race, class and gender. Generally, the students' responses demonstrated high acceptance of the film through its production techniques of rap, music, songs and dance. Students closely identified with the characters in relation to their class, race and gender locations as reflected in the film. Students' readings of the film accepted its social messages that focused on drug avoidance and AIDS prevention; but the heterosexual messages pertaining to teen pregnancy were contradicted or resisted by students. While African-American racial and cultural representation appealed to students during the film showings, in interview sessions students rejected the film's assumption that an exclusive African-American cast would have greatest appeal to this same racially targeted audience. It was also significant that discussions with students through unstructured small group interviews elicited the most insightful and evocative responses, in contrast to individualized interviews and written quantitative questionnaires.

This preliminary study also indicated the need for further research and refinement of methodological techniques for continued study of this particular
film, and suggested the need to include a second film to compare and further analyze the initial findings. Results included the need for (1) a more diversified research population to assure triangulation by expansion of the study to additional secondary schools that would represent a broader and more heterogeneous student population; (2) a greater depth of study by utilization of ethnographic participant observation techniques over an extended period of time in classroom and school settings; and (3) additional assurance of triangulation by inclusion of a second film. These recommendations from the preliminary study ultimately undergirded the research methodologies, techniques and procedures that were implemented in the major study described below.

Description of Major Study and Procedures

The study took place in a large metropolitan area, geographically located in the southern United States. The city's population is 496,938 with a racial population approximately 61% African Americans, 3% Hispanics, 35% Caucasians, and 1% others (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1991, p. 40). The city's predominant religious orientation is Roman Catholic. The city is economically depressed, and unemployment
is extremely high. In this city, the numbers of AIDS cases are increasing at an alarming rate, including more babies born with AIDS each year (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1989).

Research took place in an urban school district within the metropolitan area. The school district serves a population of 84,419 students, with racial representations that are 87.3% African American, 7.8% Caucasian, 3.2% Asian, 1.6% Hispanic, and .1% "other" (Department of Information and Community Services, 1989). The three senior high schools selected for the study represented a broad and heterogeneous cross section of student populations based on racial composition, academic achievement, socio-economic backgrounds, metropolitan demographics, and histories of the schools. For purposes of this study, the schools were categorized as (1) suburban, (2) magnet college preparatory, and (3) urban inner-city. Among the three schools, approximately 237 students viewed the films in their Health and Family Living classes; and 119 students including 79 females and 40 males were interviewed (Appendices A, B, C, D).

The schools ranged from high to low student achievement, based on national and state-wide norm
referenced tests (Department of Educational Accountability, 1989, 1990). Socio-economic data concerning students could not be obtained because of confidentiality, but it was ascertained from class enrollment forms that the students' socio-economic family backgrounds ranged from upper middle class professionals to lower working class, and welfare recipients. The selected communities also represented unique cultural and social histories in this city. The schools were located in neighborhoods that ranged from the wealthiest to the poorest, from the oldest to the newest. These social, economic, racial and demographic factors were significant because they shaped the cultures of the schools, as well as the social and educational experiences of the students.

Although the three schools were predominantly populated by African-American students, they were distinctly different based on proportionate racial representations, school philosophies, social and historical backgrounds, and academic profiles. The selection of these different schools was an important consideration for assurance of triangulation, which cultural ethnographers deem necessary for approaching data with multiple perspectives (Hammersley &
Atkinson, 1983). Thus, a heterogeneous representation of predominantly African-American student audiences was selected to provide data and test the assumptions of reception theory in cultural studies which proposed that (1) meanings are produced not by texts themselves, but by the interactions of texts with audiences; and (2) communities of viewers will read or interpret media texts differently depending on their backgrounds, cultural and social experiences (Allen, 1987; Becker, 1986, 1987; DeVaney, 1987; Fiske, 1987a, 1987b; Masterman, 1985; Morley, 1980).

Two contrasting films on the topic of AIDS were selected from an official list of sex education audiovisuals approved by the school district for the Health and Family Living Curriculum in secondary schools. This list of approved materials had been developed by an appointed audiovisual committee composed of teachers, school nurses, media specialists, parents, a religious representative, a community representative and instructional specialists. After reviewing the list of approved films, the two selected for this study were (1) 'Til Death Do Us Part (Durrin, 1988), and (2) Sex, Drugs and Aids (ODN Productions, 1987).
The first selected film, 'Til Death Do Us Part, (Durrin, 1988) was the same one used in the preliminary study. It was selected again for this study because of its uniqueness among all the films included in the curriculum, and also as a baseline for consistency and comparisons that emanated from the preliminary study. The most salient reasons for selection of this film were as follows: (1) the film was the only one on the approved list that was exclusively African-American in its cast, script, and production; (2) the film had been the focus of controversial evaluation by the selection committee as discussed in the preliminary study; (3) the film was unique in the delivery of its social and educational messages, compared to other films (e.g., rap music, dance, African-American cast, etc.); (3) the film targeted an urban African-American viewing audience. It was also noteworthy that the school district's Family Living Coordinator informed me in that the film entitled 'Til Death Do Us Part was currently very popular among health educators and student audiences, which she described as "the hottest film in the nation" on the subject of AIDS (personal communication, February 19, 1990).
The second film, *Sex, Drugs and AIDS* (ODN Productions, 1987), treated the same subject matter, yet it offered several comparisons and contrasts to *'Til Death Do Us Part* (Durrin Productions, 1988), based on its racial, social, cultural and pedagogical approaches to the treatment of AIDS. Although *Sex, Drugs and AIDS* was contemporary, it was quite conventional in its presentation of AIDS based on (1) the film's delivery of social and health messages on AIDS (e.g. narrative dialogues, charts, lists of facts, etc.); (2) the heterogeneity of social and racial actors included in the film; and (3) the unanimous acceptance by the school district's audiovisual committee. The second film was also selected because it included in its presentation some of the racial and social representational codes and production techniques that students in the preliminary study had suggested for inclusion in future films. It was also noteworthy that this second film was mandatory viewing in New York Public Schools, for example, and widely distributed across the United States (Ellsworth & Whatley, 1990).

Finally, these two films were selected for the study after previewing all of the other films on AIDS
that were included on the school district's approved
list of materials for the Health and Family Living
Curriculum. While the selection of these films for
inclusion in the study was an important consideration,
the significance of this film study was its focus on
the student audiences' readings and responses to the
films, directed toward an understanding of how
meanings were created from instructional media based
on the students' social backgrounds and lived
experiences. Since these two films offered sufficient
comparisons and contrasts in their approaches to the
same subject matter, it was determined that their
selection in this study would prove insightful in the
final analysis of students' readings and responses to
the films.

Prior to implementing the study, it was necessary
to obtain permission to undertake research in the
schools through the school district's Department of
Educational Accountability. Permission was granted
with the caveats that (1) written permission must be
obtained from parents to interview students, with
assurances that their responses be anonymous in the
final report; and (2) an observer must be present
during any interviews or discussions with students
The requirement for parental consent was met by writing a letter and sending a consent form to parents for students' permission to participate in the study (Appendix G). The requirement of an observer was achieved by soliciting cooperation of library media specialists in each school who agreed to unobtrusively observe interviews and discussions, while ostensibly going about their business of managing the library media center. The librarians also cooperated by providing convenient spaces in the library media centers that allowed for uninterrupted and open discussions. Library media centers were also selected as settings for the interviews because earlier observations in the schools suggested that these were comfortable neutral zones as indicated by students' apparently relaxed behaviors there. The librarians' interactions and work with students and teachers in these schools also appeared supportive, and sex education materials were clearly visible and easily accessible to all users.

Upon receiving permission for the research to take place in the selected schools, respective principals were approached in person, and followed-up in writing (Appendix F). Permission was immediately
granted from all three principals, as requested. Furthermore, it was agreed that one health and physical education teacher from each school would be cooperatively recruited by the principal to participate in the study. This procedure was intended to allow voluntary and cooperative participation by the selected teachers and principals.

The selected teachers in each school taught the Health and Family Living course as a required component of the physical education curriculum. The teachers were certified in both curriculum areas. The Health and Family Living course was a tenth grade requirement, mandated by the school district to be taught over a period of five weeks for 50 minutes daily. The subject of AIDS was included as a unit of the curriculum, usually taught over a period of one to two weeks. Although most of the students enrolled in this course were tenth graders, there were a few ninth, eleventh and twelfth grade students assigned to the classes for a variety of reasons having to do with scheduling, other course requirements, or personal circumstances. The students were informed that my purpose was to become acquainted with their course unit on AIDS, to present two selected films on the
subject, and to interview them about the films. The students were also informed that I was interested in learning their opinions about the selected films as part of a doctoral research project, and that conclusions would be used to make future recommendations concerning the selection of instructional films for high school audiences.

Two weeks minimum were spent in each school, and at least three class periods were observed each day, taught by the same teacher. During the first week of initial field work in each school, I became acquainted with the school environment, informally interviewed teachers, administrators and support staff, and gathered historical and statistical information about the school. My activities in the classrooms included participant observations, note taking, classroom film showings, informal discussions and open-ended focused interviews with students and teachers. While observing the classes, I was seated unobtrusively in positions which usually allowed rear and side facial views of students, with occasional frontal views of the class. In some instances, I was called on by the teacher to join in class discussions, to assist the teacher with the handling of media, or to supervise
the class during brief moments of the teacher's absence. Classroom observations and field notes included the verbal and nonverbal interactions of the teacher and students, situated vocabularies of students and the teacher, instructional content, pedagogical techniques, scope and depth of disseminated knowledge, classroom incidents, and all physical and temporal elements of the classroom environment. The reasons for these observations were to become oriented with the teacher, and students in the context of the classroom and school environment; to develop common experiences and reference points for student interviews; and to encourage students to be comfortable with my presence in the classroom.

It was not until at least the second week in the school and classroom that the two selected research films were shown to students, and only after consultation and planning with the teachers to incorporate the films into their planned lessons on AIDS. Teachers also previewed each of the films, before determining the order in which the films were to be shown. On several occasions, other films on the subject of AIDS were shown earlier by the teachers either as introductory subject matter or as an
integral part of their planned lesson unit. The additional films proved fortuitous and enriching to the study because they formed common classroom media experiences with the students, which further engaged them in discussions on the subject of AIDS as well as the comparative qualities of each of the films during interview sessions.

During classroom film showings, I observed the student's verbal and non-verbal responses to the films. Immediately following the film viewings, interviews were held with students in the library media center. It was considered important to conduct the unstructured and focused interviews immediately, while the films were still an immediate part of the students' intellectual and lived sensory experiences. The focused interviews were open-ended, utilizing Merton and Kendall's prescribed techniques, and stressing the criterion for maximizing depth and searching out the personal context and the salient responses to determine how the prior experiences and predispositions of respondents related to the films (Merton & Kendall, 1947). The focused interview areas were directed toward students' readings and reactions to the films in relation to their content, subject
matter, production techniques, social messages, characterizations, racial and gendered representations and social identities embedded in the films. Examples of the interview questions, are provided in Appendices H and I. For purposes of documentation, the interviews were audiotaped, seating charts were diagramed, and informal notes were taken sporadically during the interviews. Consistent with the tenets of liberatory education, student subjects for interviews were accepted on a voluntary basis only. In accordance with the school district's policy, students under the age of 18 submitted a signed consent form from a parent or guardian prior to participation in the interview sessions (Appendix G). The names of all participants remained anonymous throughout the study.

Finally, students' readings and responses to the films were analyzed based on preliminary textual analysis, as well as discussions and interviews with students, classroom observations, and the collection of other social and descriptive data derived from field work in the schools. Results of students' responses were categorized into general themes, based on prior textual analysis of the films and questions raised during interviews. Responses were also
considered with respect to Stuart Hall's definitions of preferred readings: (1) a dominant reading is produced by a viewer situated to agree and accept the dominant ideology and subjectivity of the film; (2) a negotiated reading is produced by a viewer who fits into the dominant ideology but inflects it to take account of their social position; and (3) an oppositional reading is produced by viewers whose social situation puts them into direct opposition with the dominant ideology (Fiske, 1987a; Hall, 1980a). Warranted inferences from participant ethnographic observations and interviews with teachers, administrators and staff all contributed to the final analysis and conclusions. Finally, recommendations were directed toward more critical approaches to the evaluation, selection and utilization of electronic film media in the classroom, particularly in relation to the students' lived racial, social and cultural experiences in their schools and communities.

In summary, the major study was an enlargement and refinement of the preliminary study. The three selected schools in the major study represented three characteristically distinct student audiences, based on the schools' histories, metropolitan demographics,
racial and socio-economic and academic backgrounds of students. The two selected films provided for comparisons and contrasts as they contributed to the student audiences' readings and responses to the film texts. Finally these varied elements combined to assure triangulation so that the assumptions of media reception theory could be tested from multiple perspectives in the final analysis of ethnographic observations and interview data obtained in the study.

Description of Schools in the Study

Marshview High School

General Background

Marshview High School was established in 1967 to meet the needs of a rapidly increasing suburban population of new residents in the eastern section of the city. During this study, the enrollment at Marshview High was 1,550 students, reflecting a racial representation that was approximately 70% African-American, 20% Caucasian, 9% Asian, and 1% Hispanic (Interview with principal, February 20, 1990). According to the librarian, more than 27 nationalities were represented in the student population (Interview, June 4, 1990). The faculty consisted of 111 teachers and staff, 58%
African-American, 41% Caucasian, and 1% Asian (Department of Personnel, 1991, p. 1).

The school's norm reference achievement test score data for ninth graders in 1989, which represented the tenth grade group in this study, indicated that 37.7% of the students scored at or above the 50th percentile in mathematics, and 29.4% scored below the 25th percentile (Department of Educational Accountability, 1990, p. B-9). In language arts, 32.1% percent scored at or above the 50th percentile, and 33.6% scored below the 25th percentile (Department of Educational Accountability, 1990, p. A-9). Yet, this school ranked in the middle range of senior high schools in the district's norm reference testing program. According to the school district's economic rankings for federal assistance, at least 18.423% of the school's residential area was targeted in need of economic assistance (Chapter I Department, 1990). Among the 1,550 students, 634 were eligible for free lunch and 251 were classified Aid for Dependent Children (AFDC) eligible (Chapter I Department, 1990).

This school was built on a wide tree lined boulevard, spread across 25 acres. Built when land in this
section of the city was underdeveloped and plentiful, the school was a massive sprawling modern red brick structure facing a major boulevard. The section that fronted the boulevard and housed the administrative suites was one-story, leading back through an attractive tree lined court yard to a two-story section that overlooked spacious wooded acreage at the rear of the school. A large parking lot surrounded the front and sides of the building to accommodate the many automobile commuting teachers and students. Flying high in front of the building, an American flag signaled the school's prominent location on the boulevard.

The physical plant of the building was exceptionally clean and fresh smelling, with shiny floors and walls free of writing or graffiti. While walking down the halls, classrooms could be viewed through open doors while teachers loudly lectured, but students appeared languid and only courteously attentive, answering questions when called upon. Large ceiling fans turned overhead in the classrooms because the school was not air conditioned, except for the administrative suites, counselors offices, library media center and auditorium. Throughout the day, the
library was a hub of constant activity and traffic by students and teachers. When students passed to classes, they appeared mostly in groups segregated by race and nationality, although there were many racially mixed groups and pairs that did socialize together. Similar clusters of racial groups could be seen on the school yard. Yet, students casually greeted each other across racial groups in friendly acknowledgements. Although several faculty members stated that there was some interracial dating in the school, it did not seem apparent in the halls, school yard or classrooms.

Marshview High school was originally built to accommodate a rapidly increasing Caucasian population of working class and professional families in this newly expanding section of the city. The first migration of new residents to this area were Caucasian office workers, skilled laborers and middle class professionals; but by the early 1970s more middle class African-Americans, Asians, and Hispanics were attracted to the area because of its affordable and attractive housing. In contrast to the newer residents, the older residents were mostly poor and retired Caucasian laborers, fishermen and Coast Guard
families that had earlier settled near the levee and lake areas. The social and racial mix of the community was also reflected in the student population of Marshview High School, except for the many upper middle class African-American and Caucasian families that sent their children to the city's many private and parochial schools.

The school's immediate environs reflected the mushrooming of new businesses in the sprawling area. This area consisted of a major hospital, medical offices, a major shopping mall, small shopping plazas, fast food drive-ins, small restaurants, and many well recognized national retail franchises that marketed their merchandise for suburban youth and adults. Directly across from the school was a 100 acre public park, state regional nature and science center, and a major regional public library. Next door to the school was a large private church school and worship assembly center. The residences that comprised the school's community consisted of contemporary apartment complexes and townhouses, nursing homes, and moderate to luxurious homes in well maintained subdivisions that were often surrounded by private lakes.
Marshview High's school day began at 7:30 a.m., one hour earlier than other district high schools. This regulation was based on past years, when the school was on platoon shifts due to overcrowding; however the practice continued even after a new high school in the area relieved over-crowding. A major reason for the school day beginning earlier was to provide early dismissal for students to get to jobs in nearby businesses. Money and material consumption appeared important to many students at Marshview High, indicated by their emphasis on cars, designer fashions and the latest contemporary dress styles. Dress styles consisted of expensive designer jeans, designer emblem shirts, expensive tennis shoes, and Italian leather shoes that reflected the latest in mainstream fashion magazines. A few African-American young women were beginning to wear the latest "fan" hair styles; Caucasian young women showed a preference for long blonde hair; and the Asian and Hispanic young women maintained traditional styles. Many of the African-American young men wore closely shaved razor designed hairstyles or the current "high stack" style; many Caucasian males showed a preference for long shoulder length hair; and the Asian and Hispanic young men
maintained traditional styles. There was a small group of Caucasian students who particularly stood out, usually in black clothes adorned with crucifixes or skeleton skulls, and they were rumored to be a Satanist group. Then there were some groups of very poor African-American and Caucasian students who were in need of clothing and free lunch as pointed out by teachers.

The students' apparent obsession with material things was noted as a matter of concern by the school nurse, counselor, librarian and teachers. These staff members were concerned because students seemed more focused on jobs, cars, clothes and social activities rather than school. Family problems were reported on the increase which the nurse and social worker attributed to child abuse, family alcoholism and drugs, divorces and psychiatric disorders. Indeed, the students and the families were undergoing all of the stresses and social problems of large urban communities in metropolitan cities.

The principal of the school, Dr. John Castiglia, was a Caucasian in his mid-forties. He had been principal for three years, having succeeded only two other Caucasian principals since the school opened in
1967. He was on the original staff when this school first opened, and left the school to become an elementary school principal, until his return in 1986. Dr. Castiglia was considered pleasant and easy-going by teachers and staff, and students appeared comfortable in his presence. He was often out of the building at meetings in the school district, while the administrative operations of the school were left to a team of three assistant principals. The assistant principals were all Caucasians in their late thirties and early forties. One assistant principal was responsible for discipline; the other two for student and faculty administration. These assistant principals were highly visible in the school through their constant hall monitoring, and strict adherence to policies and procedures. The school operated under strict codes of enforced discipline. The principal stated, "We really try to stay on top of discipline here and enforce the rules and regulations," (Interview, February 20, 1990).

Prior to school commencing, a uniformed African-American security guard armed with a gun and billet stick was always on duty. The guard monitored the
sidewalks and parking lot, hurried students into the school, and discouraged any socializing outside the school entrance. Every morning during the first period, there was standing room only in the reception area where at least ten or more parents and students crowded the vestibule to see one of the assistant principals for re-admission to school after suspensions or reports of infractions of the school's discipline code (e.g., tardiness, excessive absenteeism, failure to attend detentions, etc.). Office staff (majority Caucasian) quickly issued re-admission slips for students, passes to parents for conferences with teachers, and visitors passes required for anyone who entered the school.

The school's administration had a reputation in the community for arresting any trespassers who entered its premises without an official pass. Hallways and school grounds were regularly monitored by the principal, assistant principals and armed security guard. They each carried two-way walkie talkies that constantly transmitted communications from the main office and among themselves. One of the assistant principals, Mr. Peppard, was particularly noted for his aggressive stance on discipline. He
strictly controlled student traffic in hallways and sidewalks in a near military manner. Mr. Peppard would stop anyone on the hall without a badge or pass, often shouting, "Stop, where are you going? Let me see your pass? What, no pass, get to the office and I'll see you there." While students moved between classes, Mr. Peppard could be heard above the crowd shouting loudly, "Alright, move on, move on." When teachers on hall duty saw him approaching, they immediately became more vigilant in their hall monitoring duties, vocally prompting students to pass through quickly. Even I panicked one day, when in the hall without my official identification badge.

Mr. Peppard was well known throughout the school, community and school district for his strict stance on discipline. His constant refrain was, "If you don't have discipline, you have chaos; and in chaos, you can't learn" (Interview, June 12, 1990). Regarding the dress code he stated, "This is an institution of learning and not an institution for showing off legs" (Interview, June 12, 1990). He took great pride in bravado acts to enforce discipline such as when he personally chased a young intruder over fences and into the nearby shopping center until caught and
arrested. Mr. Peppard stated, "I don't play with people who don't go to this school; they're going to jail. My name is on just about everyone who goes down. I've had my fights" (Interview, June 12, 1990). He bragged of his connections with police at the nearby district station, as he described how they once dispatched three units of police cars in 45 seconds, speeding and skidding through the streets to assist him in a fight when a student took a swing at him. Yet, Mr. Peppard attempted to demonstrate that he cared, as he stated, "Part of my hard shell image is not hard shell; I do listen and I care what happens to kids" (Interview, June 12, 1990). Later he added, "I know I get arrogant and upset with parents, kids and say, 'That's the door, see you later,' if political, subtilty and placating is what they want" (Interview, June 12, 1990). On further reflection, Mr. Peppard stated, "So long as the door is open, and you have a pass, you can come in, close the door, and talk about anything" (Interview, June 12, 1990). He was proud of the birthday cards that he sent to kids, and of the students he befriended. He recalled a field trip when students exclaimed, "The guy's not that bad, he can have fun" (Interview, June 12, 1990). Yet, he
immediately countered, "When its time to be a pain in the ass, I am." (Interview, June 12, 1990)

The school was replete with social problems that plagued inner-city and suburban schools. In a discussion of the social problems at the school,

Dr. Castiglia stated the following:

What we are seeing more so that frightens me is in the unfortunate deaths that we've had. We've had counselors to come over from Lake View [Psychiatric Hospital] to help us in the crisis, and they say that these kids have a lot of problems. Home problems. Alcohol. Problems with home, in that their parents are separated or that are going to get separated. They don't like the boyfriend that the mother's dating, and vice versa. A lot of this comes out when the counselors were talking to the kids to kind of loosen them up. We got them to come over and help comfort the kids, and then as they started talking all of this pops up. Teenage pregnancy, big thing. Then in society outside of our school, there are some gangs. Different names. Now while that hasn't raised its ugly head in the school as such, we know that there are some problems in the community. People getting into fights, and we hear tales of so and so was arrested, and such and such. You know, gang related. The police tell us that, but again we've been able to kind of let that be out there when they come to school. (Interview, February 20, 1990)

Indeed the students and faculty had experienced an inordinate number of deaths during the current school year. There were so many deaths that impacted the school, it sometimes became difficult to discern exact chronologies or to distinguish their direct
relationship to the school environment itself. Yet these tragedies permeated the school, and became a part of everyone's social and emotional experiences. In the beginning of the 1989-90 school year, one male Hispanic student died as a result of injuries sustained in a fight with another student across the street from the school at a fast food restaurant. A few weeks later, an African-American student was killed over drugs. During the 1989 Christmas holidays, a popular male Caucasian music teacher suddenly became ill and died of pneumonia complications. In early January, 1990, an African-American male student was involved in the accidental fatal shooting of a seven year old child with a shotgun that was found in a dumpster at a nearby apartment complex. During my second week at the school, a popular African-American male student committed suicide.

On February 8, 1990, Dr. Castiglia sadly informed me in the hallway that a student had committed suicide the previous evening. He also informed me that the auditorium, where I usually met the Health and Family Living classes, would be used for an assembly. When I entered the auditorium, there were approximately 750
boisterous students in the assembly who were loudly implored to "quiet down" by Mr. Peppard. Then Mr. Peppard harshly informed them that, "Last night a student went into a crack house and came out dead." He exalted the students to let this be a "lesson" to them, and immediately showed a contemporary film on the subject of choices and decision-making for teenagers. When the film opened with famous rock stars, actors and football players accompanied by popular rock music, the students immediately cheered and clapped. When the film ended, the students were sent to class without further discussion, and the next group of 750 students filed in for the same film showing. Only later was there clarification that the death had actually been a suicide, causing teachers and students to become tearful and emotional throughout the day. Meanwhile, school district social workers and psychiatric staff, as well as volunteers from nearby psychiatric hospitals filed into the school to assist with the most distraught students and staff. During the entire day, students could be seen in the hallways and lavatories crying, while teachers and friends consoled them.
The school was filled with rumors that maintained a certain tension among the students and faculty. A few days after the student suicide, a written death threat was rumored against an African-American male student, which visibly upset already grieving teachers and staff. There was also constant talk among students and faculty about a Satanic group, which was seen together at lunch time near the wooded area on the edge of school's campus. Teachers pointed out rumored drug dealers wearing expensive Rolex watches and imported leather shoes. The expensive leather shoes were manufactured by Bally; thus, the notorious gang that wore these shoes were known as the "Bally Boys."

Hostile outside teenage gangs were known to roam the community and pass by the school looking for fights.

The traumatic experiences of so many deaths and tense social situations permeated the school with a certain emotional tension and a sense of hopelessness. Despite the administration's emphasis on strict discipline, the school reflected many of the social problems and racial tensions of the community and society. In an interview with the Dr. Castiglia, I inquired about the social problems in the school, which he described as follows:
Hatfield: What do you see in terms of social problems in the community reflected in the school, Jack?

Castiglia: Well, we definitely have problems. We haven't had a drug problem, per se, on campus in that we haven't made a bust I don't think this year of any drugs. Whereas in past years we have. I think when I first got here we still had smoking areas in the school. The Board hadn't passed a smoking ordinance. I think that has helped a lot to cut down the marijuana smoking and carrying joints and stuff. I'm sure it's still out there. But, by not being able to smoke it here, why bring it here. They could do it somewhere else. We don't see the kids in the numbers that we used to, kind of strung out. It confuses me, because all you hear is that drugs are out there. But then you don't see it on campus and you wonder if they can just cut it off when they come to school in the morning. I don't know. (Interview, February 20, 1990)

The assistant principal, Mr. Peppard, and the school nurse also corroborated the decline of drugs in the school. Mr. Peppard noted that marijuana use was decreasing in this school, as he stated, "Marijuana is no longer the drug of choice for Black students; the Black students are more into alcohol rather than weed. The white kids are smoking marijuana or taking anything; they're not afraid of percocan or librium" (Interview on June 12, 1990). Mr. Peppard believed that drug dealing was taking place off campus and outside school, before and after school. He mentioned that a truck which claimed to sell candy, seemed to
attract groups that "flocked" to it and then it would leave quickly.

The presence of racial tension was denied by Dr. Castiglia as he stated, "We really haven't had any race problems this year. The only hint of racial tension was when we had the boy that was beat over at Taco Bell. The white boy," (Interview, February 20, 1990). Mr. Peppard blamed the beaten student's death on his mother, in which he stated, "If the mother had taken him to the hospital, he wouldn't have died" (Interview, June 12, 1990). The principal also denied racial tension concerning the recent deaths, as our conversation resumed:

Castiglia: You see, because that was the only racial (inaudible). It was white on white, but when the kid went down, there were suppose to be some Blacks in the crowd that threw some licks and kicked. That's where the racial thing comes in. The others were all Black on Black. The shooting at the parking lot, you know at that boy's parking lot at his complex, was white and Black. The boy was only seven years old.

Hatfield: Oh, that was the rifle found in the trash can. I read about that.

Castiglia: That created some problems. But I think it created more problems at the complex than at the school. I found out to the degree where I think the parent was trying to find some place else to live. I don't know what ever happened. But all of that after several days kind of just dwindled down and kept on going. (Interview, February 20, 1990)
Later, Dr. Castiglia stated that these incidents caused the greatest concern among white parents, especially the Coast Guard families that came from rural areas before arriving in this metropolitan area.

Race relations at the school were described by Mr. Peppard as follows:

There are three major groups: white supremacy, lower socio-economic basically white, and some Satanic groups. They are the ones who say "the niggers got their jobs." (Interview, June 12, 1990)

The Vietnamese students were described by Mr. Peppard as "banned together in two groups--educationally oriented and American negative" (Interview June 12, 1990). Mr. Peppard assessed the African-American groups as "Black kid inter-fraternities fighting for survival in the community." (Interview, June 12, 1990)

Reflecting on the school within the context of its social environment and the lived experiences of students, it was evident from observations and collection of data that this was a school filled with many racial and social tensions. The climate of the school was primarily based on an efficiency model of discipline, with more attention being given to orderliness of the building rather than students'
emotional, academic and psycho-social needs. The selection by the school district of an all male Caucasian administrative team reflected an insensitivity for the racial representation and social composition of the student body. The social, economic and racial makeup of this school's suburban metropolitan area seriously influenced the students and impacted the learning environment. The rash of deaths by murder, suicide, accidental shootings and illness permeated the emotional tenor of the entire school, and left a pall of depression and a sense of hopelessness among faculty and students.

Health and Family Living Classes

Upon arrival in the health and physical education department at Marshview High, I was greeted by Mrs. Gleason the departmental chairperson. She informed me that I would be working with Miss Ana Pierre, a new teacher whose classes were just beginning the Health and Family Living curriculum with a unit on AIDS. Miss Pierre was an African-American woman in her early twenties, who had two years teaching experience. She earned her B.A. degree in health and physical education from a private African-American university located in the city.
Upon meeting, Miss Pierre informed me that she had only recently learned of my impending arrival, and knew nothing about my purpose at the school except that "the media lady from the School Board was coming to show some films on AIDS (February 25, 1990)." Yet, she welcomed me with an engaging smile, introduced me to her colleagues, and offered to escort me from the gymnasium to her class in the auditorium. Miss Pierre portrayed a relaxed demeanor in her stylish jogging suit and tennis shoes, complemented by an energetic bounce to her steps as she walked through the gymnasium among crowds of students. She seemed to have good informal rapport with students as many shouted greetings, "Hey Miss Pierre," to which she quickly responded, often calling out their individual names.

During our conversation on the way to her first class, Miss Pierre described some of her experiences at the school. This was her first year at Marshview High School, having been involuntarily transferred in October, 1989, from a junior high school as a result of the school district's teacher surplusing procedures in accordance with the union contract. Miss Pierre stated that she did not want to leave her former
junior high school because she had enjoyed teaching there for two years, she and felt comfortable with the students and faculty. In contrast to her former school, Marshview had a much larger faculty, and teachers did not seem very friendly as Miss Pierre often stated, "The teachers don't even say 'hello' or greet each other." Indeed, Miss Pierre felt alienated from most of the school's faculty and the administration, except for the group of three female physical education teachers with whom she shared a crowded back room office within the confines of the gymnasium. She stated that she liked the students, however, and especially enjoyed coaching the basketball team.

Miss Pierre's Health and Family Living classes were held in the school auditorium. Her room assignment was not unusual because all physical education teachers at Marshview High were assigned the school's auditorium for their classes in Health and Family Living, while contact sports took place in the gymnasium and spacious school yard. The only advantage to teaching in the auditorium was that it was one of the few air conditioned areas of the school, including the library and administrative
suites. This was a large auditorium with seating capacity for approximately 750 students. The front stage was enclosed by heavy, dark faded maroon curtains. The floors were rough cement, so that the sounds of students moving about were always clearly audible. Seating was permanently grounded in three aisle sections, and only the center aisle seats were equipped with flap-down writing tables.

There was no instructional equipment available in the auditorium, not even a chalkboard. Half the ceiling lights were burned out, so that students sat in semi-darkness. Often the room was uncomfortably cold, as everyone shivered during classes. Yet, despite the air conditioning, there was a lingering humidity, and musty mildew odor that permeated the room. From the auditorium could be heard the loud sounds of slamming doors, bouncing balls, laughter and shouts of students in the adjacent gymnasium. Students often used the auditorium as an expedient pathway between the gymnasium and main hallway, or a place to hide and cut classes. The auditorium was always shared by at least two classes each period, which contributed further to the noise and chaos. This situation caused considerable consternation among
the physical education faculty because in past years
the department had two spacious classrooms allocated
to them. However, due to recent overcrowding at the
school, those choice classrooms were assigned to other
academic courses. Indeed, this was as inappropriate
environment for learning, and suggested that the
Health and Family Living curriculum was less valued
compared to other courses in the school.

Miss Pierre's classes met in the center front
section of the auditorium, directly facing the stage,
while the other class that shared the auditorium sat
in the back separated by a folding partition. The
class enrollment averaged 25 students, but seldom were
there more than 20 students in the class on a daily
basis due to class skipping, absenteeism or other
school activities. Miss Pierre noted that absenteeism
was not so high in her physical education classes,
when students were scheduled for sports and physical
activities which they seemed to enjoy more.

Students sat spread out among the auditorium's
first ten rows of seats. Their seating patterns were
usually organized by race and gender. During every
class, at least three to six students could be seen
sleeping with their heads down on the writing desks.
The second period class was particularly lackadaisical, dubbed the "sleepy head class" by Miss Pierre because often more than a third of the class could be observed sleeping as she attempted to rouse them to attention. During informal discussions, several students told me that they slept in class because they were tired, bored, sleepy from evening work, or did not like the early start of school at 7:30 a.m. Of course the semi-darkness of the auditorium was quite conducive to sleep, especially since more lights went out each day. Occasionally teams of central office electricians came to look at the lights, but they were never replaced. Miss Pierre sarcastically joked that one day we would all be found sound asleep in complete darkness, and nobody would notice or care.

When the study began at Marshview High School, Miss Pierre's classes were just starting the Health and Family Living course. The first week's lesson plan was the topic of general good health, and the next week's topic was planned on AIDS. At the beginning of each period, at least 10 to 15 minutes would pass before Miss Pierre started class. This time was spent chasing the class—cutting students out
of the auditorium, or chastising them for passing through and disturbing her classes. Often there were interruptions such as the occasion when an assistant principal walked in, ignored Miss Pierre and pulled out of class two African-American males, demanding, "You two, come with me" (February 6, 1990); and the young men obeyed.

Sometimes the late start of Miss Pierre's classes was not due to administrative or student interruptions, but what seemed to be Miss Pierre's own procrastination. Often Miss Pierre would wait several minutes to begin class with the explanation that she expected more students, while she chatted with others, or worked on her school records and administrative reports. On several occasions, an African-American female student named Rose would visit the auditorium and the two would sit together and engage in lengthy conversations that sometimes lasted up to 20 minutes. Rose dressed similar to Miss Pierre in fashionable jogging suits with her hair in the same long braid style; she even mimicked her posture and walking style. Miss Pierre and Rose sat away from the rest of the class, while they lowered their heads to talk. During these episodes, the class quietly engaged in
their own personal conversations, slept with their heads down on the desk top, or stretched out in their seats with feet propped up on the seat in front of them. On these occasions, it appeared that there was an unspoken mutual agreement between Miss Pierre and the class not to disturb each other.

It was soon apparent that Rose was actually skipping classes to be with Miss Pierre, evidenced one day when a male Caucasian teacher fiercely opened the door, entered the auditorium, beckoned to Rose to leave, and shouted a warning to Miss Pierre, "I told you about this!" (February 7, 1990). Miss Pierre looked embarrassed but offered no explanation, and Rose quickly left only to return the next period. The situation with Rose became more serious a few days later when the same male teacher burst into the auditorium and demanded of Rose, "Come with me immediately" (February 14, 1990). A little later Rose returned carrying her books, and with a brave smile but wistful expression informed Miss Pierre that she had just been suspended from school. Miss Pierre looked unhappy, hunched her shoulders, and stated in a disgruntled tone, "I guess I'll be in trouble next" (February 14, 1990).
Once Rose talked with me about her class skipping and visits with Miss Pierre. She explained that her primary family lived in California, and she now lived in this city with her grandmother. She stated that she was lonesome and needed someone to talk with in school. She admired Miss Pierre, as did most students because she was young, related well to students, and actually played basketball with them. She wanted to become a basketball coach like Miss Pierre and planned to attend a Catholic college the next year to become a physical education teacher. Although Rose's relationship with Miss Pierre was close, Miss Pierre was companionable with many other male and female students of all races in the classroom.

Often students detained Miss Pierre before class to tell her about their experiences with dating, class pictures, basketball games, or extracurricular activities. Indeed, Miss Pierre had developed quite a repertoire of background information about the students, which ranged from child abuse, Satanism, theft, sex and romance. On the day that the school learned a student had committed suicide, Miss Pierre sought out students who were crying miserably in the lavatories and hallways, and they sought her out too.
Observations and conversations with Miss Pierre indicated that she liked the students and felt comfortable with them as peers, but she felt alienated and isolated from the administration and teachers outside the physical education department. Her procrastination before classes and lengthy chats with students appeared as resistance to teaching under the circumstances. Indeed, she was not happy as a teacher at Marshview High nor satisfied with the salaries and working conditions in the school district, such that she expressed interest in seeking teaching positions in other cities.

Miss Pierre introduced the Health and Family Living course with a unit on general health. This unit was introduced to the class by reading eight questions to them, which they were required to write down and answer from their textbooks for classroom discussion the next day. About a third of the students chose to work on the assignment, while small groups of students talked and socialized among themselves, and several others slept. While the students were thus engaged, Miss Pierre used the remaining 35 to 45 minutes of class periods to complete student records and office reports. On the
second day, Miss Pierre reviewed questions with the class and dictated answers. For example, the dialogue in her second period class flowed as follows:

Miss Pierre: Define health. What do you think health is. . . .

Students: (Silent)

Pierre: It is physical, mental, social well being. What is self esteem?
Female: When you feel good about yourself.

Pierre: Good. Anybody else? Then, what is stress?

Female: When you feel strain or tension.

Pierre: OK. How would you cope with stress?

Male: Relax.

Male: Take a vacation.

Male: Go to sleep.

Male: Talk out problems.

(February 7, 1990, Period 2, Marshview High)

During the next two days the classes continued with teacher directed questions and answers, with fewer than half the students actively engaged in the lessons. Those who were not engaged in the discussion slept through class, passed notes, stared passively, read magazines and other course materials, or whispered conversations with a neighbor.
Miss Pierre acknowledged that she was dissatisfied with the structure of her classes, and student apathy. By the third day of the general health unit, Miss Pierre decided to present an assignment to the students that she hoped would challenge them and get them more involved with the class. Her assignment was the development of three health related commercial skits to be created and performed by the students in groups. The students were given two days to prepare the commercials in class, and they would be graded as a group. The students listened intently to the assignment, asked questions and appeared interested. Yet, during the two days of preparation, only two groups actively worked on their productions, while the others sat around, slept, talked or read books and magazines. Meanwhile, Miss Pierre made herself available to students who had questions about the assignment, talked with students about family matters or sports, and allowed Rose to visit several times.

There were constant class interruptions imposed on Miss Pierre and her students. For example, electronic maintenance male staff often trooped into the auditorium to look at the problem lights, talking loudly, and climbing ladders without acknowledgement.
of Miss Pierre or apologies for their disturbances; an assistant principal stepped in and pulled out students without acknowledgement or explanation to Miss Pierre; a fire drill required students to file out of the building; and classes were suddenly canceled on any given day because the auditorium had to be used for other school purposes. Consequently, for several days the assigned skits were not completed by the students, except for the third period class of which only two groups performed theirs. Finally, Miss Pierre gave up on her general health unit and decided to begin a unit on AIDS.

Prior to beginning the unit on AIDS, Miss Pierre took home and previewed the selected films entitled 'Til Death Do Us Part (Durrin, 1988) and Sex, Drugs and AIDS (ODN Productions, 1987). After previewing the films, she expressed interest in showing them during the introductory unit on AIDS, in order to motivate and interest her classes on the subject. She was particularly impressed with 'Til Death Do Us Part because of the plot, music and rap which she thought would appeal to the students. Miss Pierre acknowledged that she had used no instructional media in her classes since teaching at Marshview High,
although she had used many films at her previous school. She explained that she had not received orientation to the school's library media center, and she was unfamiliar with the routines of obtaining instructional equipment and media. Together we obtained the needed video equipment from the library, and pushed it down the hall to the auditorium. Thus, the two selected films, 'Til Death Do Us Part and Sex, Drug and AIDS were shown to classes over the next week. After the last film showing of the above films, Miss Pierre announced that she would end the AIDS unit and resume her outdoor physical education classes, until the weather became really warm, and then she would return to the Health and Family Living course.

In summary, the Health and Family Living class at Marshview High suffered from poor teaching and neglect by the administration. The students rallied at times when the classroom activities appealed to them, such as the proposed skits and films. Generally, however, the students resisted their work in the environment of a cold and uncomfortable auditorium. Miss Pierre was disenchanted with her teaching role under the difficult conditions, and she had no support from the administration. Although there were social workers,
school nurses and counselors, they all explained that they were overworked and the problems at the school seemed insurmountable to them. Even more problematic, the administration was insensitive to the plight of students, except for their preoccupation with the enforcement of discipline and order. Thus, this school and classroom description provided background for the film study at Marshview High School.

Harriet Tubman High School

General Background

Harriet Tubman High School was the first public high school for African-Americans in this city. The school was established in 1917, after four years of repeated petitions before the school board by the African-American community to provide a high school to train African-American professionals in a fully segregated society (Devore and Logsdon, 1991). From 1917 until 1965, the school was located in the downtown commercial district in an old converted building that was once a school for Caucasian students. Since its inception, this was a traditional college preparatory school, and it was the only high school for African-Americans until 1942. The early principals of this school were known for their
leadership in the school's many educational successes. These principals were among the best educated in the city's African-American community, having received masters and doctoral degrees from prestigious schools in the northeastern United States. Many of the school's graduates went on to college and graduate school to become professionals and civic leaders in the community, a tradition which continues among its alumnus today.

At the time of this study, Harriet Tubman High was a city-wide college preparatory magnet high school, with a student body that was 100% African-American. Admission was open to all academically qualified students in the metropolitan area, based on an entrance examination, past academic grades, national norm scores, and written composition. Students were required to maintain a 2.5 grade point average. There were 1,309 students enrolled in the school, with disproportionate gender representation of 75% females and 25% males (Interview with Principal, March 13, 1990; Harriet Tubman High School, 1989, p. 18). Students attended the school from all sections of the metropolitan area. According to district-wide summaries of achievement test score
data, 63.7% of the students scored above the 50th percentile in reading, 4.4% scored below the 25th percentile in reading; 62.1% scored above the 50th percentile in mathematics, and 5.4% scored below the 25th percentile in mathematics (Department of Educational Accountability, 1989, p. D-6).

Harriet Tubman High's test scores consistently ranked third highest among all senior high schools in the school district.

Students come from a wide variety of socio-economic backgrounds, though the majority are from low to middle income families. Approximately 39.3% of the families have incomes below the poverty level (Harriet Tubman High School, 1989, p. 25). A random school survey reported by the school indicated that approximately 55% of the students are from single parent households, or lived with a single guardian (Harriet Tubman High School, 1989, p. 25). A school survey of the highest educational attainment of parents indicated that 5% completed elementary school, 60% completed high school, 23-24% earned baccalaureate degrees, and 9-13% earned advanced degrees (Harriet Tubman High School, 1989, p. 25). This is a significantly higher level of educational
achievement for African-American parents of public school students in this school district (Harriet Tubman High School, 1989, p. 25). According to a 1989 survey by the school's counselors, ninety percent of the students would attend college after graduation (Harriet Tubman High School, 1989, p. 21). Thus, the school had a high rate of college bound students, compared with other schools in the district.

The location of Harriet Tubman High is a significant social and racial factor in the school's history. In the late 50's and early 60's, the school's location in the downtown urban center became surrounded by high crime, gambling, drug trafficking and prostitution. Yet, students continued to commute to the school from all parts of the metropolitan area. When the original school was destroyed by a hurricane in 1965, students were temporarily housed in a vacated downtown post office building. Construction began on a new school in 1969, which opened in 1972. The new school was not afforded the visibility or quality of location given predominantly Caucasian high schools in the school district. Historically in this school district, schools for Caucasian students were built on prominent main thoroughfares, while schools
for African-Americans were built on secondary streets invisible outside their racially segregated neighborhoods (Interview with Director of Facility Planning, September 13, 1991). Thus, the new Harriet Tubman High was built on a secondary back street in a central city location.

The new school site relocated many stable African-American families that had resided for generations in the neighborhood. The neighborhood that remained consisted of low income tenement and multi-family housing that was soon overtaken by poverty, drugs and crime. Students who attended Harriet Tubman High did not live in the neighborhood, but commuted from all areas of the city. Most students commuted by public transit and walked two blocks from the bus stop through the neighborhood to school. Walking through this neighborhood, several students had been attacked, robbed, harassed, intimidated and chased, to such an extent that parents themselves hired security guards for the students' safety. Many parents drove students in car pools, and a few students had their own cars. Yet, despite these inconveniences, enrollment at Harriet Tubman continued to increase, with generations of African-American
students following the paths of their parents and grandparents, as one student stated, "All my life I wanted to go to Harriet Tubman High School." Indeed, the school's motto was "A choice not an echo."

Arriving at Harriet Tubman High School, the three story traditional brick structure sharply contrasts with the boarded up, burned and abandoned houses and apartments that comprise its neighborhood. The streets are partially paved, revealing deep ditches, broken sidewalks, old and abandoned cars scattered about. Immediately surrounding the school are four neighborhood barrooms, sweet shops and restaurants. During the early morning, residents sit outside on stoops or porches across from the school. Young pre-school children play on the sidewalks, watched over by young mothers or elderly grandmothers. African-American men, old and young, sit on the stoops, laughing, talking, playing chess; while drunks sleep on stoops or sidewalks, propped against the walls of houses. Neighbors peer cautiously behind slatted wooden doors, as they observe outsiders such as myself parking, while many of those seated on their stoops are quite friendly and respond to passers-by
with pleasant greetings of "Good morning" or "Good night" as is local custom.

When I arrived at the school, it was a cool spring day. Students walked toward the school in small groups from the bus stops, some on sidewalks and others in the street. Traffic in front of the school was busy with parents dropping off students, while students in their own cars sought neighborhood parking. Students who arrived early enough managed entry into an enclosed fenced parking area, that remains padlocked until school dismissal because of the many car thefts in the neighborhood. Entrance to the school is through wrought iron gates onto a covered patio that separates the administrative wing from the main building of classrooms, auditorium, library, gymnasium and other instructional areas. The administrative office area was filled with the activity of teachers signing in, consulting with assistant principals, and checking their mailboxes; while parents seated in the waiting area with students impatiently awaited appointments. In the patio area before the start of the school day, students circulated, chatted and boisterously extended greetings to each other and their teachers. Indeed
the school climate appeared relaxed and unconstrained, dynamic and vibrant.

The principal of Harriet Tubman High School, Mrs. Cooper, was an African-American woman in her mid-forties, with more than 26 years experience in the school district, and seven years as principal of the school. The assistant principals and office staff were also African-American, although the teaching staff was 77 percent African-American and 23 percent Caucasian (Department of Personnel, 1991). Mrs. Cooper exhibited high visibility as she walked the halls, observed classrooms, ate in the cafeteria, stopped and chatted with students. Often she could be heard asking about students' studies or applications to college, complimenting an athletic performance, or inquiring about a sibling or parent. Students seemed secure and comfortable around her as they sought her attention and called out "Hey Miz Cooper." Assertive in demeanor, Mrs. Cooper was quick to stop and give instructions on the spot to students, or reprimand them on the hall by calling out students' individual names or referring to them as "young lady" or "young man." Beyond Mrs. Cooper's mantle of assertiveness was a nurturing quality that permeated the school and
seemed to be emulated by the teachers. Thus, the security guard once remarked, "These students are spoiled; they get everything," a statement that was directed toward the school's caring and protective attitude towards the students. Indeed, the students seemed secure and self-assured in their school environment.

The full attention of administration and staff centered on the students at Harriet Tubman High. They focused on academic achievement, college placement, extra-curricular activities and the students' emotion health. The school guidance counselor expressed concerns that the students often suffered emotional problems from the pressures at home to achieve and do well in school (Interview, March 19, 1990). The part-time social worker stated that most of the problems he encountered on his case-load involved attendance and absenteeism (Interview, March 15, 1990). While there were few reported pregnancies, the young women shared their worries and concerns with the counselor because there was no full-time nurse assigned to the school. Drugs such as marijuana, crack and cocaine were not known problems at the school, but the principal stated that she had found
evidence of alcohol consumption by students. Indeed, there was a need for more professional support staff to deal with students' individual and psycho-social needs, but the funding was not available in the school district to hire the needed staff.

African-American displays of social and racial identity and historical pride permeated the school. It was fashionable among students to wear tee shirts or carry book bags with emblems of distinguished African-American colleges such as Howard University, Morehouse College, and Spellman College. Many students wore tee shirts with messages of African-American pride such as "You wouldn't understand, it's a Black Thing," or "Black and Proud."

The principal, Mrs. Cooper, was also very conscious of her role as an African-American educational leader and role model. She stated that part of this magnet school's mission to the African-American community was "to salvage those who can achieve," and to develop a "positive self image in this social system" (Interview, March 13, 1990). Mrs. Cooper was concerned that students did not know African-American history, and she was emphatic about the inclusion of African-American perspectives in all areas of the
curriculum, as she stated, "I dictate and mandate Black studies" (Interview March 13, 1990). Mrs. Cooper also perceived her role as raising consciousness among students about issues of African-American economic participation in the community and support of African-American business enterprises. Since most of the students were college bound, she encouraged them to seek out African-American colleges, which she believed would better benefit them as educational institutions and social networks. Thus, the culture and philosophy of this school was Afro-centric and clearly focused on its African-American student body.

Health and Family Living Classes

The health and physical education teacher, was Miss Angela Jordan, an African-American woman in her middle forties. She earned a B.A. degree from a local private African-American college, a M.A. degree from a Catholic private college, and 30 certified specialty hours in curriculum and administration. When I introduced myself, she had a frown on her face and appeared quite ill-tempered as she rapidly walked away with the explanation that her classroom situation was not suitable for any research under the circumstances.
of which she was forced to teach. She was referring to the fact that she was assigned to the auditorium for her health and physical education classes, and referred to the situation as an administrative problem.

While Miss Jordan turned and rapidly walked away from me, I followed her and attempted to explain my research interest in film analysis with students, assuring her that I was not there to evaluate her teaching. She continued to argue that the setting was not right, until at one point I considered leaving, but instead tried once more to get her cooperation. While following Miss Jordan, I informed her that our parents and grandparents knew each other for many years, and I knew her father and brother who were prominent African-American leaders in the community. I offered her my proposal letter to the school, so that she could be assured of my research purposes. Finally, Miss Jordan acquiesced and said, "Well, come on then. I'm just angry with the administration because they don't give me the support that I need to work with my students. I have to spend time looking all around for a space to show a film and teach them."
It's just not right. You can't teach like this" (March 5, 1990).

When we arrived in the auditorium, the students were laughing and talking loudly across the room, awaiting Miss Jordan's arrival. She informed them that she was going to look for a classroom to show a film, and left me with the class. Thus, I was introduced to the problems of overcrowding at Harriet Tubman High School, and recognized that Miss Jordan's frustration was with her teaching environment. Harriet Tubman High School was overcrowded because of its popularity and success as a college preparatory magnet school.

The auditorium where Miss Jordan taught her health and physical education classes had to be shared with at least two classes each period, separated for privacy by folding wall partitions, which failed to keep out the noises. The large auditorium was painted bright gold, uncarpeted, brightly lighted, and air conditioned with seating capacity for approximately 1,200 students. There were no chalkboards, nor any available instructional media equipment. Audio-visual materials could not be conveniently used because auditorium sections could not be darkened, and the
audio would disturb neighboring classes. Miss Jordan used the perimeters of the stage as her workspace for student papers, roll books, and other supplies because she had no desk or chair. Her classes sat in the right stage front section, seated close together in gendered patterns of females at the front and males along the outer and back rows of the section. In front of the auditorium, a heavy maroon stage curtain prominently displayed the school's emblem, a roneagle, and the inscribed motto: "A choice not an echo."

Miss Jordan was energetic, highly organized and structured in the classroom. She often wore the school's colors of maroon and gold in various combinations of gym clothing attire, which signalled her school spirit. She was always conscious about efficient use of instructional time, making sure that her classes began immediately at the beginning of each class period, and continued until the bell signaled the end of class. Roll call was quick and perfunctory. Each day's class started with a review of the previous day's work, an introduction to new work, a film or class activity, an assignment and final review. Miss Jordan constantly moved around the class, calling on students, watching, observing, and allowing no
talking, playing, slouching or sleeping. Students' hands were raised constantly for Miss Jordan's attention, showing off their knowledge, and demonstrating participation to earn grade points. On one occasion when a student was observed sleeping, Miss Jordan walked up to him while still maintaining her discussion with the class, paused briefly, touched him on the shoulder and said, "You shouldn't have come to class, if you're going to sleep." The student answered, "My Mama made me come to school;" but he sat up and maintained at least the outward appearance of attention and proper decorum during the remainder of the class (March 5, 1990).

Miss Jordan used audio-visual media frequently in her classes, including film strips, 16mm films and videotapes. Since the auditorium was impractical for film showings, she would scout the school building seeking empty classrooms or language labs, depending on their temporary availability. In the language lab, Miss Jordan resorted to covering bare windows with her own black paper in order to achieve optimal darkened room conditions for media viewing activities. These occasions were very frustrating and her anger was clearly visible, as she sought space, and left notes
in the auditorium to let her students know where to meet her each period. Students soon became part of the routine, checking first in the auditorium to see where they would actually meet each day, and helping Miss Jordan move audiovisual carts and equipment throughout the school. Often the students' empathy for Miss Jordan's situation could be overheard, as they stated, "It's a shame Miss Jordan's treated like that."

Once the class was settled, Miss Jordan went into action, introducing media by topic or theme, previewing questions and requesting that students take appropriate notes in their Health and Family Living notebooks. It was apparent that she previewed media before classroom presentations, as she prepared the classes for viewing activities and sometimes prefaced the viewing with a necessary apology about an outdated or flawed film with a statement such as, "This is a little corny, but look out for facts on . . ." Following a media presentation, the factual information was discussed, factual omissions were noted or omitted, and important points were written on the board or verbally reiterated through discussions. Special activities also followed film viewings, such
as the day when all the classes had to demonstrate proper brushing of teeth and dental flossing following a film and discussion on dental hygiene. For that particular lesson, fewer than three students in each class failed to bring their toothbrushes, and those who forgot theirs brought them the next day.

Although an occasional student could be seen reading a hidden magazine or studying another subject text during class, most students were conscientious about getting facts and information down on paper, sometimes stopping Miss Jordan and requesting her to slow down so that they could get it all in their notebooks. Often students would ask whether certain items would be on a test. Sometimes during a pre-test or note-taking activity, students would joke with Miss Jordan and ask for prizes for being the first to finish. Miss Jordan would throw out a few small boxes of raisins or other snacks to them. During those moments, the students' behaviors confirmed interview remarks by the principal and counselor who voiced concerns that the students were academically competitive about grades, but did not take time to think and reflect on what they were learning.
When the unit on AIDS was introduced, Miss Jordan started the class with an introduction to the subject by asking them, "What would you do if I brought an AIDS patient to class?" (March 12, 1990). Students' remarks ranged from murmurs of fear and indignation to curiosity. Miss Jordan attempted to put the students at ease with the subject matter by informing them that they were going to embark on a "touchy subject," but she wanted them to know how to protect themselves. On occasions when students became giddy or strayed from attention, Miss Jordan would state with humorous perplexity, "It's not funny, you might have it already; so don't laugh;" or, "You know that you have unprotected sex, so you could be walking around with it" (March 12, 1990). The students often answered back with friendly banter, such as, "Oh Miss Jordan you ought to be ashamed;" yet the banter was limited and they quickly got back to work. Several times after class, Miss Jordan reiterated to me that she really enjoyed teaching the Health and Family Living curriculum, even better than physical education classes. Yet, she constantly expressed her frustration with the overcrowded school conditions and the administrative decisions that located her classes
in the auditorium. Miss Jordan interpreted this treatment as a silent message that her subject matter was less important than other academic courses in the school's college preparatory curriculum.

A pre-test on the subject of AIDS was given to classes by Miss Jordan which revealed the students' prior knowledge of the disease as well as some information about their attitudes and concerns about the disease. The pre-test involved true and false questions, as well as instructions by Miss Jordan to write one page about personal concerns regarding the disease. The students conscientiously took the test, some fidgeting worriedly and attempting to check answers with neighboring students until Miss Jordan calmed them with the statement, "Don't worry, just do your best because this is a pre-test." According to Miss Jordan's analysis of the pre-test, students were limited in their factual knowledge of AIDS. This was verified by my perusal of the results which revealed areas of misunderstandings and ignorance of the disease pertaining to (1) the incurable and fatal aspects of the disease; (2) the differentiation between AIDS as a virus rather than bacteria; (3) functions of white and red blood cells involving the
disease; (3) the symptoms of Karposi's sarcoma; (4) internal development of the disease. The students were better informed about AIDS concerning (1) the sexual transmission of HIV; (2) the immune-deficiency syndrome; (3) the transmission of AIDS by a pregnant mother to her unborn child; and (4) the evidence that casual contact such as handshaking, hugging, and drinking would not spread the disease. These areas of factual knowledge and gaps of information were noted for discussion during the film interview sessions.

In one segment of the pre-test, Miss Jordan asked students to write down their concerns, questions and any comments about the disease. The question posed was: "What are your concerns about AIDS?" (March 12, 1990). Students' commentaries regarding their concerns about AIDS are summarized as follows:

1. Students knew that AIDS was transmitted through unprotected sex, the exchange of blood and body fluids and intravenous needles; yet many were still unconvinced and concerned about non-sexual transmission such as kissing, handshaking, toilet seats, and touching an AIDS patient.
2. Students were interested in the origins of AIDS, and questioned how it had spread so rapidly around the world.

3. Students were concerned about the lack of a cure for AIDS.

4. Students were concerned about how to relate to AIDS patients, how to treat them, and how to conduct themselves.

5. Students blamed AIDS on homosexuals and punishment for sinning, as one student wrote, "God made Adam for Eve and not for Steve."

6. Students blamed lack of morals on the disease.

7. Students considered the disease tragic and stated that they did not want to get it.

8. None of the students had close personal contact with an AIDS patient, but several knew of someone who had died from the disease.

Students' responses were particularly revealing in the pre-test because they expressed their own concerns and perspectives on the disease, and targeted areas that would be focused on in the classroom. The pre-test questions and written essays were immediately reviewed the next day in classes. During review
sessions, students swapped papers and corrected them; they attempted to answer the questions while Miss Jordan confirmed answers and offered anecdotal information. When the class seemed to get out of control or manifested poor responses, Miss Jordan quickly brought them back to attention, or chided them with a statement such as "Don't holler out ignorant answers" (March 12, 1990), often resulting in good natured student laughter. When students raised questions about the origins of AIDS and suggested that the disease originated in Africa, Miss Jordan quickly raised their African-American identity and consciousness with the statement, "Please do not believe everything you hear. AIDS did not originate in Africa. They put everything on us, saying Black people started AIDS. It was discovered in 1981" (March 12, 1990). After these introductory sessions, Miss Jordan announced that she was ready to show the films selected for the research.

In summary, Harriet Tubman High was Afro-centric in its history and all academic endeavors. Although the students participated in many extra-curricular school activities, their emphasis was on academic achievement. Sometimes the striving for academic
achievement resulted in a focus on factual information rather than aesthetic experiences in the teaching and learning processes. The academic competition and pressure to achieve sometimes also contributed to tension in the classroom. However, this was a student-centered school, in that the students were socially and academically nurtured and supported by faculty and the administration. It was expected that students would achieve, and they did.

_Gardenia High School_

**General Background**

Gardenia High School was located in one of the oldest and most affluent sections of the city. Located on two major thoroughfares, the school was surrounded by traditional Southern styled middle and upper middle class homes and large mansions enhanced by beautiful gardens that made the area famous and attractive to locals and tourists. Surrounding the school's neighborhood were the city's oldest and most elite private schools, colleges and universities. Just a few blocks away was another public high school that was racially balanced and recently recognized nationally for educational excellence by the U.S. State Department of Education. In the school's imme-
diately neighborhood, African-American maids could be seen daily going to and from work as domestic laborers in the surrounding homes and mansions, while Caucasian youngsters in school uniforms could be seen either walking or being dropped off in luxurious cars at their private schools. Meanwhile the students from Gardenia High commuted to school on public bus transportation from distant predominantly African-American inner-city communities.

Gardenia High School was an impressive classical four story brick building built in 1931 on two acres of land. It was located on adjacent main streets lined with massive old oak trees, which gave the school high visibility in this famed uptown area of the city. A large playing field and gymnasium built in 1948 were located at the rear of the school. The entrance to the building faced the main street, high above a wide expanse of two stories of impressive concrete stairs that extended across the entire front of the building. Visitors entered the school through massive wooden doors which led them inside into a white marble and columned foyer. The architectural beauty and massive structure of Gardenia High reflected the high quality of construction that was
afforded public schools built for upper middle class Caucasian students during racial segregation.

Upon entering the school, I was stricken by the stark contrast between the classical beauty of the building's refurbished exterior, and the physical condition of its interior. Although the marble floors were beautifully polished, and the halls clean and free of litter, years of neglect were evidenced by peeling paint, faded woodwork and a leaking roof. Entering the administrative office, I was greeted by a cadre of friendly and efficient staff. Only one parent was awaiting an appointment in the main office on my first day, which was unusual for most schools. However, I later learned that discipline problems were transferred from the main administrative office to the assistant principal's suite.

In the assistant principal's suite there were several students with parents, awaiting their disciplinary appointments. Mr. Maynard Kyles, the assistant principal was an African-American in his fifties who knew the students well, including their backgrounds, families and community experiences. Mr. Kyles could recite a litany of experiences and knowledge about neighborhoods, drug dealing, killings,
family problems and violence that impacted students at the school. He stated that he viewed his mission as working with parents to solve problems and keep students in school (June 7, 1990).

The school was also a fortress of security. When visitors entered the first floor basement area from the side street door, they were recorded by hidden video cameras being monitored from the second floor administrative office suites. Side entrance doors were locked and tied with heavy metal chains after the first morning bell, so that afterward the only available entrance was through the front doors where an armed security guard was usually posted on duty. Hallways had hidden video cameras to monitor the most isolated and insecure areas of the school. Teachers carried several sets of keys because every room in the school was locked from the inside to protect against unwanted intruders. This security arrangement was often ingeniously circumvented in the classrooms by the presence of a least one intentionally broken window pane on each classroom door that allowed anyone entry simply by putting their hand through the vacant space and turning the door knob from the inside for
quick entry. Since I had no keys, I soon acquired this convenient entry into the classroom also.

The vigilant concern for safety and security was initiated by internal administrative concerns, as well as community pressure. This was the only school in the district with video monitoring devices for security, much against the protests of parents and several African-American community groups that believed the arrangement reflected an image of prison incarceration rather than a healthy school environment for students. The monitoring equipment was given to the school by a corporate business partner, ostensibly to guard against outside intruders who on several occasions had entered the school with guns and other weapons, threatened and attacked students and staff. Earlier in the school year a student had been shot and killed outside the school, which the assistant principal suspected was the result of drug dealing. Just the week before my arrival, three outside youth entered the building, walked up to a fourth floor classroom, and beat up a sixteen year old student in front of students and teachers.

The conservative newspaper and television media often reported that neighbors were incited with fear
about the fights and vandalism that had occurred in and around the school. These reports reflected racial and class stereotypes that negatively portrayed the students at Gardenia High School. Police vigilantly patrolled the geographical area of the school, not so much to protect the students whom they often harassed even on school property, but to keep the area safe for the neighbors. Police also diligently ticketed illegally parked cars in front of homes in the neighborhood which were privileged with special parking regulations and restrictions for their streets only. Thus, the lived experiences of students at Gardenia High were impacted by prejudices and social violence that surrounded them both inside and outside of school.

According to local public school historians Devore and Logsdon (1991), for many years Gardenia High was considered the pride of the school system. When the school was established in 1931, it was for Caucasian males only. Many of the city's white male establishment of successful civic, political and business leaders were graduates of Gardenia High School. When sexual school segregation for Caucasians ended in the school district, white females were
admitted to Gardenia High School in 1952. The school was racially integrated in 1968; however, the administration and faculty remained totally Caucasian until the 1967-68 school session.

Many of the original African-American teachers and support staff who were involuntarily transferred under desegregation orders are still tenured at the school. The current faculty of 82 teachers and staff is 82% African-American and 18% Caucasian (Personal Communication with Director of Personnel, September 20, 1991). According to interviews with faculty and staff who experienced the early days of racial integration, the school climate remained relatively calm and peaceful until the late 1960s and early 1970s, when African-American students joined the Black Power movement in civil rights demonstrations to protest and resist racial oppression that characterized the city. This period of racial unrest was the impetus for a mass exodus of all Caucasian students and many middle class African-American students from Gardenia High. Those who left the school transferred to a public high school just two blocks away, which recently had been created as a college preparatory magnet high school with a policy
that required high academic standards for entrance and retention of students. Thus, Gardenia High soon became solely African-American, stripped of its former diversified socio-economic, racial and academic student population.

During this study, the student body of Gardenia High was 99.9% African American (Gardenia High School, 1989, p. 1). The African-American neighborhoods where most Gardenia High students resided were popularly referred to by students and staff as "Niggertown" or "Gert Town." These old African-American neighborhoods were nearer in proximity than others to the Gardenia school area, and historically these were the neighborhoods where large numbers of domestic servants lived who worked in the wealthy homes that surrounded the school. The remainder of the students' home boundaries radiated in all directions for many miles from the school, in public housing developments and other inner city predominantly African-American neighborhoods. The student population was unique in that over 75% of the enrolled students did not live in the school's immediate neighborhood (Gardenia High School, 1989, p. 3).
Most of the students' residential neighborhoods were classified among the lowest socio-economic areas of the city. Based on a student enrollment of 1,148 students, the poverty rating of students was 28.5733% with 551 students eligible for free lunch and 375 on Aid for Dependent Children welfare rolls (Chapter I Department, 1990). Although current compilations of occupational data for parents were not available at the school, a cursory review of students' class enrollment cards indicated that most of their parents were employed as semi-skilled and skilled laborers, household domestics or welfare recipients, while a few were in teaching and medical professions. According to the school nurse, the social and economic struggles of students to survive inner-city life often contributed to early teenage pregnancies, drug use, and sexually transmitted diseases such as syphilis and gonorrhea but not AIDS (Interview, March 26, 1990). These historical, social, economic and cultural perspectives were important for developing insight into the students' lived experiences in the school and community.

Student achievement at Gardenia High School was low in comparison to national and district standards.
Norm reference national test results of median percentiles were available only for those ninth grade students enrolled in the 1988-89 school session, who were the tenth graders sampled in this study. In mathematics, 12.89% of students were at or above the 50th percentile; 50.3% were below the 25th percentile (Department of Educational Accountability, 1990, p. B-9). In language arts, 9.2% of students were at or above the 50th percentile; 60.7% were below the 25th percentile (Department of Educational Accountability, 1990, p. A-9). The school's test scores were beginning to show slight improvement, based on concentrated efforts by the administration and faculty to emphasize academic achievement through tutorials and special programs in basic skills.

Students at Gardenia High reflected the contemporary life styles and popular fashions of the inner-city community. Their fashions included bright shirts and jeans or wide leg pants for the young men, while many young women wore the latest short skirts and stretch latex pants. Many young men wore popular African-American hairstyles that included special designed razor cuts or high "stacks" of three inches or more; while many of the young women wore curly or
"fan" hair styles and partially bleached hair. Some students preferred the school uniform, more popular with the young women, which consisted of a blue plaid skirt and white blouse. There were also many highly visible female and male student members of the Reserve Officers Training Corps (R.O.T.C.), who proudly wore their military uniforms. A unique aspect of the contemporary style reflected by many students were gold teeth purchased from local dentists who exploited the youngsters by removing perfectly good teeth and replacing them with gold caps in a variety of popular designs. This custom had become so popular in the culture of the school that gold teeth were coveted as gifts from parents for Christmas, graduation and other special occasions. Sometimes while large groups of students were observed passing in the hallways, the amount of glittering gold that flashed from teeth, necklaces and medallion earrings was awesome. Students explained, "It's just the style." Some faculty confided that indeed it was a fashion style located in the students' culture, but it was also a well known popular exchange for luring many impoverished African-American youngsters into drug dealing in their communities.
Once inside Gardenia High, there was a mixed ambience of tension and calm. The tension was created in part by the vastness of the building, numerous stairwells, and the outward manifestations of security evidenced by locked doors, video monitors, and an armed security guard. The calmness of the school was manifested by an administrative organization that fostered cooperation and commitment by the faculty. This was a stable faculty that had been positioned in the school for many years. Teachers who transferred to the school during forced racial desegregation in 1968, soon formed into a close knit professional family. This was evidenced by the open friendliness of teachers toward each other and the students. Many of the faculty also enjoyed living in close proximity to the school. Some had grown up in nearby African-American neighbors where Gardenia students now lived, and vividly recalled walking by the impressive Gardenia High on their way to distant racially inferior segregated schools.

Through the leadership of the principal, Mr. Albert Bowman, efforts were underway to improve the school's discipline, public image, academic achievement and school climate. Mr. Bowman was an
African-American in his early forties, who began his teaching career at Gardenia High in 1973. He left the school for other teaching assignments, but later returned as an administrative assistant and soon became the principal in 1987. Mr. Bowman was very sensitive to public school issues in the community and concerned about the negative publicity that plagued Gardenia High School. He suggested that the school suffered an unfair bad reputation because of a few incidents that were highly publicized by the influential media. He was acutely aware of the histories of socio-economic problems and racial injustices that impacted students at home and the in community.

Since becoming principal of Gardenia High School, Mr. Bowman started several to improve the school. His administration initiated a successful improvement theme program entitled "Operation Cleanup" to keep the school clean and students from loitering in the halls. A newsletter was published and circulated to communicate with neighbors about the good things that were happening inside the school. Parents were required to attend an "Open House" to receive their youngsters' report cards, which resulted in more
parents visiting the school than previously. Partnerships were increasing with the nearby private universities and downtown business corporations. "Rapathons" featuring rap music and poetry were initiated and performed by African-American community activists who encouraged students to avoid drugs and remain in school. During my stay at the school, a local television channel came to document the school's recent test score improvements achieved through a special tutorial program. A few days later a national conference of mayors was held in the city, and they sent representatives to visit and dialogue with students. These and similar programs were planned by the administration to motivate and encourage students to become successful. Mr. Bowman's expressed mission was to improve the school for the benefit of the students. He had a very calm, dedicated manner, filled with enthusiasm for the school, teachers and students.

Mr. Bowman considered instructional leadership an important part of his mission as principal of the school. He was firm in his belief that African-American students in high schools were failing because teachers did not understand their learning styles. He believed that the students at Gardenia
High School learned better through interactive teaching. Mr. Bowman stressed verbal interaction in the classroom, and opportunities for students to relate to their own social and cultural experiences. He believed that the students at Gardenia High would learn more effectively by auditory, visual and kinesthetic teaching and learning activities. To assure that teachers were incorporating these teaching strategies into classroom practice, Mr. Bowman stated that he strictly monitored teachers' lessons plans by carefully reading and critiquing them weekly. He also visited classrooms as often as possible. Mr. Bowman stated that his ultimate message to teachers was, "When you select Gardenia High, expect to serve as a parent" (Interview, April 5, 1990).

Health and Family Living Class

Upon arrival in the administrative office at Gardenia High, I was welcomed by friendly African-American office staff. Mr. Kyles the assistant principal immediately called over the intercom for Mr. Adolph Moore, the teacher whose Health and Family Living classes I was assigned. Mr. Moore greeted me warmly, and informed me that he was aware of my study from Mr. Bowman and looked forward to working with
me. Mr. Moore was an African-American in his middle fifties who had 30 years teaching experience in several inner city schools, including 22 years at Gardenia High School. He began teaching at Gardenia in 1968, during the first days of racial desegregation. He had earned his B.A. degree in physical education from a private African-American university in the city. Similar to many teachers at the school, he grew up and attended high school in this uptown area and knew several generations of students and their families. Informally Mr. Moore was called "Coach" by students and faculty.

While we walked to Mr. Moore's classroom, students extended greetings of "Hey Coach," along the hallways. He had a permanent classroom assigned on the fourth floor. Noisy traffic could be heard from the busy street below because the classroom was not air conditioned and windows had to be kept open for ventilation. Thus, it was often quite difficult to hear clearly in the classroom, due to the street noises. Although the administrative suites and library were air conditioned, the classrooms had ceiling fans for air circulation, but it was already uncomfortably warm and humid. When I expressed my
pleasure of being assigned in a permanent classroom, after auditoriums and temporary classrooms in the other schools, Mr. Moore remarked that he could not believe that those "silk stocking" schools experienced such hardships because they were considered superior to Gardenia High. Later he confided that he was often ashamed to bring visitors to the school with its peeling paint, chained doors and broken water fountains. Mr. Moore's comments reflected the low esteem that students and staff at Gardenia High often felt about the school's poor image in the community.

Mr. Moore introduced his unit on AIDS the day before my arrival. He informed me that had presented an outline on AIDS, and a filmstrip on the subject matter. The outline was written on six chalkboards, and remained for review and discussion purposes. The formal classroom lesson began in a structured manner, with Mr. Moore asking students to open their notebooks and review the previous day's lesson. Mr. Moore asked questions, students raised their hands and replied, as they followed the chalkboard outline of factual information about AIDS. The formality of the opening lesson did not last too long, however.
A characteristic of Mr. Moore's teaching style was to engage students in dialogue by encouraging communication of the subject matter in the students' own cultural language, and verbally praising them for their participation. Mr. Adams informed me that he used straightforward language with the students and encouraged similar participation by them. He stated that in-service training for the Health and Family Living course directed teachers to be factual and straightforward in the classroom. During classes he often implored students to express themselves by saying to them, "Use your own language, and we'll learn the medical terms as we go along." When students seemed awkward in getting their points across, or laughed at another student, Mr. Moore would often state, "Speak up, don't short change yourself." During every opportunity, Mr. Moore praised students effusively and worked at raising their self esteem in an effort to increase their participation in classes.

The discourse in Mr. Moore's classes covered broad topics on the subject of AIDS, and the dialogue between the students and teacher was open and uninhibited. For example, the topic of oral and anal sex was highlighted on the chalkboard as Mr. Moore
introduced the topic with the statement, "Most of you want to hide under the desk, but we have to deal with it. Oral intercourse is having sex with the mouth" (March 21, 1990). He went on to explain anal intercourse as "sex in the anus or rectum." This led students to openly ask unabashed questions and to discuss the subject matter as follows:

Male: One man and another man. Since the anus equipped for excretion, its dry and rubbing against it messes it up and causes bleeding, and ejaculating into the man can give it [AIDS].

[Some class laughter]

Mr. Moore: Don't be shy, let it hang out. Tell it like it is.

Male: If a woman have it and she be doing the man, he can get it from her saliva through his pee hole, huh coach?

Mr. Moore: I got you thinking, great!

Male: Like a lady sucking a man, he can get it from saliva?

Male: How he get it from her blowing you?

(Class discussion, March 21, 1990, Period 5, Gardenia High School)

During the course of the above conversation, Mr. Moore responded to the students' inquiries with factual information, using appropriate medical terms juxtaposed with their language. However, Mr. Moore also revealed his own ideological and religious beliefs once, as he stated, "The rectum was not
designed for sexual intercourse, and God did not put it there for that purpose" (March 21, 1990). Perhaps, due to this statement some students became inhibited and stirred away from continued questioning about certain aspects of sexual behavior, such as the male student who quietly and timidly approached me in the library afterward and asked for clarifying information on the subject of oral copulation and the transmission of AIDS.

Indeed, Mr. Moore's teaching style in the classroom was adapted to the learning styles of students. He used film videotapes and other media formats in the classroom frequently. He also stated that he preferred films that featured African-Americans because the students seemed to relate better to them. Mr. Moore also concentrated more on dialogical communications with students in the classroom, and this instructional approach appeared to work effectively in his classes. For example, in a discussion on opportunistic diseases one male student clearly defined the term in relation to the HIV virus that "as a chance disease comes along and takes advantage of it" (March 21, 1990). In another context, a female student verbally interpreted a
film's message to mean "wake up everybody--learn the facts and do the right thing" (March 21, 1990). Yet, when students were asked to write comments, their remarks were limited to simplistic statements such as, "I like the music;" or "The film was boring;" or "It told you how you get AIDS."

The majority of students in the class were not compelled to take notes during lectures or film viewing. When requested to copy notes from the chalkboard, they either ignored the request or did so with little enthusiasm. Upon completion of the unit on AIDS after several films and classroom discussions on the subject, Mr. Moore rewarded the students by forfeiting the final exam because of their high level of classroom participation and cooperation in the classroom. Instead, of an examination, the students attended a "rapathon" (ie. a lecture performed in African-American rap conversation and poetry) on drug awareness and individual decision-making, performed by a volunteer African-American community activist. Mr. Moore stated that he was satisfied that the students had covered the subject matter successfully. Indeed, in their classes the students had demonstrated knowledge of the subject matter, complex medical
concepts and higher order analysis through dialogical discourse, which also became apparent later during focused film interviews.

In summary, Gardenia High School was highly focused on the racial, cultural and social experiences of its African-American students. The faculty and administration were dedicated to working with the students for academic achievement, as well as social and economic advancement in society. There was evidence that the varied learning styles of students at Gardenia High were recognized and respected in the classroom. Faculty and administration also related well to the social and cultural backgrounds of the students. Yet, African-American students, faculty and administrators struggled with daily reminders and unfair comparisons of the school's Caucasian elitist past, while they worked together for a better future.
AN ANALYSIS OF EDUCATIONAL FILMS:
AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE

VOLUME II

A Dissertation

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in

The Department of Curriculum and Instruction

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CHAPTER 4

RESULTS OF THE TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF FILMS

This chapter presents a textual analysis of the two selected films 'Til Death Do Us Part (Durrin, 1988), and Sex, Drugs and AIDS (ODN Productions, 1987). Textual analysis was employed according to the tenets of critical cultural studies, aimed at uncovering the processes and structures that worked to produce meanings in the films within their social, cultural and historical contexts. Textual analysis focused on the signs and representational codes embedded and produced in the films, as well as the silences and absences in the films, which Kuhn (1982) refers to as making the invisible visible. Semiotic textual analysis was applied within its broadest definition, focusing on the significant signs, symbols and modes of communication involved in the production and reproduction of meaning. The films were also examined for social, cultural and ideological practices of society as they pertained to issues of race, class and gender, particularly in relation to African-Americans as subjects and viewers of these films. Finally, the results of this textual analysis
were later juxtaposed in the audience study through focused interview questions with students.

'Til Death Do Us Part (Durrin, 1988)

Background of Film

This film was created, written and performed by African-American young adult members of the Everyday Theater Youth Ensemble based in Washington, D.C. The theater company served as a youth oriented training group for unemployed, foster care, and adjudicated youth who had been referred through various social agencies of the urban metropolitan area. According to the theater group's publicity brochures (Durrin, 1988), their plays were created to serve as tools to help young people understand and evaluate their social situations and the consequences of choices made under such circumstances. In this case, the film was concerned with the social issues of AIDS related to only heterosexual sexual activity and intravenous drugs.

The theater group communicated with its audience through rap songs and poetry, and modern dance to convey messages about high risk drug activities and sexual behavior that can lead to death caused by HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) infection and AIDS.
(acquired immune deficiency syndrome). Considering its origins and production techniques, the film differed from most main stream instructional media products on the commercial market for schools. First, the theater group was community-based, and its drama emanated directly from its own social experiences. Second, the film's discourse in rap and dance represented the authentic voices of youngsters who were actually impacted and adjudicated by the social system, often referred to as "juvenile delinquents," "problem kids," or "at-risk youth." Indeed, this film reflected many of the lived experiences of an urban population of African-Americans that resulted from this nation's social, economic and political system.

Although this textual analysis in part criticizes certain ideological messages and images of the film text, it was not intended to diminish the production or marginalize the contributions made by its community-based corps of writers or actors. Instead, the criticism attempted to expose how certain dominant hegemonic beliefs in society are circulated and reproduced even by the victims of oppression themselves. Thus this film was upheld as an artifact of the social actors' experiences, reflexively

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reproduced through their theatrical performances for transformative purposes in the African-American community.

Film Plot

'Til Death Do Us Part is a tragic love story dramatized through rap music and contemporary dance about a young teenaged African-American couple who fall in love, marry, defy warnings about drugs and unprotected sex, and participate in shared intravenous drug use. The lifestyle of the couple results in AIDS related deaths of the wife and their infant son. Eight scenes unfold to narrate the story and bring social messages to teen audiences on issues about AIDS in contemporary society.

The first scene sets the tone as it opens with a young adolescent male and female surrounded by a white picket fence, with a large rainbow in the background. This setting symbolically promises a future of middle class mainstream domestic happiness for the African-American young man and young woman who are featured in the drama. Embracing and lovingly looking into each other's eyes, under soft romantic lighting, they enchantingly rap in a musical duet about their planned marriage and anticipated future of happiness and
success. She sings of becoming a doctor or a mother; he sings of becoming an attorney and a good father.
The scene closes with their mutual pledge and thematic refrain, "'Til Death Do Us Part."

The second scene opens ominously as the camera sweeps rapidly past the rainbow and fades into gloomy darkness, foreshadowing dire predictions immediately enunciated by two males in a dance and musical rap:

Boy and girl fifteen at age
Thinking about life at the future stage
A doctor a lawyer is what you wanna be
Computer Technician fill your eyes to see
Planning ahead one day at a time...

[Written by John Young, Everyday Theater Youth Ensemble, n.d. (Durrin, 1988)]

While this scene speaks of middle class ambitions for the African-American couple, it symbolically closes with a hovering black shadow that predicts failure for the couple's dreams of future happiness and success. Materialistic consumption is the theme of the third scene, while the group performs a rap song and dance entitled "Try It." Television commercial skits depict how youth are lured into buying glamorized goods and drug products; for example, male underwear is described as "edible, delicious, danceable"; toothpaste is advertised for "sex appeal"; malt liquor promises "to put your Mama in the mood"; and panty
hose are made "to feel sexy all over." Viewers are further bombarded with drug needles and related paraphernalia, as well as powdered and intravenous drugs to demonstrate how the power of media advertising later influences the youth toward meeting their tragic end.

The theme of making choices in life continues in the fourth scene, featuring all males in a rap song entitled "It's Your Future That You're Blowing." The beat flows rhythmically with a solo message performed by a very savvy looking man who wisely raps:

The time comes when you need to know, either go with your dreams or go with the flow.

If the flow ain't kosher like the Madi Gra [Mardi Gras], the people ain't the same as the people you saw.

Like school you learn to add as you pass in your grades, but in the flow you pass the virus that they findin' in A.I.D.S. . . .

[Written by Charles B. Dyer, Everyday Theater Youth Ensemble, 1987 (Durrin, 1988)]

This scene closes with a group of male and female youth arrogantly disregarding the rappers' wisdom, continuing to intravenously take drugs and share needles, while druggedly swaying in a slow circular dance under subdued lighting. Simultaneously the camera's eye pans the behinds of dancing young females
who wear tightly fitted slit skirts, blue jeans and spiked high heeled shoes. The youth's behavior symbolically bodes evil for their future.

In the fifth scene, a male youth identified as Street Smart Alvin, speaks forthright in rap poetry about AIDS killing babies, mothers, Blacks and Whites as he states:

This is Alvin on the mike
When I talk I talk it right
And I'm talking about Aids
the killer of the night...

[Written by Norman Bowlding, Everydaw Theater Youth Ensemble, n.d. (Durrin, 1988)]

Alvin is signified as street smart by his self-assured solo on center stage, directly confronting the viewing audience under bright lights while he moralizes to his peers. In his moral discourse, Alvin preaches that they must practice safe sex, warns against the hazards of sharing needles, and cautions that AIDS is a painful slow death. Finally, Alvin reminds his peers of their mortality and warns them not to try their luck because AIDS will stick with them "till death do you part." His warnings are unheeded as the scene closes with young people appearing in a drug induced stupor.
The mood changes in the sixth scene, when a Siren character appears as the representative of AIDS Death. The Siren is a grotesquely attired female costumed in a black flowing gown, stark white face and body make-up, extended long fingernails and a ghostly trembling voice. The Siren's appearance in black and white robes represents the epitome of evil and power as she hovers above the youth and reprimands them for their careless behavior as follows:

Come into my hands  
Let me lead you to the promised land  
I've got the power to control your world  
And I effect every woman, boy, and girl  
As well as men, I'll defeat you all  
I'll take your system in my hand  
Crumble it you fall. . . .

[Written by Sharnetta Hunter, Everyday Theater Youth Ensemble, May, 1987 (Durrin, 1988)]

While the Siren recites her litany, the offending youngsters are forcefully brought before her, and wreath and moan as they succumb to their deaths from AIDS. Finally, the Siren summons the baby who contracted AIDS from his mother during her pregnancy (the young woman in the first scene). Pandemonium breaks loose as the mother anguishly pleas for her baby's life, but the Siren is unheeding and snatches the child in a symbolic gesture of death amidst a cloud of black smoke.
Immediately following the baby's death, the seventh scene is a graveyard funeral service, strewn with the many coffins symbolizing AIDS victims. The small group of mourners is recognized as the wise rappers, and the drug users who were involved in earlier scenes. A young female gospel singer, dressed in black and white mourning attire, performs an emotionally stirring spiritual hymn entitled "It's Calling Out Your Name." The verses of this hymn dramatically reflect the film's theme:

Can you believe, it's taken all of this
To tell the world about a risk
This epidemic its happening
It's all a chain reaction
And its calling out your name
Why must we answer to this pain
Isn't it wrong to endanger their health
It's like we're taking out our problems
on somebody else. . . .

[Written by John Young and Tempie Satcher, Everyday Theater Youth Ensemble, May, 1987 (Durrin, 1988)]

The hymn characterizes the horror of AIDS creating a chain reaction in communities, spreading the disease, causing needless death, destroying the population. Its lyrics are directed toward persons whose mistakes in life cause suffering and death to innocent victims. Thus, the hymn's message appears to blame the young parents for the death of their baby.
Amidst the young mother's piercing screams of anguish and the mourners tearful weeping, the singer repeats her retributive refrain: "It's calling out your name, why must we answer to this pain." Upon completion of the hymn, the camera lingers on a bouquet of flowers laid to rest on the small wrapped figure of the dead baby.

Hell and damnation are depicted in the final scene, signified by darkness and billowing smoke emanating from the bowels of earth while suffering victims of AIDS slither on the ground as an act of retribution. The victorious AIDS Siren enters this scene in an intense glow of light, and fiendishly taunts her victims into submission. The victims cry out for mercy with excuses for their behavior, especially the now married young man who appeared in the first scene; but their pleas are unheeded by the AIDS Siren as follows:

**Male:** I was just looking for love.

**Siren:** In all [voice emphasis] the wrong places. [feigned crackling laughter]

**Female:** I should have waited till I was married.

**Siren:** But you didn't, did you? [feigned laughter]
Male: I should have never shared that needle.
Siren: But it felt good, didn't it?
[feigned laughter]
Male: [Whining] I should have used a condom.
Siren: But you were too smart for that, right?
Male: [Crying] I was going to be a professional dancer.
Siren: Now dance [voice emphasis] for me.
Female: [Crying] But who's going to take care of my child?
Siren: I will, if he lives the life that you have. [Feigned laughter]
Male: [Crying] I want my wife, Tammy.
Siren: I'm not ready for her yet. (Durrin, 1988, videotape)

Finally, surrounded by white ghostly figures emanating ghoulish groaning sounds, the AIDS Siren demands the infant victim of AIDS with the triumphant statement, "Now bring the baby to me." Upon receiving the baby wrapped in a white blanket, she dramatically holds it high before the viewing audience under intense lighting, while asking the rhetorical question, "And what could he have been?" Silently this dramatic scene fades, as the film ends with a captioned written message as follows:

- You can protect yourself from AIDS
- Don't have sex
- But if you choose to have sex, always use condoms
- Don't do drugs

While the above messages are projected, the refrain from the hymn, "It's calling out your name," is repeated until the background fades to black.

**Critical Analysis of Film**

This film is written and produced to communicate with adolescent inner-city students about sexual behavior and drug use that can lead to the transmission of HIV infection and AIDS. Through its theme, plot, language, music, rhythm, rhyme, and dance, the film integrates aspects of African-American inner city life to capture the audience's attention while alerting them to the disease. The film's production techniques borrow from the genres of theater, vaudeville, rock musicals, commercial television and Hollywood movies. Although the film claims African-American social and cultural authenticity because it is created, written, and performed by African-American inner city youth, closer examination reveals that certain themes of race, class and gender embedded in the film are reproduced from
dominant mainstream American ideology. The rap music, street poetry, spiritual hymns and dances actually work to mask the dominant hegemonic ideologies of racism, capitalism, and patriarchy hidden in the discourse of the mainstream text. Also revealed in the film's text are racial tensions and social anxieties of African-American youth related to these issues.

The film's use of rap music and poetry is an effective technique for conveying social and instructional messages to African-American teenage audiences. Rap is an oral tradition of African-American people, originating from African and Caribbean tales and fables. In America, this oral tradition took the form of slave songs and chants, particularly in the South, and later migrated to the North. Rap is sometimes referred to as "signifying" or "playing the dozens." Through its rhythmic, rhyming, competitive and braggadocio poetry and musical expressions, rap can deliver a message that is either positive and liberatory or negative and defeating "Don't get it," 1988). The instructional appeal of rap is that can be incorporated as a method of peer education for students to teach their friends,
classmates and colleagues. Peer education is a rich and greatly untapped source for teaching, tutoring and cooperative learning. In this respect, the film takes advantage of the experiences, interests and knowledge of youth, and positions the subject matter in a more meaningful social context for African-American student audiences.

The film is structured to show student audiences how AIDS is introduced into the African-American community and can destroy their future hopes and aspirations in life. The African-American young woman and man are introduced in soft romantic spotlight, surrounded by the imagery of a white picket fence and large rainbow which symbolically promises them a future of love, marriage and happiness. The ideological message is that the white middle class American dream is equally attainable for everyone, not excluding African-Americans.

The young woman is constructed according to white hegemonic representational codes of beauty and youthful innocence in her frilly short dress, Mary Jane shoes, and large pink bow affixed on her head of tousled Shirley Temple curls. The young man is constructed to appear boyish and naive too, in knee-
length pants called biker shorts, high socks and a baseball cap with the letters "USA" superimposed over an American flag. Thus their dress and demeanor "hail" the viewing audience to conjure audience acceptance by reflecting white America's ideals of attractiveness, happiness and success in society.

The imagery and dialogue of the first scene convey several messages that romanticize the patriarchal ideals of marriage, as illustrated in the following dialogue between the young couple:

Female: I see us together, just you and me. As far as my mind's eye can see."

Male: I see a beautiful home, and you my lovely wife.

Female: We'll be together for the rest of our lives.

Male: Up the road, I can see me as an attorney.

Female: Maybe I'll be a doctor and a mother.

Male: And I will be a good father to our kids.

Both: We love each other, straight from the heart;

We'll be together, 'til death do us part. (Durrin, 1988, videotape)

Throughout this scene the female is positioned in a subordinate relationship to the male. She begins in
the role of an innocent coquette, reinforcing the patriarchal discourse that constructs women starting out as essentially pure but morally corruptible. Once they enter the stage of romance, she signifies her desire for male pursuit and sexual conquest with her repetitive refrain, "You can't catch me!"

Immediately following her capture by the young man, the essence of the dialogue is transformed to cast the young woman into her role as future wife and mother. Although the young woman vocalizes in the rap that she has aspirations, her resolve actually appears weak, tentative and compromising as she promises, "Maybe [underlined for emphasis] I'll be a doctor and a mother." Noting the sequence of statements in the couple's discourse of family ideology, there is no doubt that the primary role of the woman is constructed as domesticated wife and caretaker of children. In contrast, the male definitively affirms that he will become an attorney; and only later, secondarily, does he proclaim, "I'll be a good father." Thus, the male's primary familial role is perceived as a professional and head of the family household. Yet, this dialogue is contradictory to the realities of disadvantaged inner-city life for
African-American families in this country, where over half the households headed by single females are relegated by the social and economic system to welfare, and African American males seldom have the opportunity to attain professional careers. Indeed, a myth is perpetuated in this dialogical discourse between the African-American male and female characters, which nurtures the hegemonic belief that the American middle class dream is easily attainable for everyone, while ignoring the social, economic and racial obstacles that actually operate against African-Americans in society.

The myth of self-determinism for African-Americans is an overriding theme in this film. The theme of self-determination is interwoven with the promise of success for African-American youth as long as they remain drug free, practice safe sex or refrain from sexual activity altogether. The hegemonic belief is perpetuated that all American youth, male and female, have equal opportunities to pursue professional careers as doctors, computer specialists and lawyers. However, the film's plot simultaneously suggests that African-American youth cannot achieve
because of their culture, peer pressure, sex, drugs and television.

The scenes that depict youngsters dancing and shooting drugs operate to foster the stereotype that African-Americans are pleasure seeking and sexually promiscuous. The implications of this scene operate to sway the viewer toward the position of blaming the victim, rather than exposing the social, racial and economic structures of society that operate against them. Too often African-Americans are themselves blamed for their lack of achievement and material success, while ignoring their tragic history and the system of racial oppression, social and economic injustices that actually operate against them. Arguments such as these are not revealed in either the verbal or symbolic discourse of the film's text. Yet, throughout the text the African-American father is blamed, the mother is blamed, and peers are blamed, while the real causes remain silent. Although self-determinism is a worthy value and ideal to be inculcated in the discourse of films targeted toward African-American youth, it must be viewed cautiously in the context of this film.
Social and economic tensions are revealed as the lyrics of rap songs evoke different perspectives on class differences among African Americans. Messages target the social and economic status symbols afforded middle class Black urban professionals who are currently referred to as "buppies" in contemporary slang. Buppies are characterized by their materialistic, corporate, and social climbing lifestyles. In a finger snapping upbeat song, the rappers are insightful critics of this social and economic lifestyle:

Boy and girl fifteen of age, thinking about life at the future stage.

A doctor, a lawyer is want you want to be, Computer technician for your eyes to see. . . .

Planning ahead one day at a time.

Won't be long to get yourself a Gucci, Ten years later, it will be a Suzuki.

Turning the world with the go-go sweat, Looking ahead at the discotheque.

That you're growing up smart, smarter than Dad, Hoping that you're making more money than he ever had.

Well, they go through college, never thinking of death,

Looking for money, not looking for health.

Well, time will go by so fast you know,
That your dreams will be blocked by death's shadow. (Durrin, 1988, videotape)

Indeed, the rappers challenge the "buppie" lifestyle with their lyrics, as a foreboding and fatalistic tension is introduced to block buppie success as a great dark shadow suddenly appears on stage to signify the Shadow of Death.

Curiously throughout the entire drama, the central male character wears a baseball cap emblazoned with stars and stripes of the American flag, with "USA" in large letters superimposed across the front it. This apparent sign of patriotism might be interpreted in several ways, some of them ironic and contradictory. First, the patriotic cap could represent a statement that the African-American male is patriotic and truly embraces all aspects of American mainstream ideology, especially as represented in the scenes that idealized romance and marriage. Second, the hat could be given an oppositional reading, producing the meaning that only a politically naive young African-American male would respect the American flag while experiencing racial, social and economic injustices of that system. Third, this patriotic signification might be
considered a national warning that AIDS is a threat to all Americans, particularly African-American male survival in the USA. Fourth, an ironic oppositional meaning could be at work which suggests that the African-American male so desperately wishes to be accepted and assimilated as an American that he wears this USA cap as a supercilious gesture of patriotism and loyal citizenship. Finally, the attire could be represented as merely fashionable, but this does not seem likely within the context of the film's ideological messages.

The treatment of gendered roles is revealing throughout the film. In the opening scene, it is the young man who chases the young woman and physically captures her. The camera close-up shots and soft key lighting work to highlight the female's flirtatious sparkling eyes, tempting lips, broad smile, hugs and kisses that construct her as the seducer. Meanwhile this young woman is portrayed in the dialectical "Madonna/whore" role. She behaves seductively, while simultaneously appearing virtuous and innocent, instilled by her contradictory remarks, "My life is fresh, my vision is pure"; and later, "I have my youth and my energy." These representational codes produce
a moral discourse intended to reinforce the belief that women start off in life virtuous and pure, but they are really sexually wanton and primarily desire male seduction. It also sends a message to African-American women that they should emulate such behavior in the marketplace of heterosexual courtship and marriage.

Female characters are also cast as evil, anguished or hysterical throughout the film. Only in the form of a witch is the female AIDS Siren character consistently strong, powerful and always in control. Yet, it is ironic that she and her helpers are made up with white body paint to appear Caucasian. In the Siren's whiteness and within her castigating role, she represents power and self-righteousness. The female AIDS Siren triumphs in intimidating African-American victims as she threatens them with her powers to seduce, punish and defeat them until they "crumble" in her hands. White faced characters hover nearby and contain the victims as they are all ruled by the AIDS Siren. The message of white domination, perhaps more so white female domination, is clearly signified and articulated above all other racial representations and social identities in this scene. When African-
Americans are confronted by the white Siren, the audio track sound is accentuated and the camera voyeuristically closes in on them to capture their fearful black anguished faces, strident voices and defenseless stances.

In contrast to the AIDS Siren, her counterpart in the role of an African-American young woman and a mother is depicted as powerless. The latter is blamed for her infant's death, and punished through humiliation and eventually her own death. Indeed, this scenario reflects the powerless situation of many young African-American inner city females who find themselves blamed and burdened as unwed mothers with sole responsibility for rearing their children. The role of the father is never reconciled in the film, as the young man selfishly cries out, "I want my wife, Tammy." This image reinforces the stereotyped African-American male father, constructed as socially irresponsible, absent and uncaring about his children.

Males dominate center stage throughout the film in the roles of major rappers. Rappers are the characters who creatively convey wisdom through their music, poetry and dance. Although the film's brochure credits females with writing some of the raps, the
young women are completely disengaged from participation in rap performances. While young men rap before the cameras, young women are subordinated in the background as the camera's eye gazes upon their bodies. The absence of females as major rappers actually distorts African-American women's demonstrated ability to successfully rap, signify, and play the dozens, as many persons have observed and experienced in African-American communities. Gates (1988) notes that "Signifying(g) itself can be, and is, undertaken with equal facility and effect by women as well as men" ((p. 54). Furthermore, Gates quotes the famous African-American political activist H. "Rap" Brown's statement, "Some of the best Dozens players [sic] were the girls" (Gates, 1988, p. 72). Thus, this film sends a distorted message that females cannot rap, while male actors are privileged to dominate the field of rap music.

Issues of sex, drugs and AIDS appear secondary in the film, compared with the intensity of its moral and social messages. Strong controlling messages play on fears of pain, illness, and death. Overtones of religious Christian sermonizing communicate messages of right and wrong, death, punishment, hell and
damnation in an effort to create fear and control youth. For example, the AIDS Siren offers a metaphor of salvation with her dramatic gesture and statement, "Come into my hands, and let me lead you to the promised land." Her convictions are followed by shouts of atonement such as "I'm sorry;" or "I should have used a condom." Thus, the film brings students to grips with Christian religious discourse that threatens them with punishment for their sexual and moral transgressions. These examples of encoded messages demonstrate how instructional media can be used for purposes of social, political and religious control. Indeed, these messages are illustrative of the silent or covert curriculum. Through textual analysis of these scenes, the silent curriculum becomes more evident in the film text, rather than its factual information about AIDS.

When the characters present themselves before the AIDS Siren as personifier of Death, it is to save the life of an African-American male child. Their pleas are ignored as the Siren condemns the baby to death because of his parents perceived sins. This final scene ends dramatically with the AIDS Siren taking the child away and loudly exclaiming, "And what could he
[underlined for emphasis] have been?" On first reflection, this gesture might be conceived as placing greater value on males in society; but such a stance would be inconsistent with the historically ignoble social position that has been accorded African-American males in society. Furthermore, the scene was not played empathetically.

The AIDS Siren's final stance appears to parallel the mass attitude of society concerning the African-American male today. In the final dramatic moment of the last scene, the AIDS Siren scornfully and fiercely condemned the African-American male child to death, signified by harsh bright stage lighting that conjured malice. Thus, in this final dramatic gesture by the Siren, it is likely that the African-American male was symbolically proclaimed as the problem in society. Perhaps, this statement was also an intended threat to shock African-American males into complicity with the mores of white American society. The implications of such a statement, however, could only be detrimental to the self-image and self-esteem of African-American male youth.

The scope of factual information about AIDS is quite limited in this film text. It is limited to
AIDS caused by heterosexual activity and intravenous drug use. There are no statements in either the plot or written messages of the text that homosexual activity, oral sex, anal sex, or blood transfusions can transmit the disease. The assumption is that all youngsters are heterosexual, censoring discussion of homosexuality and reflecting homophobia towards other forms of sexual practices that the producers consider deviant. The social messages further suggest that it is sexual behavior that causes the disease, rather than the presence and transmission of the HIV virus, thus misguiding fear and possibly creating guilt on the part of students. The film also fails to convey the facts that AIDS cannot be spread through social contact such as hand shakes, kissing, living with AIDS patients or going to school with them.

Since the film is extremely limited in factual information about AIDS, it would be more useful as a trigger film to raise questions about AIDS, and the sexual and social responsibilities of students concerning the disease. The omissions in the film emphasize the necessity for teachers to preview the content, supplement the text with factual information, and encourage students to research, investigate,
question and critically discuss all aspects of its technical production and subject matter. Too often films are selected merely because they include minority actors or reflect various aspects of ethnic cultures such as music and dance. It is imperative for educators to look beyond the racial and cultural facade of inclusion, and seek out the social messages and hidden curricula embedded in these types of film.

The racial, cultural and social backgrounds of the writers and creators of this film text merit special consideration in determining the value of 'Til Death Do Us Part for its viewing audience. Considering the film creators' backgrounds, this film takes on a different perspective, offering the viewer many insights into inner-city life and the social tensions which these youth experience on nearly a daily basis as reflected in the film's themes: drugs, early deaths, early pregnancy, white supremacy, emotional stress, failed aspirations, punishment and incarceration. The film's creators and actors make a unique and valuable contribution to their viewing audience of peers because their production is rooted in their own lived experiences. The racial, cultural and social backgrounds of the film's creators serve to
re-position the film more authentically in the social context of messages imparted to the audience. Thus the historical situatedness of the social actors is even more significant than the instructional text on AIDS. Indeed, the significance of this film is that the meanings imparted in its text reveal the innermost feelings of inner-city African-American youth's experiences and reflections on race, class and gender in American society.

This textual analysis of 'Til Death Do Us Part raised focus questions to stimulate open-ended interviews and discussions with students in order to gain insight into their readings and responses to the racial representations, social identities, and instructional messages of in the film. Questions were constructed to evoke responses based on the textual analysis as a platform to juxtapose students' readings and responses to the critical issues of the film. These questions were not presented verbatim, but interwoven within the context of discussion with students, focused on the following:

1. How were African-Americans identified and represented in the film?
2. How were females and males represented and identified in the film?

3. How did the production techniques of rap music and dance impact the film?

4. What were the instructional messages of the film, and were these messages sufficient to increase your understanding of AIDS?

5. How would you improve this film through its production techniques, if you were the producer or director of a film on AIDS?

6. Would you recommend this film as appealing to all racial and ethnic student audiences; (i.e., African-Americans, Hispanics, Caucasians, Asians, etc.)?

7. What was the symbolic representational role of the AIDS Siren?

8. How did you react to the treatment of the baby in the film?

9. Does it make a difference whether this film was written, created and produced by an African-American theater group of teenagers?

10. What did you like or dislike about the film, and do you have any other comments or observations?

11. According to your own experiences, with what
messages in the film did you agree, oppose, consider neutral, or interpret in a different context?

12. How did you interpret the characters’ dress, behaviors, beliefs as symbolized by backdrops, costumes, lighting, musical background, etc.; (e.g., the picket fence, the rainbow, the USA hat, hazy smoke, the young woman’s frilly dress, the young man’s short pants)?

13. Were there any hidden or unspoken messages in the film? If yes, discuss them.

14. Would you recommend this film to others? Why?

15. How does this film compare with other films that you have viewed recently, particularly in Health and Family Living?

Sex, Drugs and AIDS (ODN Productions, 1987)

Background of Film

The purpose of this instructional film is to provide information about the transmission and prevention of AIDS. It features an African-American adolescent movie and television star hostess, Rae Dawn Chong, who serves as narrator and communicates with the viewing audiences. Traditional narrative and documentary stylistic techniques are utilized to
convey the film's messages. The producer/distributor claims to be a non-profit educational media company, yet the packaging and pricing are comparable to those of most commercial educational media vendors.

Film Plot

The film opens with an AIDS patient, a Caucasian young male who is introduced by the camera in an extreme close-up with intense white spotlighting that exaggerates his sick and nervous physical appearance. Immediately the character announces to the viewing audience that his name is Scott, and he has AIDS. Following Scott's introduction, a fast paced musical video montage of adolescents accompanied by voice overs, provide a rapid cacophony of popular public concerns, opinions and myths about AIDS as follows:

- Female: AIDS will kill you, right?
- Female: I don't want to get AIDS.
- Female: If you shoot up, you'll get AIDS.
- Male: I want to have sex, but I don't want to die.
- Female: It just kills gay people?
- Male: It comes from needles.
- Female: I don't want to catch it.
- Female: You die, if you get it.
Male: I don't know what it is; my parents don't even know what it is.


The above statements serve as attention grabbers, that trigger the themes and underlying messages of the film.

Following the introduction, Rae Dawn Chong hosts five segments that treat specific topics related to the AIDS disease. The first segment utilizes visual messages in a video montage with an upbeat musical background that portrays young people involved in many everyday activities and demonstrates that AIDS is hard to get by such means as handshakes, toilet seats, eating after others, door knobs, and money. The second segment depicts a graphic and authentic scene of shared intravenous drug activity between two adolescent youth who appear to be Hispanic. This very tight close-up shot shows how AIDS can be transmitted through shared needles. The third segment discusses the transmission of AIDS through vaginal and anal intercourse, and recommends protection with a condom. The fourth segment features three young Caucasian adolescent women at ballet school in a conversational dramatization which highlights their
arguments concerning safe sex and AIDS. The fifth segment presents a fast paced line-up of AIDS victims who briefly state how they acquired the disease: (1) an African-American mother who passed AIDS on to her infant; (2) a Caucasian woman who was infected by her needle sharing or bisexual boyfriend; and (3) a Caucasian male who was infected by a blood transfusion. The sixth segment is a dramatic and tearful personal testimony by a Caucasian male adolescent concerning the death of his brother who contracted AIDS through homosexual activity.

The film concludes with a statement by Rae Dawn Chong that there is nobody to blame for the disease except the virus. Chong summarizes three essential facts for students to remember: (1) AIDS is hard to get; (2) you can get AIDS from sharing needles; (3) you can get AIDS from having sex with someone who has the virus. Her final message states, "... if you have any kind of sex, you've got to be careful and use a condom. If you decide not to have sex, that's ok too" (ODN Productions, 1987, videotape).

Critical Analysis of Film

Although this film is contemporary in its stylistic approaches to social discourse, it reverts
to the characteristics of early twentieth century cinematic propaganda while focusing on morality, sexuality, and health. According to Kuhn's discursive study of early twentieth century propaganda sex education films on venereal diseases, the project of this genre is to produce a specific mode of address for films within a broad social and historical context, and to construct spectators as moral subjects of a particular kind (Kuhn, 1985). Kuhn (1985) further notes that the production approaches of propaganda films are organized according to a logic that is tangential to that of mainstream cinema into which it attempts to assert itself, and such an approach is illustrated similar in Sex, Drugs and AIDS. In its contemporary context and cinematic techniques, the film utilizes a variety of narrative film styles and documentaries to capture the attention of impressionable high school students and to transmit information on the subject of AIDS. In the process of getting across its social, moral and health messages, the film's discourse includes contemporary music, peer actors, dramatizations, and testimonials. It also takes advantage of certain racial and social stereotypes in all aspects of its spoken and unspoken
texts under the guise of being an equitable educational project for adolescent students of all social, racial and ethnic groups.

The role of host narrator Rae Dawn Chong is significant as the propagandist and authoritative voice of the film. Chong occupies a privileged position as enunciator and censor of the desired knowledge transmitted by the film. In most sex education and health films, this position of privilege is given to a medical professional, usually a doctor or nurse. However, Rae Dawn Chong is socially constructed to appeal to a broad racial and ethnic population of adolescent audiences through her past roles in popular commercial films and television.

Chong is constructed to be closely related to her audiences by nationality, age and social identity. She is socially and racially identified as African-American-Asian through her mixed racial and ethnic physical appearance and her surname, which appeal to broad representational racial and multi-cultural audience. Her friendly presence and contemporary attire serve to embrace and unify her viewing subjects so that they identify with her, trust her and feel comfortable with her on the screen. Her periwinkle
blue sweater, blue jeans, and popular free-flowing, frizzled hairstyle are stylishly appealing to contemporary teen audiences. Seated cross legged, facing the camera in a medium shot, Chong signifies openness, honesty and frankness in her role as hostess and narrator. Her appearance and engaging manner set the tone for an ostensible honest dialog and discussion, as indicated by her opening statement:

There's a lot of wrong information going around about AIDS, and that's dangerous. So I'm going to tell you what AIDS is; how you get it; how you don't get it; and how to be safe. AIDS can be a sexually transmitted disease, so I'm going to be talking about sex, as clearly as I can. You may want to laugh, and you may get embarrassed. That's ok. (ODN Productions, 1987, videotape)

In the above statement, Chong convinces the audience that she is sophisticated, outspoken, objective and knowledgeable. Thus, the audience is positioned to entrust themselves to the film's ideological messages through Chong's voice as the disseminator of knowledge about sex and AIDS.

The information that immediately follows Chong's opening statement is also constructed to appear appealing and non-threatening to the audience as fast paced popular music and video collages of African-American, Asian and Caucasian teenagers portray the
message that AIDS is hard to get through most everyday activities. These messages are followed by scientific and medical explanations of the disease through clearly illustrated graphics of HIV transmission and its destruction of the human immune system. Throughout these scenes, Chong remains self-assured and instructive in her dialog with the viewing audience. Thus, medical discourse is authorized to Chong by the film text's language, graphic illustrations, and camera movements focusing on the star.

When Chong introduces the topic of sexually transmitted AIDS, her calm assuring tone is transformed to embrace a moral discourse within her medical text. When Chong begins her discussion of sexual intercourse, she purposefully becomes uncomfortable in demeanor as her body tenses, her face wrinkles and she slightly stammers her words. For example, she distinguishes two kinds of sex as "intercourse" and "anal intercourse." She refers to intercourse as "your standard guy-girl form of sex," and differentiates anal intercourse as "the other kind of sex." When the subject turns to a discussion of anal intercourse, she further portrays discomfort and
embarrassment through her body language as she squirms, flinches, and frowns before proceeding to briefly describe how anal intercourse can lead to transmission of the HIV virus. Her treatment of sex in this context appears homophobic, which could lead students to feelings of guilt about their own choices of sexual practice, as well as inhibit them from engaging in an open dialogue about different forms of sexual behavior. Perhaps the suggestion of discomfort in approaching this subject was intended to connote to the viewing audience that it is acceptable to feel embarrassed when talking about sex. However, such discomfort becomes problematic when it is displayed by the film's voice of authority.

When Chong discusses safe sexual practices and prevention of AIDS, her messages are more forthright and authoritative, constructing and re-circulating discourse centered on the hegemony of acceptable sexual beliefs and behaviors. For example, she states:

If you're going to have sexual intercourse of any kind, use a condom. I know you may feel like a jerk, buying them, or taking them out, or putting them on, and you don't think they're romantic, and you feel a little embarrassed, and you figure the person you're going to have sex with, won't like them, they're icky. But believe me, its
better to feel a little embarrassed than to risk getting a disease that could kill you. And if you feel weird or uncomfortable about condoms, or any of this stuff, talk with someone, and hopefully it's the person you want to have sex with. (ODN Productions, 1987, videotape)

In this context, acknowledgement of feelings of sexual embarrassment can enable adolescents to deal with their own sensitivities and insecurities, especially among their peers and sexual partners.

Themes of racial, gendered and social stereotypes prevail throughout the film. In the film opening, a sickly looking young Caucasian man who appears to be in his early twenties, personally introduces himself through a brightly lighted camera close up shot, as he looks directly at the audience and introduces himself in a sombre and repentant tone, "My name is Scott, and I just found out that I have AIDS." Although this dramatic opener could serve as an audience grabber, it also allows for the erroneous interpretation by the viewer that Scott is homosexual. He speaks to the audience fearfully, as he states:

I didn't think it could happen to me. There's no cure for AIDS, and I'm scared about what is going to happen to me. I don't know when I got AIDS, and I hope I didn't give it to anybody before I found out. This film will tell you what you need to know so that you won't get AIDS. (ODN Productions, 1987, videotape)
If the viewer initially interprets Scott's presentation to mean that he is homosexual, his statement that he is scared could further reinforce the stereotype that most AIDS patients are predominantly male Caucasian homosexuals and inherently weak. Scott's statement also erroneously suggests that persons who contract AIDS are promiscuous, and participate in casual sexual contacts with numerous partners. In a later segment of the film, when Rae Dawn Chong speaks of gay and bisexual groups who are susceptible to AIDS, the camera focuses on another young Caucasian male who wears an earring. These stereotypical assumptions which portray homosexuals can actually work to convince students that mostly Caucasian homosexual males are susceptible to AIDS, and that their chances of contracting AIDS are lessened as long as their own sexual behaviors and racial identities do not fit into the social categories of Caucasian, bisexual or homosexual males.

Overtly the film claims to engender empathetic social understandings of homosexual victims of AIDS, while it actually engages the viewer in a moral discourse that the sins of the victims come back to roost in the family and community. This sentiment is
enacted in a dramatized testimony by the brother of a homosexual male who has recently died of AIDS. The dynamics of the scene work to further reinforce and contrast stereotypes between heterosexual and homosexual males. Again a young male Caucasian is positioned in the representative social group of homosexual orientation. The setting is in a bicycle shop, which is surveyed by the camera in long shots and contrived to suggest to the audience that homosexuality can be concealed or hidden under the guise of masculine surroundings. The speaker is represented in the film text by his physical appearance to signify socially constructed signs of masculinity intended to contrast him with the hegemonic ideology of homosexual identity. Thus, the speaker is tall, rugged, muscular, heavy bearded, and attired in a white athletic shirt after removal of his black leather biker's jacket. The camera amplifies the speaker's strong muscular build through tilted floor angles that construct him to appear even larger on the screen, while the stage lights accent his heavy black shadow of a beard.

In contrast to the heterosexual brother's stereotypical robust and muscular masculine
appearance, when he refers to homosexuals stopping in the bicycle shop, the camera immediately casts a medium shot on a pale, bespectacled, frail Caucasian male. When the speaker reflects on his brother's illness, and his former dislike of homosexual males, his voice is strong though emotional. He attempts to exonerate male homosexuals, yet succeeds in simultaneously putting them down with the statement, "I still think it's weird that guys want to get it on with other guys." Finally, however, he breaks down and cries directly on camera, as he pledges, that he'll "punch-out" anyone who makes fun of homosexuals. Male crying by "straight" men thus becomes acceptable, but the young man's final declaration ruptures the text with the negative underlying message that homosexual males cause their families great suffering, and they should never expect to enjoy a life of acceptance in society. Furthermore, since the treatment of homosexuality deals solely with males in the film, there is also the distorted message that homosexuality is exclusively male oriented and excludes female participation.

African-Americans representation in the film is problematic, mainly evidenced by absence or
marginalized roles, with the exception of Rae Dawn Chong who appears as narrator and host. During early scenes, when the general population is shown in fast-paced group shots, African-Americans and other racial and ethnic minorities appear infrequently, and then only as blurred background figures in the outer frames of the camera's shots. When three young women participate in a discourse about AIDS and prophylactic protection, African-American female representation is absent. When an African-American female is finally introduced as a victim of AIDS, the assumption is that she is a single teenage mother who has been socially irresponsible. The treatment of this young woman is again racially stereotyped, constructing a discourse that the African-American female is a social problem, singularly blameworthy for the future of her progeny, as she tearfully states, "This is my baby; she has AIDS. She got it from me." In contrast, the female Caucasian AIDS patient is constructed as blameless, the innocent victim of a deceptive bisexual male partner or user of intravenous drugs, as she states, "My boyfriend gave me the virus. He had sex with another man, or he shared needles." Even more problematic, no spoken voice is given to the
African-American male in any segment of the film. Thus, the message to the African-American male viewer is that AIDS is not his problem; or he is so devalued as not be worthy of concern in this society.

The only focused educational treatment of gender in this film centers on middle class Caucasian young women. The scene takes place in a ballet school, featuring three Caucasian female adolescents. The topic of discussion among the three young women revolves around methods of prophylactic protection against AIDS. Their conversation opens with stereotypical female giggles about a boy who is a "doll," and being in love. The intimacy of their discussion is signified by the camera's tight medium close shot, while the lighting also remains medium-low to depict the setting and the context as sociable and ordinary. Among the three girls, one is sexually active and takes the pill as a method of birth control; one consistently uses condoms; and another is undecided about the use of prophylaxis or whether she should have sex at all. The latter character signifies the American stereotyped female "dumb blonde" who is wide-eyed, naive, silly and incapable of making an important sexual decision. For example,
the blonde character asks naive questions such as, 
"Where do you get them [condoms], where do you go?
What does your boyfriend think, like does he mind?"
Finally, the conversation ends with the blonde
stating, "I don't know, huh, maybe I won't have sex at
all; I mean, I don't want to get any diseases, and I
don't want to get pregnant. It's such a bother."
This final statement concerning abstinence is a
significant moment of discursive rupture in the film,
reinforcing the moral discourse of sexual abstinence
as it pertains to women.

Despite the enumerated weaknesses of the film,
there are some redeeming qualities to the health and
scientific messages articulated by Chong as narrator.
The graphic scientific explanations of the HIV virus
and examples of its transmission through blood, semen,
cuts and needles are clear and pedagogically sound.
The questions raised for young women to become self-
empowered in making decisions about their own health
and protection from the virus are engaging to viewers.
It is commendable that this film even treats the topic
of anal intercourse, despite Chong's malapropisms,
since many other films on AIDS only marginally mention
the topic or totally avoid it in their texts.
Similarly, this is one of the few films currently available on AIDS that allows its audience an authentic close-up visual experience of intravenous drug use and sharing of needles. The film is also comprehensive in denoting all segments of at-risk populations, and exposing many myths by demonstrating ways that AIDS cannot be transmitted.

The focused questions raised by this film centered around issues of race, gender and sexual orientation, as well as the inclusion or omission of any pedagogical information concerning health issues on the topic of AIDS. Again, as in the case of the previously discussed film, these questions were used to focus on issues through unstructured focused interviews, rather than repetition of a structured list of formalized verbatim questions. The focus questions raised by for discussion with students are as follows:

1. Was Rae Dawn Chong an effective choice as host narrator for this film? Why?

2. How were African-Americans treated in this film, especially compared to other races or ethnic groups represented in the film?
3. Were your opinions of homosexuals altered or changed by this film, especially after viewing the segment related by the brother of the deceased homosexual victim of AIDS?

4. How were females represented in the film?

5. How were males represented in the film?

6. What were the essential health messages in this film, and were there any moral or sermonizing messages?

7. What was your impression of the ballet school scene and the discussion among the three girls about their sexual experiences?

8. If you were the producer, how would you change or improve this film?

9. What aspects of the film impressed you the most? Why?

10. Did you identify with any particular parts of the film? Why?

11. Are there any questions that you would like to raise about this film?

12. How did this film compare with others that you have viewed in your Health and Family Living classes, especially on the subject of AIDS?
CHAPTER 5
RESULTS OF
STUDENTS' READINGS AND RESPONSES TO THE SELECTED FILMS

This chapter describes and analyses the students' readings and responses to the films 'Til Death Do Us Part (Durrin, 1988) and Sex, Drugs and AIDS (ODN Productions, 1987), from Marshview High School, Harriet Tubman High School and Gardenia High School. Prior to the interviews, Health and Family Living classes were observed and studied within the context of their school environments as described in Chapter Four; and the two selected films were textually analyzed as presented in Chapter 5. During film showings in classes, students were observed for overt reactions and responses; and immediately following the film presentations, small groups of students were interviewed. Among three classes in each school, approximately 237 students viewed the films which consisted of an average viewing audience of 45 students at Marshview High School, 120 students at Harriet Tubman High School, and 72 students at Gardenia High School. Immediately following the film showings, small group interview sessions of 20 to 30
groups at Marshview High School totaled 30 students (10 males, 20 females); Harriet Tubman totaled 33 students (22 females, 11 males); Gardenia High totaled 56 students (37 females, 19 males). Thus, 119 students participated in group interview sessions for analysis of readings and responses to the films. Refer to Appendices A, B, C, and D for complete breakdown of student participation. In reporting the results, the names of the schools and all participants were changed to maintain anonymity in the study.

Analysis of students' readings and responses to the films were based on observational field notes, transcriptions of interviews, textual analysis of films, focused interview questions, and ethnographic participant observations in the school and Health and Family Living classes. Students' readings and responses to the film texts on AIDS were organized into general categories that focused on (1) racial representations (2) gender representations, (3) instructional messages, (4) social messages, and (5) productions techniques of the film. In the section entitled "Results of Group Interview Sessions with Students," these categories were developed into...
salient themes in relation to students' readings and responses to the selected films.

Conclusions from these results led to an understanding of how students read film texts and created meanings from them, based on their own lived racial, social and cultural experiences. Significantly, these results also led to reconceptualized curriculum approaches pertaining to the evaluation, selection and utilization of film media. Although this study targeted African-American student audiences, its results and recommendations are deemed relevant to all educators and curriculum media specialists who serve diversified student populations in our nation's schools.

Marshview High School

Students' Readings and Responses to 'Til Death Do Us Part

Description of Students Viewing the Film in the Classroom

When students arrived in class and learned that they would see a film, they became more alert, attentive and curious. When the film was turned on and the rap music began, students sat up at once, and started watching intently. Only one student slept in
the second period class while the film was shown, but none slept in the other classes. The commercial skits caused bursts of laughter, especially the skit that alluded to "edible underwear" and the other that stated malt liquor could "put your Mama in the mood." A certain tension became evident in all classes during the funeral scene in which the singer entoned, "It's calling out your name." The hymn was broken by overt student reactions in two out of three classes; for example, one male African-American student let out a loud boring yawn; a male Caucasian student mimicked high pitched crying; and several students expressed loud sighs of relief when the funeral song ended. These students' reactions might be considered forms of resistance to the film's production techniques, or fearful reactions to the overriding theme of death and dying which had already impacted their lives in the school.

The scene that located the characters in hell caused student reactions around the classroom. The AIDS Siren elicited laughter when she admonished the male characters in Hell, especially when one character pleaded, "I want to dance," and she exclaimed, "Well, dance for me;" and later when the leading male actor
stated, "I should have used a condom;" and she reproachfully replied, "But you didn't did you?" In contrast, the classes became disturbingly quiet when the AIDS Siren demanded possession of the male infant victim of AIDS. The classes became dramatically quiet and tense during the scene when the baby was taken away from his mother. Yet, this tension was broken in the fourth period class when an African-American male student suddenly faked a loud high pitched cry and succeeded in making several students join in laughter with him.

While the major instructional film messages about AIDS scrolled across the screen at the end of the film, again there was quietude among most students, interspersed with some females humming the theme song, "It's Calling out Your Name." During the second period, in the "sleepy head" class, a few students clapped at the end of the film. However, the film's ending encountered negative reactions in the third period class, when an African-American male loudly exclaimed, "That was fake!" followed by another African-American male student who stated, "That didn't make sense!" Considering these initial student reactions and responses to the film, it appeared that
the film was an unnerving and threatening reminder of the many deaths that the students had experienced at the school, and it was culturally resisted for its plot and production style.

Results of Group Interview Sessions with Students

In the introduction to this chapter, it was explained that analysis of group interview sessions with students focused on categories of (1) racial representations, (2) gender representations, (3) instructional messages, (4) social messages, and (5) production techniques used in the film. In this section, these categories were developed into salient themes in relation to students' readings and responses to the film, 'Til Death Do Us Part, as presented below.

Marshview students resisted exclusive African-American racial representations in the film text. Students at Marshview High consistently rejected the underlying assumption of this film that African-American audiences would welcome an exclusively representational African-American cast. In all interview groups, students expressed preferences for more diversified racial representation in the film, reflective of the school's multiple racial populations.
including African-Americans, Asians, Hispanics and Caucasians. The African-American students were particularly contentious of mono-racial identities, as evidenced by the following dialogue:

Hatfield: Sometimes when people are selling films, they'll say, "Mrs. Hatfield, this has an all Black cast, and it's going to appeal to the Black kids in the class." Do you agree with that?

Female: Cause not everybody just want to hear about Black people. They want to hear about everybody's problem.

Hatfield: So they don't want to hear just about Black people; they want to hear about everybody's problems. Any other ideas on that?

Female: If they have a mixed group and just Black, the whites aren't going to be interested because its all Black. And then if it be all White, the Blacks not gonna be too interested cause its all White. Some of the Black kids might say, "Why they just focusing on the Black kids?"

Female: Like these the only ones got problems.

Male: They got White kids and Black kids, and Vietnamese kids, all kind.

Female: Everybody can't be insulated.

(Interview February 13, 1990; Period 4; Marshview High School)

Based on the above dialogue, it appeared that African-American students were quite conscious and defensive of negative racial stereotyping that is often directed toward them by various forms of media; thus they
rejected the all African-American cast. Also, considering the racial makeup of this school, there was consciousness of a racially and culturally diversified student body and the requisite need for inclusion of all representative races in the curriculum.

**Rap music communicated, but not good enough for everyone at Marshview High School.** In this school setting, students contradicted the film's assumption that rap music would have significantly high appeal to African-American student audiences. During the film showing, neither African-American, Asian or Caucasian students responded with any particular distinction or enthusiasm toward the inclusion of rap songs and poetry, as indicated below in interviews with three different groups of students:

Hatfield: What about the rap music?

Male: They were trying to get a point to the children. They were trying to get it in their own language.

Hatfield: Did you understand all of the rap? Was it clear to you?

Female: Yeah. (Interview February 13, 1990, Period 2, Marshview High School)

Hatfield: What about the raps?

Male: It was alright, if you really listen.
Hatfield: Did y'all understand the raps?

Male: Yeah, I understood.
(Interview February 13, 1990, Period 5, Marshview High School)

Hatfield: Did all of you understand them?

Female: Yeah, if you listen really closely you can understand what they're saying.

Hatfield: Jean, did you? Did it make a difference, do you think if its raps, it makes a difference?

Male: It doesn't really make a difference.

Female: Some raps catch people's eyes, get attention.
(Interview February 13, 1990, Period 5, Marshview High School)

Although the students did not overtly reject rap music and poetry, they appeared cautious in expressing any negative connotations for this African-American cultural form. African-Americans, Caucasians and Asians appeared cautious not to offend the racial and cultural representations in the film. Thus, the students' responses clustered around culturally and racially neutral and safe responses among peers.

Marshview students critiqued production techniques and suggested new instructional film styles. Students' major criticisms of the film's production style were made in comparison to popular television shows. While focusing on *'Til Death Do Us
Part, students provided insight into the elements of production styles and techniques that would appeal to their audiences of peers. Discussions centered on comparisons of 'Til Death Do Us Part with other films that students had experienced in school, which led to suggestions for film production that would appeal to them as follows:

Male: Well, most films that you see are like a TV show.

Hatfield: The ones you see in school are most like TV shows?

Male: The most you see [inaudible], and they end and say, "Oh, we shouldn't have done that.

Hatfield: Oh, I see, it's kind of "preachy" like.

Male: Yeah, the whole thing.

Hatfield: Ok, Shantra? Was it any different from any you usually see? And in what ways was it different?

Female: Let's see.

Hatfield: What?

Female: It's not like the one we saw in the auditorium.

Hatfield: Ok, you liked the one in the auditorium?

Female: It was different from the one that Dr. Castiglia and 'em showed us.

Hatfield: Yeah, I saw that one, Choices. The one by Pepsi Cola and Burgher King.
Female: It was different.

Hatfield: Go on, tell me what you thought about that one. Did you prefer the one called Choices that you saw in the auditorium?

Female: Yes.

Hatfield: For what reasons?

Female: It was somehow more entertaining.

Female: It was entertaining.

Hatfield: What made it entertaining?

Female: The music, the stars.

Hatfield: The music, the stars. Well, this film ['Til Death Do Us Part] had music and stars. What did you think about it?

Several: [Laughter]

Hatfield: Well, compare it, compare it. Lynn, what else did the other film have?

Female: It had a lot of different things.

Female: It really grabbed your attention. It gave a message. But this one was gloomy; it put you to sleep.

Hatfield: Ok, so you felt like you were going to go to sleep on it. Well, I saw some of you laughing.

Female: Well, we started talking about other things.

Hatfield: You started talking about other things. What about when sometimes you sort of laughed like "Oooh!"

Female: We was laughing at the way they was acting on there and how they looked.
Hatfield: **How they looked?** Tell me about how they looked. Some of the other kids said that too. I just want to hear your opinion. How did they look?

Female: The way they was moving, and the way that man was dancing.

Female: Um, huh. **Looked silly.**

Hatfield: So they looked silly. Imagine this, what if you as individuals or a group were the producers of a film on AIDS. What would you do that would be different? Or would you do it like this? How would you do it?

Female: I would have, I wouldn't have it like that one.

Female: I would have it like a . . .

Female: **Talk show.**

Female: A talk show like VEP. They have a little program on with teens and teenagers and discussions. Yeah, I would have it like VEP.

Hatfield: One like VEP in which teenagers talk; that's an idea. That's an approach. Anything else you would do, if you were producing a film? In someone says here are some cameras and here's all the stuff you need. Just like yesterday, when you did commercials. Any other way you would do it?

Female: I have an idea. Like the Cosby Show, you know like that. People are funny and serious.

Hatfield: **Ok, like the Cosby Show, serious.** I can imagine that. Anything else?

Male: Or like Arsenio Hall. I'd have skits and all.

Hatfield: Skits. Would they be funny skits?

Male: Yeah, but on the serious side.
Hatfield: So what I'm hearing too, sort of, is what both of you are saying, you know. You might have comedy on a serious matter, but this would watch people's attention.

Female: Yeah, like attract them and make them say like uh, "yeah." And then later on they gonna think about it. Then they have a message to that. (Interview February 13, 1990, Period 4, Marshview High School)

These discussions indicated that the students maintained their preferences for films that were patterned after popular television shows, including popular actors and contemporary forms of entertainment. These students did not advance rap music, but instead suggested the use of popular lyrics with famous singers and stars. Famous athletes, especially football and basketball players also appealed to students. These were characteristics that should be considered while selecting films for this group of viewers in the classroom, in order to attract their attention to the subject matter. The fact that the students were aware of various production techniques also indicated that they were quite capable of producing some of their own video films which could engage them much more in the classroom, stimulate creativity and critical thinking, and cultivate more
cooperative learning and cultural sharing among all students.

Marshview students read instructional messages and recognized factual omissions in the film's text. Students viewed 'Til Death Do Us Part, with learning expectations of the knowledge that they would obtain on the subject of AIDS. Their interests included factual information to prevent AIDS as well their curiosities about myths that circulated about the disease. Considering their interests in the subject matter, students were able to discern many of the film's factual omissions, thus raising questions and opening space for their own inquiries about AIDS, as indicated below:

Hatfield: Before you saw this, and I told you this was going to be a film about AIDS, what were you expecting? What were some facts you wanted to know? Did you get a lot of facts out of this film?

Male: Not really.

Hatfield: Not really?

Male: Most of this I already knew.

Hatfield: Did you have any questions, like "I really wish I knew such and such?"

Female: Can you get AIDS from kissing?
Hatfield: Ok, that's one of the questions that you wanted to know. You're going to get that answer in the next film, ok.

Female: Like can you get it after eating after someone?

Female: Drinking?

Hatfield: When I show the next film, I'll ask you to come back and we'll talk about the comparisons.

Female: Can you get it from using the bathroom?

Hatfield: Ok, those are some other questions. Anything else?

Female: Open cuts and sores?

Hatfield: Ok, so you're interested in those things. Did this film answer these?

Several: No. (Interview February 13, 1990, Period 5, Marshview High School)

Hatfield: What was it that you wanted to know that you didn't. Like when I told you all, this is a film about AIDS, what did you think you were going to learn?

Male: How its transmitted.

Female: How you catch AIDS, and like that.

Hatfield: Ok. Shantra, What did you think when I told you all that?

Female: By just having sex and not by needles.

Hatfield: So you thought by sex and not by needles.

Female: Yeah, I thought the same thing. I thought they was going to tell you how you could catch AIDS just by having sex. They show how to get AIDS just by carrying needles.
Male: They showed stuff that everybody has already seen on TV and on commercials.

Hatfield: So there was nothing new that you learned, huh?

Male: No.

Hatfield: Some questions that you would like to know? Still would like to know.

Female: I thought that mosquitoes would give you AIDS.

Hatfield: So you wanted someone to answer that question, huh, about mosquitoes. Any other questions about AIDS that you wanted to know? Do you really concern yourselves. Do your friends say, "Oh, I might get AIDS."

Several (females): No. Only about getting pregnant. (Interview February 13, 1990, Period 4, Marshview High School)

Marshview students read social messages in the film and confronted their own lived social, emotional and health problems. During interviews, most students tended to ignore the immediate issues of AIDS, while they focused more directly and urgently on the social pressures and tensions that they were experiencing as individuals and a student body at Marshview High. Students responded to the social messages embedded in this film from perspectives that were quite personalized. They read the film's messages of peer pressure, commercialism, sex, materialism, drugs and marriage in direct relation to their own personal and
lived school experiences. Students immediately recognized the implications of peer pressure that were articulated through the rap songs and poetry in the film. Each group of interviewed students enumerated peer pressure as a major concern for them. Peer pressure was associated with the social tensions experienced among students at home, school and the community as follows:

Hatfield: They kept saying "Try it, try it." What did that mean?

Male: Peer pressure, I guess.

Hatfield: Tell me about peer pressure.

Male: You want to do what everybody else is doing. Interview February 13, 1990, Period 2, Marshview High School

Hatfield: Tell me about it.

Female: Like if someone goes stealing in the store, and they want you to steal. You do it and get in trouble.

Hatfield: Um, huh, um, huh. Larry?

Male: Well, the same thing she said.

Hatfield: Alright, stealing is an example. Any other examples you can think of peer pressure?

Male: Some dudes wanted someone to join a gang around my house, he joined and he got killed.

Hatfield: He got killed around your house?

Male: Where I used to live.
May: If a whole lot of people are having fight, and they ask you to help and they jump in.

Hatfield: Um . . . another one.

Male: When two of your friends are fighting, you know, and you don't know what side to go on, and they still want you to help them.
(Interview February 13, 1990, Period 2, Marshview High School)

The above discussions were reflective of difficult and complex forms of peer pressure that students were experiencing at Marshview High. One example cited above even paralleled an actual incident that occurred when a Hispanic male student was killed during a fight in which others joined in the violence. The segment in the dialog that involved stealing was similar to an earlier discussion with Miss Pierre who was concerned that the students' materialistic obsessions often led to several shoplifting arrests among students. During these discussions students became quite animated and intent on relating the social tensions that permeated their lives at home, school and the community.

On health issues, students responded that they were much more concerned about pregnancy, non-injected street drugs, violence and sexually transmitted diseases other than AIDS. Only one student in a class
had known an AIDS patient. The school nurse confirmed that there had been no students at the school reported with AIDS (Interview, March 11, 1990), but she had referred several cases of gonorrhea and pubic lice. The school nurse was also aware that syphilis was also on the rise among high school students in the school district. Although the students knew that AIDS was a serious disease and could cause death, concern with the HIV virus was not an immediate worry for them. Yet, other sexually transmitted diseases such as gonorrhea were of great interest and concern to the students, and pregnancy also rated high as a serious worry according to the dialog below:

Hatfield: Any other questions about AIDS that you wanted to know? Do you really concern yourselves, or do your friends say, "Oh, I might get AIDS!"

Several [indistinguishable]: No. Only about getting pregnant.

Female: No, they don't talk about diseases or anything like that. They say, "What am I going to do? I might get pregnant." Syphilis, gonorrhea, and all of that. Cause I had a friend, and he had gotten syphilis, and he didn't even know what it was about, you know. And he wasn't even going to tell his partner, cause you supposed to tell your partner, because he might catch it; but he say, "Oh, I'm not gonna tell her, cause she gonna think I'm a freak or something."

Hatfield: Um, huh.
Female: You don't ever hear them talking about that.

Hatfield: Yeah, I hear you.

Female: They might tease you and say, "Yeah, I hear you got gonorrhea," but they don't never talk about it.

Hatfield: Aha, ok, so if you looked at it on a scale of what people are talking about, AIDS isn't really up there, huh? Would drugs come before AIDS?

Several: Yeah.

Hatfield: So drugs would come before AIDS. Would pregnancy come before AIDS?

Female: Yeah.

Female: Pregnancy is like number one.

Hatfield: Pregnancy is a number one concern, huh? (Interview February 13, 1990, Period 4, Marshville High School)

In none of the discussions was there interest or concern with intravenous drugs, which contradicted an assumption of the film that urban African-American youth who attend school are greatly involved in needle sharing drugs. Instead, students stated that the drug habits which extended from the school and neighborhoods were marijuana and crack cocaine, as indicated in the following dialogue:

Hatfield: What about drugs?

Several: Weed, crack, acid, smoke . . .
Hatfield: What about crack?

Female: We even see it at church. They be smoking that weed.

Male: And selling acid too.

Female: A lot of drug dealing.

Hatfield: A lot of drug dealing here. Well, I've noticed in the sex and AIDS films that they show a lot of needles. Do you think that is something our kids are really concerned with?

Male: Not really. Not needles.

Several: Yeah. (Interview February 13, 1990, Period 5, Marshview High School)

Although pregnancy, peer pressure, drugs and socially transmitted diseases topped the students' list of concerns, the themes of death and dying were on most of their minds in the context of this film. During the death and funeral scenes of the film, students seemed quite attentive and tense, despite those who attempted jokes to break the tension and resist the subject. Yet, the topic of death was consistently evoked among the students as indicated below:

Hatfield: Are these questions that kids have, like the concerns that kids have, would AIDS be at the top?

Female: No.

Hatfield: Then tell me what would?
Male: Violence.

Hatfield: Violence. Why would violence be?

Female: Because we've had a lot of deaths at this school. (Interview February 13, 1990, Period 5, Marshview High School)

Female: Now, I notice now that a lot of people are concerned about dying because we have had a lot of deaths at [name of school] during the past year.

Hatfield: Yeah, y'all sure did, huh.

Female: We had four students and one teacher.

Hatfield: You had four students and one teacher? I didn't know you had a teacher. (Interview February 13, 1990, Period 4, Marshview High School)

Hatfield: Has it affected the kids?

Female: They're scarred.

Several: Yeah.

Male and Female: You don't know who's going to be next.

Male: Cause like you knew all these people.

Female: Everyday friends. (Interview February 13, 1990, Period 5, Marshview High School)

Female: Some people say this school cursed cause everybody dying.

Female: Now everybody wondering.

Several: Who gonna be next. (Interview February 13, 1990, Period 4, Marshview High School)
Conversations such as the above were most revealing in understanding the students' responses to this film in the context of their lived experiences at the school. These discussions were serious and poignant reflections of how so many deaths affected the student's social situations and learning experiences.

Although several students recognized the signifying practices of picket fences and rainbows as symbols of the promise of a happy future, three out of four students discerned these symbols as boding unhappy futures and read uncertainties in these scenes about the possibilities of happy futures; for example:

Hatfield: Tell me this. When, Larry, you said to me it was different from the very beginning, remember that scene where there was the rainbow, what do you think that meant, the rainbow and the couple in the very beginning?

Male: That everything is going down for them.

Hatfield: Going well?

Male: No, going bad.

Hatfield: May, when you saw the rainbow, and the boy and girl, you know, when they were in the beginning scene, and they saw the rainbow, and they started hugging? What did you think about it?

Female: I guess it meant they weren't going on drugs.

Hatfield: What about the picket fence in which he said to the effect, "I want to be your
husband," and she said, "I want to be your wife?"
Did you think it was going to be a happy film or what? What did you think when you first saw that? Now you said that you thought it was going down; now what did you mean by that?

Male: That they were going to start doing things.

Hatfield: That they were going to start doing things and go down, huh.

Male: Yeah.

Hatfield: Did you think that May?

Female: Yeah. (Interview February 13, 1990, Period 2, Marshview High School)

Hatfield: Remember when the film opened with the rainbow, the kids and the picket fence? What did that stand for? What was the producer trying to make that stand for?

Female: That they had a bright future.

Hatfield: They had a bright future, ok.

Female: That they were leading into drugs and stuff. (Interview February 13, 1990, Period 4, Marshview High School)

Hatfield: Let me ask you something about some of the scenes. Remember when the film opened, it showed a rainbow, picket fence, a boy and girl, and the boy is wearing a USA hat, ok? Symbolically, what does that mean? What did you think when you saw that?

Male: Like everyday, normal kids.

Hatfield: Ok, so you say everyday normal kids. What do you mean by that? What about the rainbow?

Male: It was a nice day, and then it got dark. All of a sudden it got dark.
Hatfield: You saw that so you thought that something bad was coming, huh.

Female: Yeah. (Interview February 13, 1990, Period 5, Marshview High School)

Indeed, these examples of fatalistic conversations could be interpreted as reflecting the students' needs for support, help, and counseling in light of the recent tragedies that were experienced by students at the school. These revelations were also helpful in understanding the student's complacency in classes.

Gardenia students read film text's gendered biases. Many students were aware of gendered roles of women in films other media, but their responses were not focused on comparative levels of subordination and participation between males and females in the production of the film. Despite continuous probing of students about female and male representation, only one student discussed this level of participation as follows:

Hatfield: How do you think girls were treated in the film?

Female: From the boys?

Hatfield: Yeah, anything about them? How were they treated in the film? Did they have a leading role?

Female: Yeah, they were treated fairly.
Male: I think they were used as sex objects.

Hatfield: What about the boys? How were they treated? How were they used?

Larry: As the messengers. (Interview February 13, 1990, Period 2, Marshview High School)

In the context of female representation, reference to fair treatment of women was often interpreted to mean equal treatment, rather than the symbolic modes of production fostered upon women in the film as a reflection of their roles in society.

The AIDS Siren was immediately responded to as a female symbol depicting evil, power, seductiveness and death, as students stated:

Female: She was death.

Female: It remind me of that little poem that they had passed out around the school, with cocaine. It was like, you know, she is taunting you, and its for you to not go with it. You know, she's telling you, "Yeah, come on, come on," like that.

Female: So when she got you, she told you how foolish you were. (Interview February 13, 1990, Period 4, Marshview High School)

It is indeed noteworthy that among this racially integrated student audience, the AIDS Siren was never racially identified by the audience as being either African-American, Caucasian, Hispanic or Asian.
Instead, the AIDS Siren was often referred to as "the witch lady."

According to the students, the female character in the lead role as the infant's mother was deemed most blameworthy for male infant's death. This female character was immediately positioned by the students as a matriarchal single parent, both victimized and blamed for the child's death. For example, responses from each interview session concerning the mother's role were revealed as follows:

Hatfield: What about the baby? How was the baby treated in this film?

Larry: Neglected.

Hatfield: Neglected. How do you feel about that May?

May: She was neglected because, um, cause the Mama shouldn't have been using, because it would affect the baby.

Female: It wasn't the baby's fault, and the girl, now she wants to cry about it. Well, she should have thought about it before it happened. (Interview February 13, 1990, Period 2, Marshview High School)

Female: If you get pregnant and your baby gets it, it has no life for itself. They already said it was going to die.

Female: It wouldn't have a chance to live its life.
Hatfield: The baby didn't have a chance to live its life. Was that the message? Did you get any other messages.

Female: She was hurt because, you know she had did that to her baby, you know.

Male: And they were telling her its too late; its mine now. (Interview February 13, 1990, Period 5, Marshville High School)

Finally, the death of the infant baby boy engendered the greatest emotional responses from the students, including reactions of shock, anger, sadness, empathy and sympathy, as follows:

Hatfield: What would you consider the saddest scene?

Female: The baby.

Female: The part, I guess that put the shock to me was when the girl was crying for her baby, "Don't take him away." I guess it made you think about what could happen.

Hatfield: You consider that the saddest part?

Female: To me it was when they took the baby from her.

Hatfield: What about when they held up the baby and said, "What could he [voice emphasis] have been?"

Female: They talking about the baby too. He could have been a doctor, a lawyer, you know.

Male: He could get to pick what he wants.

Female: Follow in this mother and daddy's footsteps, you know.
Hatfield: And yet, did the mother and daddy seem like bad people?

Male: No.

Several: No.

Hatfield: No, they really didn't.

Female: I tell you it was pressure, peer pressure they had on them, like they said, "Try it, try it." (Interview February 13, 1990, Period 2, Marshview High School)

In summary, this film did not appeal pedagogically or aesthetically to the students. Neither did the messages embedded in the film offer them the possibilities of liberatory social transformations in their lives. Yet, it was evident that students' responses to the film clearly related to their own lived racial, cultural, social and educational experiences. The students' readings were consistently negotiated from the perspective of their concerns with peer pressure, pregnancy, drugs, and the many tragic deaths that impacted the school. Students' oppositional readings centered on issues of racial representation being solely African-American. They also resisted the stylistic modes of production that transmitted instructional messages in the film. It was significant that the African-American students
particularly rejected the notion of an exclusive African-American cast.

While the inclusion of rap music and poetry was not fully rejected by the students, neither was its presence appreciated as exclusive codes of African-American cultural identity and racial representation. The students' contestation of these forms of representation raised questions about their own self-images and self-esteem within a racially integrated student body of which they were a majority. Considering the absence of African-American or other ethnic minority administrative leadership in the school, and the lack of a multicultural approach to curriculum and instruction in the school, these students had few opportunities to study and appreciate others' racial and ethnic cultures or histories. Thus, the African-American students' responses were directed more toward assimilationist behavior, rather than an appreciation of African-American cultural messages as a viewing audience. It was also significant to observe how the students' usual passivity and sullenness in the auditorium classroom became transformed during their involvement and full participation in the group interview sessions. Their
lively participation and insightful contributions to the discussions demonstrated their abilities to become more critical of film media, and to be much more involved in their learning experiences than they demonstrated with Miss Pierre in the auditorium classroom.

Students' Readings and Responses to Sex, Drugs and AIDS

Description of Students Viewing the Film in the Classroom

The opening scenes of Sex, Drugs and AIDS were uneventful in the classroom. The appearance of Rae Dawn Chong did not create any distinct reactions; but neither were there any sleeping students in the classes. It was difficult to determine whether this behavior was attributable to the film presentation, or to the fact that Miss Pierre started each class with a reprimand about their behavior and informed them that she was going to "lay down the law" henceforth. However, immediately following Miss Pierre's edict in the third period class, two African-American students began to quietly hum during the entire film performance. Their behavior appeared to be a form of protest, but it might have indicated their boredom.
with the film also. Except for the humming young men, viewing reactions to the film in the classes were consistently the same.

During the film showing, students in each class overtly reacted to six scenes only. The scenes that created reactions among students involved (1) the actual intravenous injections of drugs by two youth who appeared Hispanic; (2) the mention of anal sex by Rae Dawn Chong; (3) the conversation about sex and contraception between three Caucasian girls at ballet school; (4) the African-American female holding her infant baby girl to whom she had transmitted AIDS; (5) the Caucasian female who suspected that her boyfriend had transmitted the disease to her after either intravenous drug use or sex with another male, and (6) the brother of a homosexual male who had died of AIDS. During the intravenous drug scene, several students in each class emitted grunts of pain and distaste, while some actually turned their heads rather than watch the injections. When Rae Dawn Chong mentioned anal sex, several students in each class reacted negatively with sounds of aversion and one stated, "Shame!" During the conversational scene among three girls, the female students ostensibly sat
up and appeared to listen more attentively. The scene with the young African-American mother and her child evoked sympathetic murmurings throughout the class, especially discernible among the female audience. The Caucasian woman who contracted AIDS from her boyfriend elicited sounds of disgust among students, at the moment she mentioned that he might have had sex with a man. When the Caucasian male whose brother died of AIDS began to speak, the students in each class became noticeably quiet, but their quiet tension was consistently broken with derisive laughter when the youth broke down and cried, threatening, "I'll punch out anyone who calls my brother a fag." These displays of students' responses later became more revealing and explanatory during interviews with them.

Results of Group Interview Sessions with Students

In the introduction to this chapter, it was explained that analysis of group interview sessions with students focused on categories of (1) racial representations, (2) gender representations, (3) instructional messages, (4) social messages, and (5) production techniques used in the film. In this section, these categories were developed into salient
themes in relation to students' readings and responses to the film, *Sex, Drugs, and AIDS*, as presented below.

Marshview students preferred viewing a variety of racial representations in the film text. Students in all three classes were more amenable to a variety of racial representations in this film, compared to 'Til Death Do Us Part. Among responses toward racial representation in this film were the following:

Male: It was mixed. Black and White.

Hatfield: Ok, what kind of message did you get in that it was mixed Black and White? Did you prefer that?

Male: Yeah.

Hatfield: Why?

Male: It showed that all kinds of races do.
(Interview February 15, 1990, Period 2, Marshview High)

Hatfield: Did you think it was better that they used a variety of boys and girls?

Female: Yeah.

Hatfield: Why do you think it was better? Sandy, you were shaking your head.

Female: Yeah.

Hatfield: I'm not picking on you. Its just that you were shaking your head.

Female: It was demonstrating not only that Blacks could get it, but that other people could get it.
Hatfield: That 's the main theme y'all think that made it better?

All: Yeah.

(Interview February 15, 1990, Period 5, Marshview High)

Hatfield: We had talked yesterday about how Blacks were represented in the film, and whether or not Whites were represented in the film. I had a question about whether AIDS was represented in the film. What did you think of this film compared to the one you saw before?

Male: It was better.

Hatfield: It was better. In what respect, Mark?

Male: It was more together.

Hatfield: It was more together.

Female: Like the other one, it had scrambled up information. But this one, it had how you can get AIDS, by using drugs, sex.

Hatfield: Did you prefer the fact that there were different races in the film? Or did that matter to you? Adam?

Male: It doesn't really matter.

(Interview February 15, 1990, Period 3, Marshview High)

These discussions helped confirm opinions derived from interviews on 'Til Death Do Us Part, that students in this racially integrated school preferred reflections of integrated racial representations in films.

The fact that the leading host/narrator was of African-American and other mixed racial and ethnic heritage was not considered noteworthy in terms of
racial representation in the film. Instead, the students in each class recognized and acknowledged her status as a television and star. Among reactions to the presence of Rae Dawn Chong were the following:

Hatfield: Oh, I know what I want to ask you. What was the name of the person who was the narrator?

Male: Her last name was Chong.

Her last name was Chong. What did she play in?

Female: She played in "Soul Man."

Hatfield: She wasn't on Cosby was she?

All: No.

Hatfield: What was "Soul Man?"

Male: This dude, he wanted to go to Harvard and he couldn't afford college so he took some kind of tanning pills and he was Black.

Hatfield: Ok. Did she catch your attention? The fact that she was the narrator.

Female: Yeah.

Hatfield: How come Alice?

Female: Because I've seen her before. I can say that I've seen her on TV.

Hatfield: Ok, that was one reason, because you recognized her. How did you feel about having her as a narrator, Larry?

Male: She was good.

Hatfield: Mary?

Female: She was ok.
Hatfield: Carey?

Male: Yeah. (Interview February 15, 1990, Period 3, Marshview High)

Hatfield: Oh, I know what I wanted to ask you. Does anyone know the name of the main character? The person who started the film off?

All: Rae Dawn Chong.

Hatfield: What's her first name?

All: Rae.

Hatfield: Do you think that was a good idea using her as the narrator? Did you recognize her right off?

Female: Yes.

Hatfield: Tell me why.

Female: Because we've seen her in movies.

Hatfield: You've seen her in movies. Tell me what movies. Do you recall the names?

Female: Oh, yeah. "Soul Man."

Hatfield: "Soul Man." So did that catch your attention? Do you think that makes a difference to student viewers? Some of you told me, and I know someone in this group told me that you all prefer famous people. Who told me that? Did you tell me that Granger?

Several: All of us did.

Hatfield: Ok, all of you did. Did that make a difference?

Female: I guess it relates more to you if someone has [inaudible]. It's better in getting your point across because it's someone that you can look up to. And you tend to have the same beliefs that they do.
Hatfield: Anyone else? Why do you like having her there?

Male: If a star says it, you would take their word. If a nobody says it, then you know your friends will pay no attention to it.
(Interview February 15, 1990, Period 3, Marshview High)

Based on the above discussions, the race of the selected speaker or voice of authority in the film was not considered important; instead, stardom and name recognition were significant to the students.

Students at Marshview read instructional messages clearly and recognized factual omissions in the film text. Instructional messages in this film were straightforward and the students grasped them easily. All groups understood the significance of the film's main theme that AIDS is hard to get except by unprotected sex without a condom, and through intravenous drug injections with shared needles, as indicated below:

Hatfield: So do you all think that this film had a message that had an impact on all the students? What would be the main message that you got from the film, each of you. Let's go around the table.

Female: That getting AIDS is hard to get.

Hatfield: Okay.

Female: And if you're going to have sex, you should use protection.
Hatfield: Ok, Carey, if you're going to have sex you should use protection.

Female: Stop using needles after people.

Hatfield: Stop using needles. Larry, what was your message?

Male: Having safe sex.

Hatfield: Having safe sex was your message. What was yours Ana?

Female: Don't engage in sex, don't use drugs, and needles or any of that?

Hatfield: And if you do engage?

Female: If you do engage, use condoms.

(Interview February 15, 1990, Period 3, Marshview High School)

Considering the above statements, it is noteworthy that in many instances the instructional messages were internalized as negative instructions directing students what not to do rather than enabling language that would direct positive actions toward safe sex and good health.

Many students already possessed other factual knowledge about AIDS that was covered in the film, and demonstrated these understandings in discussions about transmission of the HIV through contaminated blood transfusions, vaginal or anal intercourse, homosexual and bisexual contacts, and transfer of the virus from a pregnant female to her child. Students also
recognized the omissions in the film that they wished to have answered including the ways that AIDS might be transmitted through exchanges of body fluids such as kissing, perspiration and sharing food in which saliva would be exchanged. These were similar to questions raised while viewing the previous film, 'Til Death Do Us Part, and illustrated how students as a viewing audience brought their own lived experiences into the classroom with questions that pertained to their personal needs for information on the subject matter. Despite the cited omissions, however, students described the film as more insightful, factual and informative than the previous film.

Marshview students were repulsed by the realism of authentic intravenous drug messages in the film text. The scene that all groups expressed as most impressive was the one that showed shared intravenous drug injections between two youth. Rae Dawn Chong's introduction to the scene as being authentic, with faces of the drug users shielded, served to increase students' interest and intensify their reactions. Indeed, this scene created the greatest tension, repulsion and fearful responses from the students.
Students elaborated on their reactions to this scene during interviews as follows:

Hatfield: What about the scene where it showed the kids shooting up? Remember that part? Did it have any impact on you? Was that a good scene for the producers to have done, Ana?

Female: Personally, I would have preferred not to have seen it. But I [inaudible]

Hatfield: Okay, so you would have preferred not to see it. But by looking at it, it made you realize you wouldn't want to do it that way. Okay, Karen.

Female: It's the same thing. I wouldn't shoot up because you can easily get anything from shooting up.

Hatfield: Ok, Karen, thank you. Alice?

Female: Well, it looks nasty.

Hatfield: It looks nasty. Do you think that was effective? Do you think that was a good way for them to have done that scene if they were doing a film for students. And tell me particularly why. Alice, you're shaking your head.

Female: Because you really see it. Instead of talking about it, you really get to see it. (Interview February 15, 1990, Period 2, Marshview High)

Male: It took you to the parts where they shoot up with needles.

Hatfield: What did you think of that scene, Mickey? You kind of went "ugh," what does that mean?

Female: It was gross, icky.

Hatfield: It was gross, icky. Any other descriptions of that scene? Do you think it kind
of had any other impact on people that watched it. On the viewer?

Male: Yeah.

Hatfield: Tell me about that.

Male: In order to do drugs you have to stick your own self with a needle.

Hatfield: Do you think that would inhibit people?

Male: Yeah.

Hatfield: Do you think that scene would have stopped them?

Female: Yeah.

Hatfield: Why do you think that scene would have stopped them?

Female: Because they're scared of needles.

(INTERVIEW FEBRUARY 15, 1990, PERIOD 3, MARSHVIEW HIGH)

Hatfield: Sandy, the first thing you said to me were about the needles. What about that scene? I was watching reactions to that scene with the needles.

Female: I don't like needles.

Hatfield: You don't like needles. You said you thought it was gross.

Female: Yeah, the blood coming out.

Hatfield: The blood coming out. Anybody else? Leone, we were talking about the needle scene. What did you think about that one, where they actually showed the kids shooting.

Female: Well, I think it was examples to show people what could really happen with the blood and all of that. I think it's a good example
even though it do look gross. But, it might scare somebody. (Interview February 15, 1990, Period 5, Marshview High)

The drug injection scene also further stimulated discussion and provided more insight into student's interest, knowledge and use of drugs in the community and at Marshview High, for example:

Hatfield: And in terms of drugs, do you think that kids your age at this school or other schools [sic] use the kind of drugs that you saw in the film or what?

Female: The majority of them don't shoot up. That's not the kind of problem.

Hatfield: That's not the kind of problem. You mentioned to me that drugs are a problem among young people. Then what are the problems?

Several: Smoking weed.

Hatfield: Smoking weed. Ok.

Male: Sniffing.

Hatfield: Ok. Sniffing. Is crack the same as sniffing cocaine?

Male: No, it's like smoking. (Interview February 15, 1990, Period 2, Marshview High)

Male: I would have shown different drugs than shooting up.

Hatfield: Would have shown different drugs other than shooting up?

Male: Yeah, because mostly people around here don't shoot up. (Interview February 15, 1990, Period 3, Marshview High School)
These comments from students contradicted a basic assumption of the film that urban school youth are experimenting with intravenous drugs, but the interviews confirmed that other forms of drug use are common or at least well known among students. These discussions also confirmed suspicions of the assistant principal, school nurse, several health and physical education teachers, and the counselor that drugs were being used by students and trafficked in the community. These revelations contradicted the principal's earlier interview statement that there was less drug use by students. Perhaps less obvious forms of drugs are being used by students, but the problem certainly exists and merits more attention in the school.

Students' read testimonial social messages of the film text with empathy toward all AIDS victims. Although the film centered on instructional messages and facts about AIDS, there were complex social issues raised by the film which students recognized also. For example, in the scene with the brother of the homosexual who died of AIDS, the students were receptive and understanding of his feelings, including his crying; however, students in each interview
commented that he distracted them from their empathetic feelings when he became melodramatic at the end of the scene and promised to "punch out" anyone who talked about gays. It was precisely this moment in the scene when students began to laugh during the classroom presentation, which was discussed by two groups of students as follows:

Hatfield: Alright, was it this group that told me yesterday they would prefer some kind of film where you actually interviewed the real people? Did that come out in this group?

Several: Yeah.

Hatfield: You all told me a lot of things yesterday. Alright did that happen in this film? Do you recall who got interviewed?

Female: The man in the bicycle shop.

Hatfield: The man in the bicycle shop. What about him?

Male: His baby brother had AIDS.

Hatfield: His baby brother had AIDS. Why did his baby brother get AIDS.

Several: He was gay. He was homosexual.

Hatfield: Ok, so he was gay; he was homosexual. Was there more to it that was going on in that scene where he was talking?

Female: He was prejudice against gay people and it changed his mind.

Hatfield: Ok, Mickey says he was prejudice against gay people and it changed his mind. What do you think changed his mind?
Several [at once]: The way he acted towards his brother. Because it was down home. They helped his brother.

Hatfield: Ok, it was down home. They helped the brother. Anything else? He cried.

Male: He was hurt that his brother had AIDS.

Hatfield: He was hurt that his brother had AIDS.

Mary, you don't look like you agree that was an emotional scene?

Mary: Yeah, that was emotional, but I don't know the part about punching somebody. I don't think he would do it.

Hatfield: Ok, so you thought that was a little melodramatic, do you think?

Mary: Yeah. (Interview February 15, 1990, Period 3, Marshview High)

Roger: That's the way it really was. I believe he was just feeling it. I don't believe he just planned to cry.

Hatfield: You thought he was really feeling it. Do you think it changed other people's attitude who saw him crying? Other kids in the class?

Roger: Yeah, but they wouldn't show it while he was crying.

Hatfield: Roger, that's interesting. I noticed this while I was watching the film and I was watching the class. I noticed some people went [guffaw] you know? Why would they react that way?

Roger: They probably figured, well he's a guy and he's crying. (Interview February 15, 1990, Period 5, Marshview High)

It is noteworthy that during these discussions of homosexuality, the students were sensitive to the
feelings of the characters and the issues. They were also empathetic towards the other victims of AIDS such as the female who contracted the disease from her boyfriend, the mother of the AIDS baby, and the person who received a contaminated medical blood transfusion.

Marshview students revealed their gendered roles through readings of female representations in dramatized film text. Issues of gendered roles and representations were focused on in the ballet scene with three Caucasian females who discussed the issues of unprotected sex. This scene held the attention of the viewing audience, especially the young women, and the observation was confirmed during interviews with students. While discussing this scene, it was apparent that students had listened quite intently because they could clearly and succinctly recall all of the issues, arguments and characters presented in the scene. Although this scene might have been interpreted as "girl talk," it captured the attention of the male students too, who wished be privy to the young women's thoughts and conversations about them. Additionally, the young women were interested in hearing the points of view of young men, as indicated below:
Hatfield: Were boys and girls treated equal in the film?

Female: No.

Hatfield: They weren't huh? Leona, what do you think?

Female: I didn't see any boys talking.

Hatfield: You didn't see any boys talking. Roger, would you have liked to see boys talking?

Male: Yeah, just to see how they would put it.

Hatfield: The rest of you think the same?

Female: Yes, what their opinion was. It just showed the girls point of view.

Hatfield: And tell me, would the girls have liked the boys talking?

Female: Yeah. You want to know what they think and feel about it.

Hatfield: Min, what about you? Do you think you would have wanted to hear a conversation with the boys and not the girls? And why?

Female: Because I am a girl and I understand what the girls are saying and I'm not a boy. I want to know the point of view from the boys.

(Interview February 15, 1990, Period 5, Marshview High)

Thus, based on the above discussion among African-American, Asian and Caucasian students, it became evident that they all needed more opportunities to share feelings and information about their sexuality. Whereas the racial representation of speakers was not relevant to the students, they were interested in a
balance of gendered voices on the subject. Except for this scene, gender was not raised as an issue in any other discussions of the film.

Marshview students approved of production techniques in the film text, especially testimonials, dramatizations and factual information. The production techniques of this film more closely approached the criteria that students offered as acceptable for instructional films in their earlier discussions related to 'Til Death Do Us Part. They commended the film for being more factual, especially testimonies from AIDS patients. They were oblivious to the musical background as one student typically stated, "I didn't pay any attention to it" (Interview February 15, 1990, Period 2, Marshview High). Students' recommendations for production improvement included the need for more illustrated factual information the inner workings of AIDS on the body.

In summary, this film characterized the dominant elements of contemporary instructional media productions that students expected to experience in the classroom. The variety of racially represented characters appealed to these students as a reflection
of the school's racially integrated population. During the discussions, students were alert to being racially polite which seemed to reflect the school's culture as demonstrated in the halls and classrooms. This was a racial culture that appeared outwardly polite, but rather distant and subdued in personal relationships.

Students were familiar with the codes and conventions that constructed the film. This was a relatively open text, and students were able read the social and instructional messages easily. Students accepted the dominant instructional messages articulated by "do's" and "don'ts" spoken by Rae Dawn Chong's voice of authority. In the scene where the producers attempted to gain empathy for the plight of homosexuals, the audience maintained social tension and resistance to the message, but yielded somewhat to the idea that homosexuals who have AIDS should be treated with dignity and respect. Students were more resistant to the intravenous drug shooting scene because they considered it offensive, and did not relate this kind of behavior to their own lived cultural and social experiences. However, students did reveal the presence of other drugs in their
culture with familiarity that indicated it was a social and health issue to be dealt with immediately and not ignored in the school.

In conclusion, this film appealed more to the students at Marshview High School than 'Til Death Do Us Part. Its greatest appeal was through its production techniques, especially the testimonials and dramatizations. The film did offer some opportunities to gain insight into the needs, interests and health concerns of students. Yet, this film could not be considered liberatory or transformative in the students' lives, because it merely funneled messages into the text which were accepted by students.

Harriet Tubman High School

Students' Readings and Responses to 'Til Death Do Us Part

Description of Students Viewing the Film in the Classroom

Students viewed this film in a classroom language laboratory. Again, the classroom was overcrowded and Miss Jordan had to seek out additional chairs from nearby classes, placing them along the back and side walls to accommodate all students. When the film began, students were poised as usual to take notes,
but few actually took notes during the viewing of this film. Several students stated that they saw this film the previous year. Miss Jordan confirmed that the film had been shown to large groups of students in the gymnasium during the last school year. This previous experience might have biased some initial audience responses during the film viewing.

Students appeared less attentive while viewing this film, compared with other films they had been observed viewing in the classroom. Their inattention was manifested by whispered personal conversations, giggling and bored gazes around the classroom. Derisive laughter often punctuated the classroom throughout the film viewing, particularly during the scenes that involved (1) the opening rap musical song and dance; (2) the commercials; and (3) the youngsters' banishment into hell. In one class, a frustrated student yelled out "stupid" during the hell scene which depicted the AIDS Siren punishing the characters. In another class, three male students emitted loud boring yawns, and a female student dramatically threw up her arms as a sign of frustration at the ending of the hell scene. Solemnity was partially maintained only during the
scenes that involved the funeral and the death of the baby. Miss Jordan did not interrupt or reprimand students for their inattentive behavior or talking during this film viewing, a significant contrast to her usual strict classroom manner. Later Miss Jordan confided that she did not care for this film because it was rather contrived and did not contain any factual information. Thus, it might be inferred that the students' initial reactions to the film also reflected and reproduced the value placed on factual instructional knowledge attested to by Miss Jordan's instructional practices in the classroom. Their prior knowledge of the film did not impede lively participation in the interviews and discussions following the film showing, however.

Results of Group Interview Sessions with Students

In the introduction to this chapter, it was explained that analysis of group interview sessions with students focused on categories of (1) racial representations; (2) gender representations; (3) instructional messages; (4) social messages; and (5) production techniques used in the film. In this section, these categories were developed into salient
themes in relation to students readings and responses to the film, 'Til Death Do Us Part.

Harriet Tubman High School students resisted exclusive African-American racial representations in the film text. Students largely responded with oppositional and resistant readings to racial representations in this film. They were keenly aware of racial stereotyping in media as well as society, and considered this film reflective of negative images of African-Americans, characterized as follows:

Female: Then they portrayed too many Blacks.

Hatfield: Alright, too many Blacks. You all didn't tell me about that. I was waiting.

Male: All that rapping and singing, like that's all Blacks could do.

Female: Like in the other movie, they had Whites.

Female: They had mixed and everybody.

Females: They had Hispanics you know.

Male: Yeah, everybody.

Female: This film, it was just all Black.

Male: Umhuh.

Female: They made it less interesting.

Hatfield: That made it less interesting?

Male: They had a Black lady that was pregnant for a junkie.
Hatfield: Okay. Go on, Larry.

Male: Because its showing that Black people only use drugs, and its affecting babies.
(Interview March 15, 1990, Period 2, Harriet Tubman High School)

Hatfield: Tell me this, what about the fact that this was an all Black cast?

Female: It probably interested more people to look at the film probably.

Female: It makes no difference if it was an all Black cast. It would have been better if it was mixed. (Interview March 15, 1990, Period 3, Harriet Tubman High School)

Thus, students opposed a basic assumption of this film's producers that an exclusive African-American cast of actors would appeal to the same racial viewing audience. These students were keenly aware and resistant to the perpetuation of racial prejudices and stereotypes directed toward African-Americans. Thus, the dancing, singing and socially deviant behaviors performed by African-Americans in the film created meaning based on their own social experiences and historical knowledge of a hegemonic ideology that negatively portrays African-Americans in media and society.

Some of the students' social stereotyping from academic and class perspectives became apparent as we discussed the appropriate student audiences for this
film. Students were insightful about meeting the instructional needs and interests of diversified social and cultural audiences in the selection of instructional media. Yet, the students from Harriet Tubman High stereotyped students from other predominant African-American inner city schools, and targeted them as more appropriate social and academic audiences for this film, as illustrated in the following dialogue:

Hatfield: What would you recommend to me in terms of selecting audiences for this film? Would you suggest that I take it to a school where they have Black, White, and Asian students? I just left [Marshview High], for example. . . .

Female: I figure all of them.

Female: I know. First of all, I would visit the school to see the type of environment these students have lived in or whatever. Because if you go to a school like [name of an inner city school], that school is kind of bad and a lot of students like to listen to a lot of rap music there. So I probably would bring the film about rap. And like if you come here or somewhere, its kind of hard because there are also people that listen to rap and also other kinds of music so its kind of hard. I would first try to visit the school first to see what type of students they are.

Hatfield: Any other comments on it? What do you think James, you're laughing?

Male: I'm laughing because I think she sums it all up.
Hatfield: So you all are in agreement on that. (Interview, March 15, 1990, Period 3, Harriet Tubman High School)

The above remarks reflected the social and racial stereotypes that were often produced by local mass media concerning inner city schools in this metropolitan area. Thus, the students at Harriet Tubman High were influenced by these negative perceptions of inner city schools that had lower academic achievement, lower socio-economic profiles and many other social problems. Significantly, the type school mentioned was the next one that would be visited for this study. Indeed, these students' remarks stimulated even greater interest in the next school, and signaled that this study was heading in the right direction for obtaining multiple social and cultural perspectives on students' readings and responses to the same films.

Harriet Tubman students criticized the film for absence of "straight up" instructional messages. Students were not impressed by the instructional messages of the film. In fact, students criticized the film for not containing sufficient factual information as indicated by the remarks below:
Female: I thought it was pretty amusing, but it didn't tell us as much as the other film.

Male: I think that yesterday's film was better than this one because it had more details. It dug in deep. (Interview March 15, 1990, Period 2, Harriet Tubman High School)

Male: Really, I'd rather sit down and watch a serious movie and listen to some actual facts about AIDS rather than have to pick it out in the rap and have to listen to the rap, something you have to really concentrate on too much.

Female: It's like basically this film is kind of like I consider childish because you have to rap to us in order for us to understand. Why can't they just come out straight with the facts and just tell us what is going on.

Hatfield: So, what you are saying is, yesterday you all saw one that was straight with the facts.

Female: And, yesterday they had examples of the people who had AIDS and stuff, telling us how to prevent it and stuff. (Interview March 15, 1990, Period 3, Harriet Tubman High School)

Based on the above reactions by students, not only was there dissatisfaction and frustration expressed about the paucity of information contained in the film, but there was acknowledgement of a curricular funnel approach to the transfer of instructional knowledge operating in this classroom and perhaps in the school. Students were attuned to receiving quantities of information directly or verbatim from the teaching medium, whether a teacher or a film, but they were less experienced with
interpreting abstract or symbolic messages in media texts.

Students quickly grasped the film's instructional messages concerning the spread of AIDS through intravenous drugs, and its prevention of transmission by sexual abstinence or the use of condoms. In one group discussion, the transfer of the HIV virus became an item of stimulating debate as follows:

Male: The dude said, "I should have used a condom."

Female: "I shouldn't have shared that needle."

Female: I guess those were the facts that they were giving.

Hatfield: Okay.

Female: They were trying to tell children what to do and what not to do.

Male: But a condom don't prevent AIDS, right? That's what I hear on TV.

Female: It gives you a better chance of not getting AIDS.

Hatfield: That's what you hear on tv? What TV; what show?

Male: It was on Oprah Winfrey one time. It was on Phil Donahue. You know they say that condoms can't prevent AIDS because the [inaudible]

Hatfield: The facts are that its recommended. The the safest thing available right now to prevent it is by using a condom. And the point that you are making is a good one, because there are different kinds. There are latex ones made
of rubber and then there are those made of animal skin. And the AIDS virus is so small [interrupted]. Yes, made of lambs skin; so it's more like someone's skin. And the virus itself is so small that it has been a theory that it can pass through it. And so one of the recommendations now is that you use a latex one, because it's less porous than the skin kind.

Male: I heard that the first condoms made were the best ones. They were made back in Roman times. The Romans use to kill their enemies. They use to cut their arm open and use the tissues around their muscles. I guess that's where they got the name Trojan from.

Hatfield: That's really an interesting fact.

Female: I think they should talk about that more on television. That you can get AIDS even it you wear a condom. They should persuade children to use certain kinds of condoms, instead of just saying just use a condom. They should tell them certain kinds of condoms to use. (Interview March 15, 1990, Period 3, Harriet Tubman High School)

The above discussion demonstrated that although a film might not contain lists of factual information, the instructional messages embedded in the film can stimulate greater depths of discussion and even motivate students toward new directions in their own research of the subject matter. In addition, such films can challenge students to question information and acquire knowledge for their own liberatory purposes.
Harriet Tubman High School students were suddenly engaged with coded signs and symbols of social messages in the film's text. Students responded extensively to the social messages of the film. They easily interpreted the social significations of coded signs and symbols used in the film, such as the rainbow, picket fence, flowers, and baseball hat. The rainbow was interpreted as a futuristic symbol of happiness; the white picket fence depicted love, marriage and peace; and the painted flowers represented happiness. Although students earlier laughed at some of the costumes as outdated, they recognized the bow ribbon and biker shorts as significations of the characters' youth and innocence. Some students referred to the baseball cap worn by the male star as a biker cap, and interpreted the USA symbol in several different perspectives: the threat of AIDS in America, a good luck charm, and contemporary stylish attire. Thus, once the students became involved in discussing some of the more aesthetic and symbolic elements of the film, they were more communicative, creative and actively engaged in the film's social messages, and less concerned about the paucity of factual knowledge.
Students at Harriet Tubman High also read the social messages of this film in religious and moral contexts of temptation, punishment, hell and just retribution. The AIDS Siren was referred to as evil and a devil, as well as the symbolic embodiment of AIDS; but she was not given a racial identity. Students viewed the commercial segments as temptations of sex and drugs that would result in just retributions of punishment, hell and damnation. Yet, there was some confusion by students in distinguishing among the social codes, signs and symbols, moral messages and factual information concerning AIDS in the commercial vignettes. For example, several student confused the symbolism between consumerism and toothpaste with kissing and the transmission of AIDS; and similar questioning occurred on the subject of the edible underwear and pantyhose, as follows:

Hatfield: What about the scene that occurred where you had the rappers and the commercials. Or were they commercials?

Female: I don't know what the pantyhose had to do with the toothpaste. I guess he was trying to persuade her to have sex.

Hatfield: Talk to me about that one. I've heard a lot of opinions about that one.

Female: When I first heard it, I thought it was really stupid, talking about pantyhose.
Female: I guess they were trying to persuade her to buy something, like Closeup [toothpaste]. All they showing there is kissing and what does this have to do with Closeup?

Male: You can't catch AIDS from kissing, so why they had the sexy toothpaste commercial?

Hatfield: So what was the message?

Female: I thought they were trying to persuade her to buy a product. It's like they were trying to persuade her to have sex or take drugs. It was like if she was easily persuaded to buy toothpaste and licorice drawers.

Hatfield: So, you thought they were tempting her. Any other thoughts on that? Did anyone else think that was going on in that scene?

Female: I guess they feel that if they were easily persuaded to buy that certain brand of toothpaste or certain brand of stockings that they would be easily persuaded to take drugs. (Interview March 15, 1990, Period 3, Harriet Tubman High School)

This initial confusion by students in reading the film's social messages was indicative of their inexperience with symbolic metaphors and significations in film texts. Yet, as these discussions developed, students began to think more critically and abstractly, and began to evolve toward an understanding of the underlying messages regarding advertising, persuasion and social behavior. These conversations with students revealed a need for
educators to direct more attention toward media literacy and criticism in all curricula subject areas.

The role of the infant in the death scene was a focal point for students' responses to the film's pervasive social messages concerning death, victimization, decision-making, persuasion, temptation, and children's welfare in society. Among students' responses to this scene were the following:

Hatfield: Next you went into the hell scene, when she said, "Come into my hands." Okay, what was that all about?

Female: They had them taking drugs and they had AIDS. And they were showing how she was calling them.

Male: Since they took drugs, they knew they were going to die.

Hatfield: Right after that scene, you had the scene where the funeral was going on. Remember when she said, "No, not my baby." How did you react to that scene?

Female: I felt kind of bad, the baby dying real young with no future ahead at all, because of his mother. (Interview March 15, 1990, Period 3, Harriet Tubman High School)

Hatfield: And then the final scene, when she said, "Rise and come to me."

Female: She was calling up all those people, and explaining and everything.

Hatfield: What did that mean? You remember when one said, "I was just looking for love?"

Female: That's how they got hurt.
Hatfield: She said, "In all the wrong places." When he said, or one said, "I should have waited." And I can't remember what she replied to that one. And then one said, "I shouldn't have shared that needle." And one said, "I should have used a condom." And one said, "I'll never dance again." What was going on in that scene?

Male: They were saying what went wrong.
Female: They were saying what they regretted.

Male: Cause they got AIDS.

Hatfield: So they were regretting it, huh? Okay, and then she said, "Bring the baby to me." What [about] that part?

Female: She was trying to figure out what was going to be the future, like we were talking about before.

Hatfield: She held him up, remember, "And what could [voice emphasis] he have been?"

Female: He's gonna die, cause he had AIDS just like the mother.

Female: That means he can't grow up, to be, you know.

Male: To be anything.

Female: He'll die from AIDS cause she had AIDS.

Female: End of his life. (Interview March 15, 1990, Period 2, Harriet Tubman High School)

Harriet Tubman High School students read negative female representational roles within the film text. In the above discussion, students blamed the mother for the infant's death; yet they did not consider the
father's role at all in contributing to the infant's death. They treated the infant's death from the medical aspect of the disease being transferred from mother to child. The role of the father was not considered and thus appeared inconsequential in this discussion. Thus, the students' responses to the young woman's maternal role in the film revealed a matriarchal ideological reading that reflected the "Eve syndrome" and blamed the mother when things went wrong.

Thus, gender was integral to students' readings of social messages in the film. Discussions focused more on the roles of females rather than males. While the father's paternal role in this theme of tragedy and death was hardly mentioned, the mother's role in transmitting the disease to her child was considered blameworthy in causing its suffering and early death. These connotations of the young mother's role were also cited in the dialogues pertaining to social messages in the film. Finally, the AIDS siren was viewed in terms of an evil and controlling female. Although students were resistant to racial stereotypes directed toward African-Americans in the film, they were oblivious to issues of gender.
oppression. The question might be posed whether the two-thirds female population of the school contributed to this complacency, or whether the primary emphasis on African-American issues overshadowed concerns for feminist liberation.

Harriet Tubman students resisted exclusive rap music and suggested multiple creative approaches to production techniques. Students' responses to the production techniques of this film focused on the selections of music, dance, and actors. While students appreciated the producers' efforts to incorporate contemporary entertainment styles in the film, they strongly opposed the assumption that rap music and dance would uniquely appeal to them as an African-American student audience, reflected by the following remarks:

Hatfield: What did you think about this one?

Female: I think it was better than the other one, maybe because they had more people our age in it.

Hatfield: Okay, any other opinions?

Female: It was also based on the world today with rap and everything in it and music.

Male: I think that lately in those kinds of movies they try hard to influence us by rap and dance. That's really not something in the top ten of my agenda. No rapping and dancing and...
stuff like that. That really don't put the point across to me like they think it might.
(Interview March 15, 1990, Period 3, Harriet Tubman High School)

Hatfield: We talked a little about the rap. You told me that it was too fast, you couldn't understand it. Yet, some of you told me, or rather some of your classmates told me that if they were doing a film, that they would want the rap.

Female: Yeah.

Hatfield: You were saying that, weren't you?

Male: The rap was what he was trying to say.

Male: I'd rather something more up to date.

Hatfield: Okay. James wants something more up to date. Larry wants a better message, huh? And James said more up to date. What do you mean by more up to date James?

Female: They were rapping faster, but that music wasn't going with that rap. Not for this generation anyway.

Hatfield: What would be more up to date rap then?

Male: What you mean, like names of songs?

Female: Like who.

Hatfield: You'd want a famous rapper? Give me a famous rapper.

Female: Public Enemy.

Male: Yeah.

Hatfield: Public Enemy.

Female: Iced Tea.
Hatfield: Okay. Big Daddy Cane? I've heard some other kids tell me that too. Big Daddy Cane. These are the two they mentioned the most to me, Iced Tea and Big Daddy Cane. They are the more popular ones? So you think in these kinds of films, if you have them, you need really famous people?

Male: You might.

Hatfield: What was the girl's name yesterday that we had in the film?

Female: Rae Dawn Chong.

Hatfield: Yeah. So she was, well, what was the effect of having her? She was famous.

Male: It got your attention.

Female: Yeah, it sure did. (Interview March 15, 1990. Period 2, Harriet Tubman High School)

Thus, students did not totally reject rap music, but they did prefer the inclusion a variety of different forms of contemporary music which they named as pop rock, rhythm and blues, Black music and mellow moods. Indeed, music appealed to this student audience, but students expressed their high expectations for variety and quality entertainment, rather than what they perceived as amateurish in the rap musical performances of the actors in 'Til Death Do Us Part. Students also responded positively to the inclusion of popular television and movie stars such as Rae Dawn Chong. Thus, film productions that seek
to interest this particular audience at Harriet Tubman High School should consider a variety of musical styles and performances by more acclaimed and professional groups. Included also for this audience should be youthful popular star actors as characters who can capture their attention with factual information and social messages incorporated into educational films.

In summary, many students at Harriet Tubman High School, this film represented a departure from the mainstream instructional films that they usually experienced in their classes. They were used to films that presented factual knowledge, but there were few opportunities for imaginative and creative interpretations of social and instructional messages in film media. Once the interview sessions and discussions focused on social, racial and production issues, the students became more engaged in these elements of the film also. Their insights contributed to a more meaningful understanding of the production styles and techniques, as well as the social and instructional content that would appeal to them as African-American student audiences.
Students' Readings and Responses to
Sex, Drugs and AIDS

Description of Students Viewing the Film in the Classroom

Students viewed this film in the school's language laboratory. The classroom was overcrowded, due to the limited number of available seats; therefore Miss Jordan had to borrow folding chairs and additional desks from neighboring classrooms to accommodate students. There were no darkening shades on the windows, so Miss Jordan covered them with black construction paper that she had acquired for that purpose. When the film began, students sat poised to take notes, while they watched attentively.

The most overt student reaction occurred during the scene between a male and female youth intravenously sharing drugs, actually injecting each other in the arm through their veins with a needle. Upon viewing the injection close up, several students in each class reacted with displeasing groans and noises while some students quickly turned their faces away from the screen. In only one class did the mention of anal intercourse result in any obvious negative reactions, again by disapproving mass
audience noises. During the dialogue among the three Caucasian girls in ballet class, most of the students appeared to listen attentively at the beginning of the scene; but a few minutes later into the dialogue, at least three males seemed to become distracted by turning around in their seats, speaking to a neighbor, looking idly around the room and appearing bored. When the AIDS victims presented themselves in testimonial dialogues, the appearance of the young African-American woman with her AIDS infected baby girl created the greatest emotional stir among students. The moment the young mother announced her baby girl's illness to the viewing audience, male and female students could be heard sympathetically murmuring, "Oh, poor little thing;" or "Oh, no!" in reference to the baby's condition.

When the Caucasian young man spoke of his brother who died from AIDS, students listened attentively. While he told his story, at least two to three male and female viewers in each class appeared to disengage themselves from the scene by idly looking around the room or chatting with a neighbor. This reaction might be considered a form of resistance or oppositional response by students.
Students regained attention when the character stated he thought it weird for "guys to get it on with other guys;" however, silent concentration broke into derisive laughter when the brother threatened to "punch out" anyone who talked about homosexuals or called them "fags." In one class, when this scene ended, a student who had remained focused and attentive during the scene, gave a sigh of relief and exclaimed out loud, "That was good!" (March 13, 1990, Period 3, Harriet Tubman High). During the remainder of the film, there were no other discernible reactions to the film, except for students' occasional note taking while factual information was being narrated.

Results of Group Interview Sessions with Students

In the introduction to this chapter, it was explained that analysis of group interview sessions with students focused on categories of (1) racial representations, (2) gender representations, (3) instructional messages, (4) social messages, and (5) production techniques used in the film. In this section, these categories were developed into salient themes in relation to students' readings and responses to the film, Sex, Drugs, and AIDS, as presented below.
Harriet Tubman students read "straight up" instructional messages, but wanted more facts about AIDS. During interviews, students stated that they appreciated straightforward discussions about sex and prophylactic protection against AIDS, but this film contributed few new facts to their repertoire of information about the disease. They expressed an interest in more information about the origins of the AIDS, clinical tests for the HIV virus, experiences of AIDS patients and their families, medical opinions on prevention and treatment, and scientific graphic illustrations and explanations. It was evident that these students valued factual data in their attainment of instructional knowledge through film media. This position was illustrated by one young woman who stated the following:

I want the film to be straight up with us so that we can know what to look for. Because you know if you're trying to be funny and stuff, it really doesn't sink in what [they're] trying to say. But if you're being straight up like the way Rae Dawn Chong was, it sinks in and you listen better. (Interview March 13, 1990, Period 3, Harriet Tubman High)

In another class, a student suggested that there should be a summary test on the facts at the end of the film (Interview March 13, 1990, Period 2,
Harriet Tubman High). Such responses may be considered indicative of the school's competitive college preparatory culture, where facets of factual knowledge are highly valued and measured by normative tests and grades that require positivistic evidence of instructional achievement and success.

While students focused on gleaning factual information from the film, they were still quite capable of producing oppositional readings to messages that were contradictory to their own social values and cultural beliefs. This was evident in students' responses to the basic tenet of the film that AIDS is hard to get, except through unprotected sex and intravenous drug use. Although this theme was repeated and illustrated throughout the entire film, students were not wholly convinced as reflected in the following statements:

Female: Because if I knew someone that had AIDS, it wouldn't be easy for me to say, "Come on let's play," you know. Come sleep by my house. No. You want to drink out of this cup? (Interview March 13, 1990, Period 1, Harriet Tubman High School)

Female: I wouldn't go near an AIDS victim. (Interview March 13, 1990, Period 2, Harriet Tubman High School)
These responses and similar ones illustrated that film messages cannot merely be coded and transmitted to expediently change attitudes and beliefs in student viewers; rather, meanings may be created, opposed or negotiated based on viewers' social and cultural histories, backgrounds and experiences.

In each class, students expressed curiosity about the origins of AIDS, demonstrating that they were aware of some of the racial myths on the subject with respect to countries of African racial and cultural heritage. Students' social and political inquiries formulated on this issue were illustrated as follows:

Female: But what scares me the most is that no one has a cure, no one knows how it got started, so how can we know that is true that you can get it from certain things?

Hatfield: What about that? Some of you said that in your papers too. Did any of you have any thoughts about it? Or have you heard any myths about how it got started or where?

Female: It got started in Africa.

Hatfield: Okay, what do you think about that?

Female: I thought it got started in Haiti.

Hatfield: Okay, you heard Haiti. You heard Africa. Any other ideas on how it got started?

Female: I heard Europe. Like a boy went to Europe and he brought it over here.
Several: [Laughter]

Female: I don't understand how they can have a disease and no one knows how it started, or it just came one day and somebody just had AIDS. It's not nothing like everybody knows that you have a cold and you know a cold's been around for a long time. How can a new disease just pop up? What happened before AIDS was out? (Interview March 13, 1990, Period 2, Harriet Tubman High School)

During discussions such as the above, students revealed intellectual curiosity that exceeded the usual depth of information contained in most instructional films on the subject of AIDS. These students' challenges to gaps of instructional knowledge might be viewed as oppositional responses to the film's omissions or evidence of the film's silent curriculum. Such challenges by students should be considered in the construction of lesson plans as well as and film productions to assure the inclusion of information that would be meaningful and enriching to students from diversified racial, social and political perspectives.

Testimonials and dramatizations about AIDS were effective social and instructional messages in the film text. The scenes that constructed dramatizations and testimonials were considered the most socially and instructionally informative to students, and resulted
in some of their most insightful social readings and responses to the film. The scenes that stimulated the most discussion concerning social issues related to AIDS were those that centered around (1) the three young women at ballet school who were engaged in a conversation about sex and prevention of the transmission of AIDS; (2) the sharing of drugs through intravenous injections; (3) the testimony by the brother of the homosexual AIDS victim; and (4) the appearance of the African-American young woman with an HIV infected child. These same scenes were mentioned earlier with respect to overt student reactions during the initial classroom presentations.

Concerning the scene that featured three young women in a conversation about protection from sexual transmission of AIDS, students focused more on interpersonal issues of sexual decision-making rather than the health issues. In each interview group, students considered this scene more engaging in its discussions about roles and relationships with boyfriends, and decisions about becoming involved in sexual relations, as illustrated below:

Hatfield: Okay, let's talk about the girl talk scene. Remember that scene where you had the
girls talking? Was it an effective scene? Did it help you to think?

Female: Yes, in a way because if your friends need some advice, you know what girls will usually do is they will talk about it, and they made a lot of sense. But you know one of them didn't look like she was really using her head, you know, talking about she didn't want to use the condom.

Hatfield: Which one was that?

Several: That was the one with the short hair.

Female: She thought that birth control was sufficient.

Hatfield: She was having sex, right, but she used the pill.

Female: She didn't really know that the condom could help her.

Female: She felt if he didn't want to use the condom he'd walk out. She was so worried about him walking out. Let him walk out.

Hatfield: Okay, so that one really kind of had some messages in it. You had that one, then you had the one with the long hair. What about her?

Female: She was confused. Somebody needed to talk to her. She was trying to force herself into something.

Hatfield: What did they need to tell her?

Female: She wasn't ready. She was forcing herself into it.
Hatfield: Okay, so she wasn't ready. What do you think she's going to decide?

Several: She's just going to do it to see how it is. (Interview March 13, 1990, Period 3, Harriet Tubman High School)

Reflecting on this scene, the students were quite specific in their discussions of the social and health issues that were treated in the dialogue, recalling exact nuances of the conversation and quite accurately identifying each character's role. Perhaps, this scene was so engaging to students because they considered pregnancy and contraception their major concern in the context of social problems and pressures experienced among them at their school, much more than AIDS. The fact that the young women in this dramatization were Caucasian did not seem to distract from the students' engagement or identities with the characters, nor the social messages that they communicated. Male students did not contribute to this part of the discussion, but they appeared to listen intently to their female peers, as though they were trying to understand the female perspective on this issue. This film technique was considered so effective, that in each class, the young women said that they would like to eavesdrop on similar scenes.
with young men so that they could get their male peers' social perspectives on the topics of sex and contraception.

The scene that featured two young people shooting up and sharing intravenous drugs succeeded in transmitting a negative social message about this form of drug use among teenagers. Responses to this scene are illustrated below:

Hatfield: Now what about the shooting up scene? I heard "huh, yuk" and everything.

Female: I can't understand how they can do it. It seems like they don't think about the consequences.

Female: All they want to do is get high. And then later they wonder if she had AIDS or something like that.

Hatfield: So that one had impact. Is that the kind of thing that, when they showed that scene, in terms of how kids really relate? Do you really think that it had any impact on kids?

Female: Yeah. Because once you look at it. It makes you think twice about doing it. (Interview March 13, 1990, Period 3, Harriet Tubman High)

Hatfield: Okay, now there was something else I wanted to ask you about. What about the shooting up scene? Do you all remember that? Okay. I heard people [inaudible], some turned their heads. Tell me about that one? Was that an effective scene?

Female: It made me not want to shoot up drugs.

Hatfield: Okay, it made you not want to. And what else?
Female: Some cases, people they don't have to use drugs, but people who have diabetes they have to, but it's not necessarily shooting up, but I don't think if I had diabetes, I could not shoot a needle in my arms everyday.

Female: But, if you have diabetes you have to.

Female: Yes, but still in all, I feel, well, you know if you do something for a long period of time. . . . But the thought of it is disgusting. (Interview March 13, 1990, Period 2, Harriet Tubman High School)

Hatfield: What else do you think they were reacting to?

Female: The drugs.

Hatfield: The drug idea.

Female: Needles. I hate needles.

Hatfield: It was needles for you. Was it the social scene for anybody else? That it was social, do you think that is something that is here, in terms of students here or other students? Do you think that scene was really meaningful, the shooting up scene? Is that one of the scenes that your classmates would be really concerned about? What are the aspects of AIDS that they would have greatest concerns?

Female: The sexual part.

Hatfield: Okay, the sexual part.

Female: I don't think a lot of students our age shoot up. If they do, they're not at school, so I don't think that would affect them.

Hatfield: So, you don't think that would be the problem of high school kids or kids at [name of school].
Female: I think they should know, but I don't think it's a problem. (Interview March 13, 1990, Period 2, Harriet Tubman High School)

The above responses indicated that these students did not participate or even experience first-hand knowledge of the intravenous drug culture in their school or lived social environments. This conclusion was substantiated in earlier interviews with the principal, Mrs. Cooper, who stated that she had no evidence of intravenous drug activity at the school, although there had been incidents of alcohol consumption, and ingestion of illegal pills (Interview March 13, 1990, Harriet Tubman High). The inclusion of this scene in the film was successful in discouraging intravenous drug use among students, and their reactions demonstrated their revulsion to this form of drug consumption in general.

In scenes where partners were HIV carriers, students were responsive and reactive to the social messages of the actors. The scene with the African-American young woman garnered the greatest emotional reactions and sympathetic responses to the baby's situation. The social message that students read from this scene was that young women should know and ask about young men's sexual practices and background
before having sex with him. The same reaction was
given to the Caucasian female who had acquired HIV
from her partner, and did not know whether it was
because he was a promiscuous heterosexual or bisexual.
Less sympathetic responses were given to the male
Caucasian who was unsure of how he acquired the
disease but acknowledged sleeping around. These
scenes complemented the students' readings of
instructional messages from the film, that individuals
should take responsibility for their own sexuality and
use condoms to assure protection from AIDS. For
example, when questioned about Rae Dawn Chong's
refrain that there's no one to blame but the virus,
several students opposed her statement as follows:

Female: I don't really agree with that because
people should take precautions and they should
take heed or something. (Interview
March 13, 1990, Period 3, Harriet Tubman High
School)

Female: The virus can't just jump on you.
(Interview March 13, 1990, Period 3,
Harriet Tubman High School)

Female: It seems that the best way that you can
just stay away from AIDS is to have abstinence.
Leave drugs alone and you'll fair out pretty
good. (Interview March 13, 1990, Period 3,
Harriet Tubman High School)

Female: So I don't think that you should stress
much on it's hard to get. You should stress on
how to prevent getting it. (Interview March 13, 1990, Period 2, Harriet Tubman High School)

Thus, the film's messages concerning sexually transmitted diseases and personal sexual decision-making were emphatically and successfully reinforced through social dramatizations. Yet, students did not simply reproduce the messages, as the above dialogues demonstrated that they were quite capable of negotiating the film's discourse to fit into their own experiences and value systems.

There were mixed reactions to the topic of homosexuality as presented in the scene with the young man whose brother died of AIDS. In two classes the students responded with preferred readings of the social messages embedded in the films that were sympathetic to the issues of homosexuality, illustrated by comments below:

Female: I felt that the man whose brother had AIDS was different in that he learned a lesson from it.

Female: He used to talk about them. He showed that he learned not to judge people just because they were different from them.

Hatfield: He was different in that he learned a lesson from it, huh. Had you ever seen any film that had a victim like that before?

Female: No.
Hatfield: Did it change your attitude about people like his brother?

Female: A little. That you can't be afraid. (Interview March 13, 1990, Period 2, Harriet Tubman High School)

Hatfield: Okay, alright, tell me this, we didn't talk about the bicycle shop. Did we talk about the bicycle shop?

Several: Yeah.

Hatfield: The guy talking about his brother. Did it seem realistic to you?

Several: Yeah.

Hatfield: It didn't seem phoney?

Several: No.

Female: I was about to cry. Looking at all that anger he was going through.

Hatfield: Amy, you were about to cry. Betty, you said you weren't going to cry.

Female: Because he didn't look like he was about to cry. It just looked like he was saying all of this.

Hatfield: Did he look angry?

Female: Not from where I was sitting at.

Female: He never noticed how bad it was until it hit home. (Interview March 13, 1990, Period 3, Harriet Tubman High School)

Considering the above responses, it remained problematic as to why male and female students laughed consistently at the same point, during the episode when the young man exclaimed that he would "punch out"
anyone who made fun of homosexuals. Students explained that they reacted that way because his response was "phony." This scene also demonstrated students' resentment toward homosexuals, as well their fears of other victims of AIDS, as illustrated below:

Hatfield: You know what I noticed, I noticed that one or two people kind of laughed at that scene. Can you give me some insight into why did they think it was funny? Why do you think they might have laughed at it? Was it phoney at all, or how did you feel about it?

Female: I guess if that was his brother and all. You know you shouldn't be scared of people that had AIDS. If that was my brother, I would be kind of scared of him, you know just the fact he had AIDS. I would still be kind of scared of him, even though that was my brother. (Interview March 13, 1990, Period 2, Harriet Tubman High School)

Several students [speaking at one time]: No one likes gay people. I know I'm scared of them. I don't want to go close to a gay person. I'm not confused. I just want them to stay away from me.

Female: Because I used to work around two guys that were gay. They were cool. But, that was it, we just worked together. They were just like anybody else.

Hatfield: So why were you scared?

Female: I don't know.

Female: What people do behind closed doors that's their own business. (Interview March 13, 1990, Period 1, Harriet Tubman High School)

Based on students' reactions to this segment of the film, it is deemed important for schools to
include more controversial topics of human sexuality in the Health and Family Living curriculum. The example of this film segment demonstrated that the topic of homosexuality merits attention, and the subject can be effectively presented in relational contexts such as school, family and friends through the film medium.

Thus, the social messages in this film engaged students on issues related to contraceptive protection, personal decision-making, interpersonal relations, and homosexuality. During discussions of these social issues, students were able to relate their concerns to tensions that they were experiencing as adolescents growing up in society. Finally these discussions during interviews were helpful in determining future topics for the selection and evaluation of films that will meet the needs of students confronting these social issues in school and society.

Harriet Tubman students negotiated messages of gender roles and representations in response to the film text. Issues of gender roles and representations in the film text came about through discussions on the matter of gaps or omissions in the film text. There
was general consensus that the only male voices heard in the film concerned homosexuality, as indicated in comments listed below:

Female: I think we had more insight [sic] for us girls than guys. (Interview March 13, 1990, Period 2, Harriet Tubman High School)

Hatfield: In this [film] are men well represented? We talked a little about that.

Several: No.

Hatfield: No, it was mostly women. And when we did see men, what did we get?

Several: Gays. (Interview March 13, 1990, Period 3, Harriet Tubman High School)

In each interview group, female students indicated that they would like to hear a male perspective on heterosexual topics of sexuality. Questions that female students wanted answered for better insight about males were as follows:

Hatfield: What would you want boys to say?

Female: Their point about birth control.

Hatfield: Do you think that would help you to hear that? What would you want to know?

Female: How they feel about it.

Female: If they would use condoms.

Hatfield: Okay, and if they would use condoms.

Female: Does it make a difference? Do they care? (Interview March 13, 1990, Period 1, Harriet Tubman High School)
Hatfield: Do you think the boys were getting the message in that scene? I was kind of watching that.

Several [talking at once]: I don't know what to say about them. The boys you know, they only think about themselves. They don't think about the consequences and what the girl really has to go through. All they want out of it is their enjoyment, thrill.

Hatfield: Do you think it would have been better [sic] if there would have been a scene like that with the boys.

Female: Okay, then what do you think the boys ought to be talking about?

Several [all at once]: They don't think anything. And all they use is a condom.

Female: Talk real, actual. You know how boys sit down and talk?

Female: Because I often wonder what do they talk about. (Interview March 13, 1990, Period 3, Harriet Tubman High School)

It was problematic that during these discussions males did not enter the conversation; yet it was evident that these young men were listening attentively. In previously observed classes, these same young men were involved in classroom activities and discussions, and aggressively kept their hands raised to be called on by the teacher. In later interviews on the second film, these same young men participated in the discussion much more actively. Based on the above observations and discussions,
possible conclusions were that (1) the young men were socially threatened by the subject matter presented in the film, especially since it focused on male contraception and homosexuality; (2) they did not relate to the subject matter due to lack of identity with any of the characters; (3) they were intent on learning more about their female peers perspectives on the subject matter. Since prior observations of male participation in classes indicated that males were quite competitive and comfortable in dialogues with females, it appears that the subject matter as presented in this film was most culpable.

Harriet Tubman students preferred multi-racial representations in this film text on AIDS. Students indicated a preference for multi-racial representation in films. Exclusive African-American representation as a desirable element in the film was clearly rejected by students, as indicated in the dialogue below:

Hatfield: Did it matter to you that the baby was Black? That the girl was Black?
Several: No, not really.
Hatfield: Okay, how did you think race was represented in the film? Was it fair? Was it unfair? Was there other representation?
Female: I don't think that race really mattered. As long as the point is getting it across, it doesn't matter.

Female: AIDS is not prejudice.

Hatfield: What would you think if it were an all Black film?

Female: I think it would take away from the message.

Female: It would have made you feel that only Black people transmit AIDS. (Interview March 13, 1990, Period 3, Harriet Tubman High School)

Based on the above responses and similar ones, it might be inferred that students were quite aware and sensitive to racial stereotyping that is directed toward African-Americans in this society. Yet, they did not consistently carry this logic through to their own unfair prejudices against homosexuals. In reference to race, however, there appeared an underlying belief expressed by students that multi-racial representations in film media texts might operate to deter racial rejection and stereotyping of African-Americans. The remark by a student that AIDS is not prejudiced might be considered a reflection of the students' liberal standpoint that all races should be treated fairly, and equally represented in media as required in a democratic society.
The issue of racial representation was raised earlier in discussions about the origins of AIDS. Students were aware of omissions in the film concerning the origins of AIDS, but their awareness was related to stories in the news media that attributed AIDS to countries of African racial and national heritage. Indeed, this is a topic that students should be allowed to research, discuss and debate. In all subject matter, greater attention should be given to historical perspectives from multiple racial and cultural perspectives. This is especially necessary in conjunction with media presentations, which are characteristically limited by time constraints that often prevent comprehensive coverage of information.

Students at Harriet Tubman introduced their own creative production techniques in a critique of the film's text. Students were questioned about the elements of production that appealed to them in conveying the instructional and social messages of the film. They understood the practice of selecting popular stars such as Rae Dawn Chong as film hostesses and narrators because famous personalities attract students' attention and make the production more
interesting to them. Many students appreciated the fact that popular movie and television stars donated their time and efforts to foster public information on health issues such AIDS. Yet, Rae Dawn Chong's appearance was not particularly inspirational or motivational, and several students were convinced that she was merely reading from a script. Students' responses to the star of the film and her delivery of instructional and social messages were as follows:

Hatfield: Tell me this, who was the main character? The one who opened it? What was her name?

Several: Rae Dawn Chong.

Hatfield: Okay, I knew the last name was Chong. Did it make any difference that she was the main narrator when you saw her?

Female: She made it more interesting.

Hatfield: She made it interesting.

Female: You know, they have stars who do things for AIDS.

Hatfield: Okay, do you think that's effective to use stars?

Female: No, not to me.

Hatfield: Not to you. How many of you think it's effective using stars?

Female: I do because it gets people more interest in the topic. Better than someone, you know, strange and boring.
Hatfield: Okay, so you think it helps to give interest to topics. But why did you say it doesn't matter?

Female: You know they might have had to deal with it and the people around them. But it just seems that they were just relaying information too. They should have had someone who had AIDS or have been closely related to AIDS.

Hatfield: That's interesting. A lot of students have said that.

Female: You don't look at the person's background and what they did at the start. You look at what they are trying to say, what they are trying to get through to you.

Hatfield: Okay, so you think it's really not that important if it is a star, as long as the information is out there.

Several: Yeah. (Interview March 13, 1990, Period 2, Harriet Tubman High School)

Hatfield: What are most of the films like that you see in school? You can just talk out. I'm not looking for right answers. I'm trying to find out what you want in films. Okay.

Female: Well, most of them, you know like that dentist film we saw, they're childish you know, for kids like nine or ten. I want a film to be straight up with us, so that we can know what to look for. Because you know if you're trying to be funny and stuff, it really doesn't sink in what you're trying to say, but if you're being straight up like the way Rae Dawn Chong was, it sinks in and you listen better. (Interview March 13, 1990, Period 3, Harriet Tubman High School)

Hatfield: Do you think it's effective using someone like, what's her first name?

Female: Someone like Rae Dawn Chong? No.
Female: It's like someone just told her what to say and she just said it.

Hatfield: So, you weren't convinced? I like this group.

Several: It was like reading a script. . . .

Hatfield: So, you felt it was kind of like a script?

Female: It's not like someone asked her, "How do you feel about this?"

Hatfield: Why do you think the producers used her then?

Several: Because, she's an actress.

Hatfield: So they thought they would get your attention that way? So, it wouldn't matter to you if you had a big named star?

Several: No.

Female: Because all you're trying to do is get your point across. (Interview March 13, 1990, Period 1, Harriet Tubman High School)

Considering Rae Dawn Chong as a popular star, students were more interested in her genuine point of view on the subject matter rather than her mere appearance on the screen. Similarly, students criticized the characters who portrayed AIDS victims in the dramatizations and testimonials because they did not appear authentic in their representations of reality. Thus, producers of films should consider
credibility and authenticity of actors in films that are presented to student audiences.

Discussions on the elements of the film's production techniques elicited from students their own creative ideas as suggestions for films that would appeal to them. Among students' suggestions were the following: (1) straightforward dialogue; (2) rap music by popular musicians; (3) cartoons; (4) skits; (5) authentic or real victims of disease; (6) family situations dealing with the disease; (7) interviews with families and victims; (8) introduction to the origins of the disease; (9) in-depth medical and scientific explanations; (10) graphics and illustrations; (11) HIV testing; (12) on the street interviews and opinions. These production techniques suggested by students merit consideration in the planning, development, evaluation and selection of films for high school viewing audiences.

In summary, students approached this film from an instructional perspective that emphasized the acquisition of factual knowledge on the subject matter. Their responses reflected the school and classroom culture that placed considerable value on subject matter content. Students were critical of the
limited information contained in the film, and capably delineated the instructional gaps or omissions in the film. Several social messages contained in the film were negotiated or opposed, particularly those related to homosexuality, as well as the film's theme that AIDS was hard to get and no one was the blame for the disease. Despite the film's preferred message of empathy directed toward homosexuals, an ideology of homophobia prevailed in students' responses toward this social group. Race was of secondary importance to the presentation of facts and information, though students preferred racially mixed perspectives and representations in relation to the subject matter. The fact that hostess and narrator Rae Dawn Chong's racial background was African-American was not impressive to this student audience. The film's production techniques were criticized for being limited in creative and instructional presentations of the subject matter. The students' recommendations for future film productions on the subject of AIDS were deemed most noteworthy. In conclusion, this film was only marginally satisfactory but certainly more highly favored than 'Til Death Do Us Part by the students at Harriet Tubman High School.
Gardenia High School

Students' Readings and Responses to 'Til Death Do Us Part

Description of Students Viewing the Film in the Classroom

When 'Til Death Do Us Part opened with the appearance of two adolescent African-American characters in a rap song, the majority of students immediately sat up and focused their attention on the film. In all classes that viewed this film, at no time did more than two or three students turn their attention from the film. Most of the students seemed to enjoy the music as indicated by their body movements in tempo with the rap songs and poetry. Several female students smiled at the romantic love scene between the teenage couple. When the film switched to commercials, students paid attention and laughed out loud. Most laughs occurred during the commercial scene which advertised 357 malt liquor "to put your Mama in the mood." There were guffaws as well as silence when the AIDS siren called the adolescent characters to their deaths. During the death scene with the baby, students became extremely tense and unusually quiet. Finally, several members
of the class could be heard singing along with the theme song "It's Calling Out Your Name" as the film ended with written messages pertaining to abstinence, safe sex and the use of condoms for the prevention of AIDS. This pattern repeated itself in all sampled classes at Gardenia High School.

Results of Group Interview Sessions with Students

In the introduction to this chapter, it was explained that analysis of group interview sessions with students focused on categories of (1) racial representations; (2) gender representations; (3) instructional messages; (4) social messages, and (5) production techniques used in the film. In this section, these categories were developed into salient themes in relation to students' readings and responses to the film, 'Til Death Do Us Part, as presented below.

Exclusive African-American racial and social identities in 'Til Death Do Us Part highly appealed to students at Gardenia High. Among the three schools in this study, the students at Gardenia High were most responsive to exclusive African-American representation in the film. The majority of students welcomed the cast of African-American characters, and
stated that they racially and socially identified with the inner-city setting, character roles, messages, rap music and dance. They concurred with the assumption of the producers that African-American viewing audiences would be more attentive to the messages of the film, if the characters reflected their own race and culture. Some of their responses also indicated an estrangement from Caucasian people and their culture. Finally, students stated that they would welcome more films of this type that featured producers, writers and actors who were racially identified as African-Americans. Students' positions on African-American racial representation in the film were expressed as follows:

Hatfield: This film had an all Black cast. What did you think about that? When you saw it, and you saw that it was all Black, what did you think?

Male: I didn't think anything of it, but it could have been both, Black and White.

Hatfield: Sam said that he didn't think anything about it and that it could have been Black and White. Does anybody have an opinion on that?

Female: I think it was good to be all Black, you know, other Black people will see it and they will know that other Black people who had AIDS were Black, and that they can get it too.

Hatfield: Anne?
Female: I think more Black people listen, you know, when the program is all Black people and they can relate better to them.

Hatfield: Aaron, what did you think about it being all Black people?

Male: I think if it's all Black, they relate to each other, you know if another Black person is telling you. (Interview March 26, 1990, Period 5, Gardenia High School)

Hatfield: What made it different?

Female: It had actors.

Hatfield: What about the actors made it different?

Female: It was an all Black cast.

Hatfield: It was an all Black cast. Do you usually get to see films that have an all Black casts?

Several: No.

Hatfield: Okay, usually you don't, huh. Do you think that made a difference to you?

Several: Yes.

Hatfield: Tell me why.

Female: It helped understand and reflect Black, instead of just reflecting White people.

Hatfield: Very good.

Female: It helped understand better about AIDS.

Hatfield: Do the rest of you have any other feelings about that because it was all Black? When you saw that it was an all Black cast, what did you think?
Male: Then I could understand what they were talking about. When you see just White folk, you think, well that's just White folks' disease, that just they have. You saw that its not just White folks, it's Blacks and other colors.

Hatfield: Okay, so you could really understand it better, huh? Alright, that's true, because when we first started off in the classroom, remember a lot of the students said it was just a White folks' disease?

Female: Yes. (Interview March 26, 1990, Period 1, Gardenia High School)

Hatfield: I'm interested in what you think about films because when I look at them to buy them, I want to know what I ought to be looking for, okay. I'm also interested in how Black people are represented in the film, [sic] what their role is like. Did you like it, if you did, do you want to see more of that type. Does anybody want to talk to me about that?

Male: I liked it.

Two females: I liked it.

Female: I'd rather see more like that. (Interview March 26, 1990, Period 1, Gardenia High School)

Thus, exclusive African-American representations in this film pedagogically impacted students by capturing their initial attention and focusing them on the social and instructional messages in the film text. Students were attentive because they seldom had the opportunity to see themselves racially and culturally represented in instructional film texts. Indeed the students agreed with the film's assumption
that its exclusive African-American inclusion of race would appeal to inner-city African-American students.

Students at Gardenia High read admonitions in instructional messages of 'Til Death Do Us Part. Students reiterated the factual information from the film, reading the instructional messages within the social context of the disease as well as their own lived social experiences. However, the instructional messages were also read as admonitions rather than constructive social meanings that could guide their individual choices and behaviors. Thus, their readings of the instructional messages were as follows:

Hatfield: What was this film telling you about then?
Male: Do the right thing.
Hatfield: Okay, the film was saying do the right thing. What's the right thing?
Male: Don't do drugs.
Hatfield: Don't do drugs. What else?
Female: Don't share needles.
Hatfield: Don't share needles. What else?
Female: Don't have sex, or have sex with a condom.
Hatfield: Don't have sex, or with a condom.
Female: Right.

Male: About STD prevention.

Hatfield: STD prevention. What's STD Oliver?

Male: Sexually transmitted disease.

Hatfield: Alright, it's about sexually transmitted diseases. Anything else? (Interview March 26, 1990, Period 2, Gardenia High School)

The following dialogue demonstrated how students related their own lived social experiences with instructional messages of the film:

Hatfield: Diane was commenting that the baby died too, and she was asking was it because of the drugs or the AIDS. Alright, Kayama?

Female: Like if the mama using drugs, and she's pregnant, because eventually it goes through the baby, so the baby has it.

Female: It doesn't have to all the time.

Female: Yes it do.

Hatfield: Okay, Kima, you said it's not all the time. Why, Kima?

Female: I'm not saying, I was asking you.

Hatfield: Oh, you were asking me. Kayama explained it was [about] taking the drugs. What happens if she's taking drugs, Kayama? Finish explaining it.

Female: Well, if she's taking drugs, and she's pregnant, it going to go through the baby.

Male: The drug gets into the immune system, and starts to break it down, and that's why the baby starts dying.
Hatfield: Does the drug get into the immune system, Kima?

Female: It starts overpowering the cells, and it starts breaking down.

Hatfield: Now I want y'all to start thinking about something. Does the drug get into the system? In the case of AIDS, what gets into the baby's system?

Female: The blood cells.

Hatfield: The blood cells, and what? [pause] What's the virus called?

All: HIV.

Hatfield: HIV has to get in. Alright. Now Kima, you were about to say something that you knew about.

Kima: This lady who stay across the street from my grandmother's house, she was on drugs, and she was pregnant, but it did not affect the baby.

Hatfield: Alright, can somebody explain to Kima why she didn't get it?

Male: She wasn't sharing a needle with anybody else, right.

Hatfield: Okay, that's a possibility Oliver, she wasn't sharing the needle with anybody.

(Interview March 26, 1990, Period 2, Gardenia High School)

Similar patterns of dialogue emerged in all interview groups, based on students' experiences in other social contexts that related to the film's instructional information about AIDS. In these dialogs students eventually touched on every aspect of
the disease; ie. sharing of needles, unprotected sex, pregnancy, the father's role, the mother's role. Thus, the film's approach of weaving a socially situated plot with embedded instructional messages proved informative, while it engaged the students and stimulated knowledgeable discussions.

Students read mainstream symbolic codes and social messages in 'Til Death Do Us Part. Similar to readings of the instructional messages, students responded to the social messages of 'Til Death Do Us Part directly in relation to their own lived social and cultural experiences. The students' reading of the social messages of the film focused on love and marriage, peer pressure, drugs, sex, commercialism, and planning for the future. These readings also reflected the influences of mainstream American themes related to love and marriage, and the promise of happiness and success for everyone in society. While observing the students as they attentively watched and overtly responded to the film, it was evident that they were tremendously engaged by the symbolic representational codes and social messages of love, marriage and a happy future, as indicated by the following dialogue:
Hatfield: Well, let's go back to that first scene. What was happening in the first scene?

Female: It was bright.

Hatfield: It was bright. Jerome, do you have any ideas what was going on in that first scene?

Male: [inaudible]

Female: They were showing how they were so happy at first.

Hatfield: Alright, and then what?

Female: They were talking about their future and how they planned to be doctors, and their kids.

Hatfield: Anything else they were saying in that first scene to make you know they were happy, and that they had a happy future?

Female: They promised 'til death do them part.

Hatfield: Okay.

Female: It was real bright.

Hatfield: It was real bright. You know, nobody ever told me that before, about how bright it was. So you gave me more insight. What about the rainbow?

Female: The rainbow was bright. (Interview March 26, 1990, Period 3, Gardenia High School)

Students responded to the phrase "Til death do us part" as signification that marriage was the ultimate fulfillment of happiness in life. In this context, students read the film's messages of family and marital relationships as follows:
Female: The scene that I really liked was when it first began, when they started talking about how they was in love with each other and they were to become nurses and doctors, have a family and all.

Hatfield: Okay, Latrinka liked the first scene, where they could become a lot of things. What about that scene made you realize it was a happy scene too?

Female: When they said they'd get married and have children, be a doctor.

Hatfield: Okay. Get married, have children, be a doctor. Anything else struck you about that scene?

Female: He gonna be a good father.

Female: They also said that the only thing to keep them apart, away from each other was 'til death do us part. (Interview March 26, 1990, Period 1, Gardenia High School)

Thus, although many students and their families experienced social, economic and racial struggles in society, they still acknowledged the film's American mainstream promise of a happy future for all citizens. This was demonstrated by the students' compelling need to tell me about their plans and ambitions for the future. When one discussion group introduced themselves at the start of their interview, they insisted on telling me about their plans for post-secondary education and professional career goals as follows:
Hatfield: Kayama, what did you want to ask?

Kayama: What they gonna be in life? When they leave out of [Gardenia], what they gonna be in life. They going to go to college or what you gonna major in or whatever.

Hatfield: Okay, that's a good question. Kayama ought to be my assistant here with these questions. Okay, you said what you want to be in life. You want to tell me Tawana?

Tawana: I'm going to college. I'm going to study for engineering. I'm trying to make something of my life, that's all.

Kayama: What college are you going to?

Tawana: JSU. [Pseudonym given for local anonymity]

Kayama: There you go! This is Darlene Lawson.

Darlene: I'm going to the service.

Kayama: What you're majoring in?

Darlene: I don't know.

Kayama: Think about it. This is your first year. Think about it. This is Causey Jackson.

Causey: I'm going to North Carolina University. I'm going to be a basketball player.

Kayama: This is Oliver Perkins. What you going to be?

Oliver: When I get out of high school, I'm going [interrupted by Kayama]

Kayama: If you get out.

Oliver: I'm going to get out. I'm going in the service. I'm going in the Navy for eight years, and then I'm going to college, get a CPR, CPR is a certified, CPA is a certified public

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accountant. (Interview March 26, 1990, Period 2, Gardenia High School)

Indeed, the above discussion was quite similar to the rap dialogue in the film that focused on young African-Americans planning their future careers. Thus, the students' responses demonstrated that the social messages produced in the film actually succeeded in effectively communicating with this group of inner city African-American youngsters.

Peer pressure in 'Til Death Do Us Part read as real life social experiences. Students immediately responded to the theme of peer pressure in the film, based on their social experiences illustrated as follows:

Hatfield: Go back to that TV scene. I'm glad you brought that up Lawana. What about that scene. Remember when they kept saying, "Try it, try it." What were you thinking about? What was going through your mind, and what was happening? Samuel?

Male: I was thinking about they was saying, "Try it" you know, to use drugs and shoot the needle and all that.

Female: It was peer pressure.

Hatfield: It was peer pressure. Okay, Emara. Did everyone see that as peer pressure?

Female: Yes.

Hatfield; Okay. And did you think that was realistic, the peer pressure.
Several: Uh, huh.

Hatfield: Why?

Female: Because they have people in the world who bring this peer pressure on other people.

Hatfield: Okay, and how do they bring it on?

Female: Say for instance if they have this group of girls and everything and they tell you, "If you don't take these drugs with us," then you can't be with them.

Hatfield: Umhuh.

Female: Or "You try it, you'll get high, you'll feel good."

Hatfield: Any other examples?

Female: Or you get involved with a boy, and he don't tell you he got the AIDS and stuff, and he wind up in a conversation with you and the girl don't have it, and he just give it to her and she didn't mean to get it. (Interview March 26, 1990, Period 1, Gardenia High School)

The above dialogue also revealed students' gendered relationships with respect to peer pressure, trust and communications. The young women particularly revealed the pressures that they were constantly experiencing related to sex, drugs and relationships with young men. In the next section, more insight is revealed on gender relationships as they were responded to by students in the context of the film.
Gendered roles and relationships among students were revealed in readings of 'Til Death Do Us Part. Students' responses to gender representations focused on the relationship between the young female and male couple, the role of the male infant, and the female Siren's role in the representation of AIDS. Representational codes of gender were read in relation to dominance and control, sexual responsibilities of males and females, and the future of the African-American male in society. These film readings contributed insight to the many social problems that confront students in their gendered roles and relationships in society.

The male infant's death engendered the greatest emotional response from students. During the final scene, when the infant was held up before the audience, students responded that this was the saddest and most tragic moment of the film, as follows:

Hatfield: Okay, now. The happy scene, you told me was the beginning one. The saddest part, what was the saddest part?

Female: When they killed the baby.

Female: When the baby died.

Hatfield: When they killed the baby?
Female: What could he [voice emphasis] have been.

Hatfield: What the baby could have been. Remember that statement, "And what could he have been?" What about that statement, somebody tell me about that. Glenda?

Female: The baby could have been something, but she took the baby too.

Hatfield: Anything else? You were about to say something.

Female: I was about to say the same thing Linda just said.

Hatfield: Anything else about that scene? [silent pause] I wonder why they said that, Samuel, you might be able to help me on this one. Why did they choose to say, "What could he [voice emphasis] have been?"

Female: Cause the baby was a little boy, huh?

Hatfield: Why did they choose to make it a boy baby? I just wondered about that, Emara.

Female: Maybe he probably would have had sex too, without using a condom. He could have followed in they footsteps.

Female: Cause a boy more into it then a girl. A boy [inaudible] faster.

Hatfield: So Linda you said a boy is more into it then girls; they could catch it [AIDS] faster. Samuel, do you agree with that?

Male: Uhum.

Hatfield: You agree with that. Anything else?

Female: I don't.

Hatfield: You don't agree with that? Good. I don't want you to always agree Jennie, tell me.
Female: A girl don't have to get it just by having sex; they can get it by doing drugs.

Hatfield: They can get it by doing drugs too, so you're saying.

Female: Boys couldn't just give it to them. (Interview March 26, 1990, Period 1, Gardenia High School)

Thus, the students responded with preferred readings of the film's message in relation to the African-American male infant's future, that it was destroyed because of drugs. The gender of the infant was noteworthy, as several students suggested that the infant's maleness made a difference in terms of his future. The young women referred to males being more forward in sexual and drug activities, which reflected social stereotype of males being the aggressors in social and sexual behaviors. Indeed, these conversations again reflected the students' lived experiences and gendered relationships. More about gendered roles and relations were articulated as follows:

Hatfield: Now we talked about the role of the baby. What about the role of the boy in the film, versus the girl.

Male: I think the main role was the boys, that they did the shooting up and stuff.

Hatfield: Anything else on the role of boys and girls.
Female: Um, huh. The girls, they did it too. They used the needles too. But I think its mostly the boys more than the girls. Most of the boys are on drugs, using the drugs. Most of the girls are having babies.

Hatfield: Okay. So that's how you saw it. Anybody else? Errol? Do you have an agreement or disagreement with her?

Male: More agreement. I think the same thing. Most of the boys use it; most of the girls get pregnant. (Interview March 26, 1990, Period 5, Gardenia High School)

Thus, these discussions revealed the social pressures and sexual behaviors that students experienced in their gendered relationships. These behaviors were related to sexual responsibility, gendered roles and the pressures of single parenthood for young teen mothers. The significance of these discussions was that they formed the basis for future dialogues, and certainly indicated the need for teachers and counselors to focus on these issues in health and family living forums.

The representational image of AIDS in the figure of a female siren was read by students as a symbolic code of domination and control. This reading appeared to be related to racial relationships, as well as gender relations. The white faced character was described by the students as a "master" in her
symbolic portrayal of death, which emphasized her role of power and domination over African-American characters in the film plot as follows:

Hatfield: Anything else about the least liked scene, the scene you didn't like?

Female: And then when they died, and the lady came up there and with all that makeup on. Talking about, "Come to me, come to me," that part.

Hatfield: Oh, you didn't like that. Why?

Female: Because she was saying, "Come to me," like that was their master and stuff. [Pause]

Hatfield: The one with the makeup on, did you know if that one was Black or White?

Female: She was Black.

Hatfield: She was Black. What did you think of that Norma? You were saying that you didn't like the lady, huh? You said something about her being like a master.

Female: Yeah, like a master. But it was just a disease, like most of the people are now dying from the disease and she said like she is a master.

Male: Like she had AIDS.

Several: [Laughter]

Hatfield: Like she had AIDS? Okay, anybody else? Let's zero in on her.

Female: That's what I thought she was, AIDS.

Hatfield: You thought she was AIDS.

Female: Yeah.
Female: I said she acted like she was the master.

Hatfield: What does a master do?

Female: Tell you what to do.

Hatfield: Tell you what to do. What else?

Male: Handle up on you. (Interview March 26, 1990, Period 3, Gardenia High School)

It is significant that the AIDS Siren figured so largely in the minds of these students as a "master" of domination. One male offered the phrase "handle up on you," as an apt description of the role a master in society. In retrospect, perhaps these references also reflected students' encounters with the police at school and in their communities. In addition, these students were surrounded by the school's neighbors who could be viewed as "masters" that wielded strong political and economic power over them in the community.

**Rap captured attention and conveyed messages to Gardenia students.** The students at Gardenia High were receptive to the film's production techniques, particularly the rap music and dance in a theatrical format. Responses to the rap music and dance were as follows:
Hatfield: Now somebody started talking about the rap and I didn't pick up on that. Who was it? Emara, you were telling me about the rap. What were you saying about the rap?

Female: I said they was rapping about, rapping the words up to you about AIDS. And they was putting it you know, they was making it out of rap where you could understand how you could get AIDS without using a condom and sex using drugs, you know.

Hatfield: Okay, so you thought the rap helped you to get the message over better?

Female: Cause I thought by them rapping it out, the telling was more understanding cause a lot of people like rap, then they listen to it.

Hatfield: Okay, so the rap was a good way to help get the message out. Did you find your class more attentive then? You know the class better than I do.

Several: Yeah.

Hatfield: You did? You found them what? What did you see?

Male: Everybody's eyes was on the TV.

Hatfield: Everybody's eyes. . . .

Female: It caught they attention.

Hatfield: It caught their attention, huh Emara? Okay, so we find out that the raps are really good in this film. What else did you like about it? Would you like to see that in other films, raps?

Several: Um, huh. [Yes]

Female: You'll understand it better.

Female: Yeah. (Interview March 26, 1990, Period 1, Gardenia High)
Hatfield: Which one did you find best?
Female: This one right here.
Hatfield: You found this one best?
Female: 'Til Death Do Us Part.
Female: The rest didn't have no music.
Hatfield: The rest didn't have any music, the rap. Oh, y'all didn't tell me about the rap.
Female: Oh, yeah, the rap was good.
Female: Oh, I liked that.
Female: When they first started off.
Hatfield: It made you understand it better.
Female: Okay, that's the end, we got to move.
Female: This movie, it put all the rest of the films that we watched together. (Interview March 26, 1990, Period 2, Gardenia High School)

Although most students appreciated the inclusion of rap music as a mode of cultural communication, they resisted the film's assumption that all students would fully comprehend and take pleasure in the rap vocabulary and songs. For example, the following dialogue illustrated several student's oppositional responses to the rap music and songs:

Hatfield: Come on Jennie, tell me why you don't like the raps in it. Tell me what you prefer in it.
Female: Cause I don't like it. You know, they rapping so fast, you can't understand it.
Hatfield: They were rapping so fast you couldn't understand it, huh?

Male: They was rapping fast.

Female: They was like talking; they wasn't rapping.

Male: They was talking and rapping. (Interview March 26, 1990, Period 1, Gardenia High School)

Students were used to more sophisticated forms of cultural entertainment in popular songs and dances communicated through the popular mass media of radio, television and cinema. Whereas the students enjoyed the songs and dances of the film text, they did not accept these performances as culturally authentic in relation to their own social experiences. Their cultural preferences in music and dance were expressed as follows:

Hatfield: What about their dancing?

Female: Oh, that was good.

Hatfield: The dancing was good, Jennie, you didn't mind the dancing?

Female: It was alright.

Hatfield: It was alright, Emara? You looked a little disgusted with the dancing. Tell me about it.

Several: [Laughter]

Female: It just was alright, you know.

Hatfield: It was just all right, huh?
Female: Yeah. Cause you know how they was looking, all funny.
Several: [Laughter]

Hatfield: They could have done better?

Female: It look like they was doing ballet.

Hatfield: Yeah, they didn't look like they were doing the dances we do down here, huh?

Female: They look like they going to CCA [pseudonymn used for name of school of cultural arts] or something. You know, a dance school. (Interview March 26, 1990, Period 1, Gardenia High School)

Finally, the above critical discussions led students to develop their own recommendations for instructional film productions that would appeal to African-American student audiences.

Students as viewers made recommendations for future films on AIDS, based on their learning styles and social experiences. The culmination of interviews resulted in students making their own recommendations for the production of films that would appeal to them as audiences. This part of the group discussion created much enthusiasm among students as they generated their own ideas about how they would produce a film on AIDS. Students' recommendations were as follows:

Hatfield: Now let's say that you were producers about to make a film at [Gardenia High], what
would you put in that film on AIDS to make it appeal to the students at [Gardenia]?

Female: I would make it, you know like a play. I liked the play wise and the way they showed it; and I would use examples like they did, like using the needles and exchanging them.

Hatfield: Okay, so you would do it that way. Anybody else with a suggestion?

Male: I would make it real too, the music and all like a regular movie. Combine like a movie version of it, and some scenes with some singing and all that.

Hatfield: So you would combine some singing with some real parts to it. Okay. Now when you say real parts, what do you mean by real parts?

Male: Alright, well real parts, you know talking about true facts.

Hatfield: Real facts. You mean like in some of the other films that we have seen?

Male: Yes.

Hatfield: Give me an example. Where they put facts on the board you mean; or what?

Male: Like they cut to a different part and they have one person talking about AIDS, giving different facts.

Hatfield: Okay. Aaron, you were about to say something.

Male: Like how to use safety about AIDS, about the condoms, about the victims, and showing them how to protect themselves.

Hatfield: Now let me see, you said that you would use music Sam, what kind of music would you want?
Male: The same that was in the movie, in the play.

Hatfield: You'd go for rap?

Male: Not really rap you know, though I'd have some rap in there too because some students think they're there to rap and it'd catch their eye.

Hatfield: Okay, you'd have the rap. Anybody else's opinion about the rap?

Female: I think I'd use rap too, but I'd use a slow or fast song to make them, you know, to make 'em think and make them think about it.

(Interview March 26, 1990, Period 5, Gardenia High School)

Thus students' suggestions for instructional film productions on the subject of AIDS would utilize a wide variety of techniques, including identifiable cultural forms such as rap and dance. Their recommendations for an exemplary production on AIDS also included instructional techniques such as graphics, personal testimonies, dramatizations, documentaries, and factual information. While the students discussed proposed productions, it is significant that they clearly demonstrated familiarity with media communication techniques, and precisely articulated media approaches that would facilitate their own learning styles. The enthusiasm and creativity expressed by students also suggested that...
these students could become successfully engaged in their own creative film media productions.

In summary, from the film's beginning, it was quite evident that the students were fully engaged in the presentation of 'Til Death Do Us Part. This reaction was initiated by the film's inclusion of African-American racial and social identities that were recognizable by the inner city setting, characters, plot and production techniques of rap music, songs and dance. After a single viewing, the student audiences at Gardenia High were actually close to memorizing exact lines and descriptive scenes of the film, as they verbally related to the film's music, plot, characters, and the significations of symbolic representational codes. It was significant that their responses and meanings created from the film were clearly related to their learning styles, social and cultural identities, and lived experiences as African-Americans in society.
Students' Readings and Responses to Sex, Drugs and AIDS

Description of Students Viewing the Film in the Classroom

During the film opening, all students initially focused on the presentation. By the end of the first scene, however, several students in each class either went to sleep or turned their attention to other activities. The scenes that elicited the most overt responses were those that portrayed (1) the two youth actually sharing intravenous drugs, (2) the brother of the homosexual AIDS victim, and (3) the African-American mother whose baby was infected with the AIDS virus. In general, this film did not engage the viewing audience with as much intensity as the previous film 'Til Death Do Us Part. Based on these observations of students, further comparison of the two films were discussed during the interview sessions.

Results of Group Interview Sessions with Students

In the introduction to this chapter, it was explained that analysis of group interview sessions with students focused on categories of (1) racial representations, (2) gender representations,
(3) instructional messages, (4) social messages, and (5) production techniques used in the film. In this section, these categories were developed into salient themes in relation to students' readings and responses to the film, Sex, Drugs and AIDS, as presented below.

Students responded with disappointment toward token African-American racial representations in the film. Students quickly observed that there were few African-Americans represented in this film. Immediately after the close of this film, one female student exclaimed, "They need more Blacks" (March 28, 1990, Period 1). Indeed, there were only two spoken parts by African-Americans; they were Rae Dawn Chong and the African-American mother whose baby was HIV infected. Considering the African-American mother, some students opposed her role because they considered it a negative stereotype, as one female student stated, "The film made her look bad" (March 28, 1990, Period 6). Examples of students' responses to racial representation in the film were articulated as follows:

Female: They should have put more Blacks in it.

Hatfield: The last one had all Blacks in it. Some people told me that they didn't like the film with all Blacks because it made it look like
all Black people had AIDS. [Pause] Who was the narrator in this film? the main speaker?

Female: The woman, Rae Dawn Chong.

Hatfield: Did that make a difference in opening the film? Did you know her? Did you care?

Female: No.

Hatfield: You all look half dead with this film. Can you tell me why?

Female: We did not enjoy it as much as 'Til Death Do Us Part.

Hatfield: What was it that you didn't care about?

Female: None of it really!

Male: The other film had excitement in it. (Interview March 28, 1990, Period 1, Gardenia High School)

Students were initially attracted to the film because of Rae Dawn Chong's early appearance as the narrator and hostess because she was African-American, and they recognized her as a popular star from movies and television. Yet, Chong's role in the film did not sway the students' position that African-American representation was marginalized in the film.

Students' reactions to Chong were as follows:

Hatfield: What was the name of the person who was the narrator?

Female: Dawn Chong.

Hatfield: What is it?
Hatfield: Dawn Chong. I know the last name is Chong. I never get her first name, like Dawn. Okay, did it make any difference that she was narrating it?

Female: No.

Hatfield: No difference. Okay, did it catch your attention?

Female: Yes.

Hatfield: So, if a stranger had narrated it, it wouldn't have made any difference; but it caught your attention. That's about all at first.

Female: Yes. (Interview March 28, 1990, Period 5, Gardenia High School)

Students believed that Chong handled the subject of AIDS with sensitivity, but they were convinced that she was acting rather than speaking with professional or medical expertise. Students perceived her role more as an actress rather than an authority in this film, as one student stated, "She looked like she was just reading off a card" (March 28, 1990).

Thus, students at Gardenia High School were disappointed in this film because of its token inclusion of African-Americans. Indeed, the students at Gardenia preferred films and instructional materials that extensively related to their racial and cultural and identities. Furthermore, their classes had recently experienced 'Til Death Do Us Part, which
they considered more relevant to their lived cultural and social experiences.

Students responded to dramatizations, enactments and testimonials as instructional messages in Sex, Drugs and AIDS. Students considered the dramatizations and testimonials employed in the film particularly effective in conveying instructional messages about AIDS. The scenes that they found most instructive were (1) the three Caucasian young women engaged in discourse about birth control and protection against sexually transmitted disease, (2) the young African-American woman and her baby, and (3) the scene with two young people sharing drugs intravenously. In the dramatized scene with three young Caucasian women at ballet school, students were quite attentive while they listened in on the intimate conversation. Female students were especially attentive during this scene, and it did not seem to matter that the representational female voices were Caucasian. Students carefully followed the young woman's conversation, raised questions about AIDS and conveyed their understandings of the disease in the context of their African-American adolescent social experiences, as illustrated in the following dialogue:
Hatfield: Any other scenes that stood out? What's another one that might have? Think back, you had different examples of people.

Female: When they were talking about the condom in the three girls scene.

Hatfield: Oh, yeah, the three girls. What about that one?

Male: One of the girls decided that she would have sex, and the other told her if she did have sex, to use a condom. And the other girl was trying to tell her that she did not have to use a condom. They talked about it. The other two girls who thought that you should use a condom convinced the other girl to use one, but she was undecided. (Interview March 28, 1990, Period 5, Gardenia High School)

Female: Her friend was trying to entice her to use birth control pills and be protected from pregnancy. But, it cannot protect you from AIDS.

Hatfield: What was going on? Did it capture your attention?

Female: In the film, one of the girls tried to tell her to use birth control pills, and the other girl tried to tell her to use condoms. They got into a little argument. She told one of the girls that her boyfriend would not like to use condoms, and preferred to use birth control pills because they are better.

Female: I don't think that condoms help because condoms might tear or split. (Interview March 28, 1990, Period 1, Gardenia High School)

Hatfield: Okay, so that scene was a scene that you remembered. Would you say that you listened to that scene and you heard all of the arguments? So, one argument was to use the condoms. What was the other argument?

Female: She was scared to have sex.
Female: That she was on birth control, and she felt she didn't need the condom because the birth control pill was protecting her from getting pregnant, but the girl told her even though it was protecting her from getting pregnant, it wasn't protecting her from getting AIDS. (Interview March 28, 1990, Period 7, Gardenia High School)

Students were evidently engaged by the conversation among the three young women, which demonstrated that dramatization was an effective instructional technique in the film. The technique was so effective that female students in each class stated they would like to see a similar scene enacted by males so that they could obtain information and insight about the male point of view on sex, birth control and the use of condoms.

The scene with the young African-American mother was instructive to students because it elicited their emotions about the outcome of AIDS on unborn babies. Students were emotional and sympathetic toward the baby in this film, as one female student stated, "It was sad to see the pretty little baby had AIDS" (Interview March 28, 1990, Period 7, Gardenia High School).

Indeed, the presentation of real or actual victims in films can be an effective instructional approach as students also cited the strong impact of scenes that
included the woman whose boyfriend transmitted AIDS to her, the man who was infected by a blood transfusion, and the young man whose homosexual brother died from AIDS.

The scene that depicted the two young people shooting up drugs was most revealing and instructive. The scene also served to discourage students from this form of drug activity. During the film viewing, it was recalled that students appeared repulsed by this scene and actually turned away from viewing it. Their reactions to this intravenous drug scene were as follows:

Hatfield: Tamara, you brought up the drugs. I guess that part stood out to you. I noticed that the class was interested in the one about the drugs. Reggie, you turned all the way around. Why do you think people were disgusted about that scene?

Male: I reacted that way because I do not like needles. Just to see that needle go in made me feel that was going in me.

Hatfield: What were you thinking about?

Male: The majority of the students wouldn't try that way, using needles for getting AIDS. The majority would try through sex. Most teenagers wouldn't want to use condoms, what would be the way I would see them getting AIDS.

Hatfield: Any other comments?

Male: It ticked me off seeing them burning crack with a teaspoon.
Male: It wasn't crack, it was heroin.
(Interview March 28, 1990, Period 6, Gardenia High School)

Female: I was thinking about after he finished shooting up, all he did was take it out and just gave it to her; and whatever they had left in there, she shot it in her. It was gross.

Hatfield: You thought it was gross. What did you think, Amy?

Female: I didn't like it.

Hatfield: You didn't like it. I noticed that all the students went, "ugh!" Some of them actually turned around.

Male: He just took and wiped off the blood with his hand.

Hatfield: Uhmmm, I know. Isn't that what we have been hearing over and over about in the films? This time we really got to see it.

Female: And they had in the little tube part, after he pulled it out, it had a little blood still on it.

Hatfield: So you were convinced that one was real. Do you think that would keep people from ever wanting to do that?

Female: To see that blood!

Hatfield: You know what I thought when I saw it, I wondered why all the students were disgusted when they say that part. Now the students in this school, it that something that they would be concerned with when it comes to the drug scene? What do you think, Aaron? You were about to say something? Is that real in terms of students in this school? When we talk about students on drugs, are talking about that kind of drug?

Male: Not really. Some students might do it. You never can tell whether they do it or not.
Discussions of the intravenous drug sharing scene provided insight into some of the students' attitudes about this form of drug activity, which did not seem to appeal to them. Although it was inferred from the students' responses that they were not involved in intravenous drugs, later class discussions revealed that some students used smoked drugs such as marijuana which they referred to as "puffs" and "weed." However, the intravenous drug scene was a strong deterrent for the students.

Students also recognized instructional omissions in the film which they cited as (1) the origins of the AIDS disease, (2) advances in finding a cure for the disease, (3) local facts about AIDS among African-Americans. Examples of questions raised by students included the following:

Male: If two people don't have AIDS, and continue to do it, but one picked up the AIDS virus, and they have sex, can they catch AIDS?

Male: How do you know you have the virus?

Male: If you don't go to the clinic to have the test, and don't get symptoms, how will you know you have it?

Female: I am curious to know who has the virus in [name of city]. I want to see facts. Are
those films make here? (Interview March 28, 1990, Period 6, Gardenia High School)

Hatfield: Was there anything that you wanted to know?

Female: Just basically the symptoms. There's a lot of controversy. Sometimes they leave out symptoms.

Hatfield: Did this one give you anything about symptoms?

Female: No. (Interview March 28, 1990, Period 7, Gardenia High School)

In conclusion, the techniques of dramatization, testimony and actual enacted scenes were highly effective in conveying instructional information about AIDS. Students' responses clearly reiterated the instructional messages of this film: (1) use condoms to protect against AIDS because birth control pill do not afford protection from the disease; (2) pregnant women can transmit the AIDS virus to their unborn babies; (3) sharing needles is dangerous and an unhealthy dirty habit; and (4) AIDS is hard to get by such means as shaking hands, sharing the shower, touching someone, drinking after someone, or using the toilet seat. The instructional messages included in this film were limited but useful in raising issues about the spread of AIDS, and gaining insight about students' experiences with the drug scene. However,
there were also serious gaps or omissions in the film that merited further attention. Thus, teachers must always preview films and be prepared to fill in gaps and omissions such as those that were cited by the students.

Students' interpersonal gendered relations were revealed in readings and responses to Sex, Drugs and AIDS. Earlier it was mentioned that the dramatization among the three Caucasian young women was very effective in stimulating discourse among students concerning gender relations. The young women were particularly interested in knowing how young men would carry on in similar conversational situations, and the young men among them were eager to include their voices in the discourse. For example, students discussed the possibilities of role playing and scripts focused on gendered roles and relationships as follows:

Hatfield: Well, there was one thing about it [the scene] that I thought about too. Now, there were all girls talking. Sam, did you find that interesting, listening in on those points of view?

Male: Yes.

Hatfield: Would it have been different if all boys were talking? Margell and Amy, would you have liked to hear an all male conversation?
Female: It doesn't matter to me.

Hatfield: Do you think that if it were an all boy conversation that it might have been a different conversation? Do boys sit around and talk like that?

[Laughter]

Hatfield: Aaron and Sam, you'll have to tell us because I don't know.

Male: No.

Hatfield: We've been wondering. What do you think that a boy conversation would be like if your were doing a film. Let's say if it were a real scene, and the boys were sitting around. Would they sit around and say things. How would their conversation go? You two help me.

[Inaudible reply]

Hatfield: You have to talk into the microphone, I can't hear you.

Male: "Man, I don't have to use that!"

Hatfield: Okay, that's what one would say. What would the next one say?

Male: "me too! I don't have to use it either."

Hatfield: Okay.

Male: guys try to buck up each other. Tell each other, "I don't have to use that, I'm man enough."

Hatfield: Oh, like, "I'm man enough; I don't have to use that." Okay, say that we would be doing a film, and you would have one who would say, "Man I don't have to use that." What would be the next point of the dialogue it were trying to get our points across.
Male: One would stand out on his own and tell him about it, "Yes, you will have to use it or end up with either a child or either some kind of disease, or with AIDS."

Hatfield: Good point. We have a different dialogue. Tell me this, let's carry it further. What if you had boys and girls in the scene and you were setting it up?

Female: I think that girls would be more embarrassed to talk around boys.

Hatfield: Girls would be more embarrassed to talk around girls.

Female: In that conversation.

Hatfield: You think that if you were making a film, it's kind of better to keep it separated in their conversations. But would you kind of eavesdrop on them?

Female: Yes. [Laughter]

Male: Another way, they could have a scene between a boyfriend and girlfriend.

Hatfield: That's a good idea. (Interview March 28, 1990, Period 5, Gardenia High School)

These discussions revealed the interpersonal gendered roles being experienced by students in terms of sexual relations, birth control and sexual responsibilities. While their classroom discussions were quite open and frank on clinical issues pertaining to sexual matters, there were few opportunities for open dialogue among young women and men on the subject of sexual roles and
responsibilities in interpersonal relationships. It was also revealing in the dialogue that young men often regarded condoms as a threat to their perception of masculinity. These responses suggested that teachers and health educators must help young men clarify their male identities, roles and responsibilities in relation to birth control and protection against sexually transmitted. The above dialogue also demonstrated that through role playing and student produced media texts, students would be empowered to express their viewpoints and help each other clarify their gendered roles, relationships and responsibilities in society.

Issues of homosexuality were unresolved in students' responses to *Sex, Drugs and AIDS*. In the classes it was noted that students often used derogatory expressions such as "fags" in reference to homosexuals. Mr. Moore made explicit moral statements about homosexual sex acts during classroom discussions also. During the film showing, students burst out laughing when the brother of a homosexual AIDS victim cried and promised to punch anyone who he heard referring to homosexuals in a derogatory manner. Students later stated in interviews that their
responses of laughter were directed more to what they termed the phoniness of the acting, rather than derision toward the message regarding homosexuality, as one female student stated, "I guess they found it amusing by him saying that he would punch out someone, but it really wasn't funny" (March 28, 1990, Period 7, Gardenia High School). Significantly, however, this component of the film did not help change stereotypes about homosexual lifestyles and behaviors in relation to AIDS, as indicated by the following student reactions:

Hatfield: Why are people not listenieng?

Male: Because they think that only through needles and being gay you can get the virus.

Female: Gay people and needle injections are more talked about in the film. In other words, the most risky way to get AIDS. And the sex part, it talks about who you sleep with, a lot of partners. Could you get it with one person, even though he or she is not fooling around? (Interview March 28, 1990, Period 6, Gardenia High School)

Indeed, according to the students' readings and responses, the issues of homosexuality were not resolved in the film. Students still viewed homosexuality as the more prevalent means of AIDS transmission rather than heterosexuality; thus perpetuating the myth that AIDS is a homosexual
problem and heterosexuals need not be too threatened about the disease. The subject matter was further exacerbated by students who whispered and asked me health questions about AIDS and homosexuality after classes. Librarians at the school later confirmed that there was a great need for films and instructional materials on the subject of homosexuality. Therefore, it is highly recommended that more media materials be made available on this subject matter, and that the topic of homosexuality be addressed more openly in Health and Family Living classes.

Students' preferred production techniques of 'Til Death Do Us Part compared with Sex, Drugs and AIDS. Generally, students compared the production techniques of this film to others that they had viewed on AIDS in earlier classes. Although students acknowledged that there was more factual information contained in Sex, Drugs and AIDS, they were more enthusiastic about 'Til Death Do Us Part as stated below:

Female: I enjoyed the other film better.

Male: More young people were rapping in the film.

Female: This one was very plain.
Female: But this film said things that the other film didn't say.

Hatfield: For instance?

Female: You can have a cut inside your body and not know it, and have sex with someone and get AIDS. (Interview March 28, 1990, Period 1, Gardenia High School)

Thus, the students responded from a cultural perspective to the compositional techniques of music and rap in 'Til Death Do Us Part, but they were appreciative of the greater inclusion of factual information in Sex, Drugs and AIDS. Yet, students were not convinced of the authenticity of the characters portrayed as victims in the individual testimonials, who they referred to as "fake: and "phony." Students reiterated that they would prefer to see authentic socially situated actors as representative voices in the film. Finally, after discussing strengths and weakness of the technical treatment of the film, several students stated that they would like to create their own media productions and believed that they could be successful. Indeed, this would be a worthwhile project for students to position themselves as social actors and producers of their own lived film texts.
In summary, *Sex, Drugs and AIDS* complemented the instructional subject matter on AIDS as a component of the Health and Family Living course; but, it did not appeal to the students' racial and cultural identities in the presentation of its text. The students' responses to this film were illustrative of their learning styles and the teaching practices at Gardenia High School. In an earlier interview, the principal stated that he preferred more integrative approaches to instruction that utilized several modalities of instruction, reflective of the students' interests and social experiences. Indeed, the students' teacher Mr. Mooere had demonstrated this integrative approach in the classroom, which interwove the students' social experiences with the subject matter. Therefore, it was not unexpected that the students would respond with similar expectations of this film. After viewing the film, students concluded that they preferred films that contained more African-American representational actors, more authentic testimonies on the subject of AIDS, and more production techniques that reflected their culture and lived social experiences.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study contributed to an understanding of how racial representations and social identities are coded and produced in educational film media texts in curriculum, and how predominant African-American audiences respond to these texts in the context of schools and society. Prior to the study there had been a paucity of effort directed toward African-Americans in curriculum studies of educational media. This study represents the perspectives of students in three unique schools in a large urban school district located in a southern section of the United States described as (1) suburban, (2) magnet college preparatory, and (3) urban inner-city. The selection of these schools afforded the opportunity to understand how students in differentiated learning environments appropriated their readings and responses to film media texts in relation to their racial, cultural and social backgrounds.

In studying the students' readings and responses to the two selected films on AIDS, it became evident that a given film text would be accepted, negotiated or opposed by student audiences to produce divergent
interpretations or responses based on their racial and
gendered identities, economic positions, cultural and
social backgrounds. Although several threads of
similar interpretations were interwoven within the
students' readings and responses to the films, the
distinguishing characteristics of their responses
reflected their unique pedagogical experiences in the
classrooms, social experiences in the schools, and
racial and cultural experiences in a diversified
metropolitan community. Indeed, the films themselves
did not construct or determine the readers or viewers
readings and responses; rather, the student viewers
created their meanings or interpretations from the
film texts based on their own lived experiences in
schools and society.

Results of Study

The framework of critical cultural studies
contributed to the theoretical background and
methodologies in this study including, ethnographic
participant observations, unstructured and focused
interviews, and textual analysis of films. These
qualitative approaches, with their emphasis on
signifying systems and media audience interactions,
provided the needed alternatives to mainstream
quantitative research approaches that place greater emphasis on the structure and content of media texts. Cultural ethnography situated the research in the environment of the student media audience to provide insight into the meanings they created from film texts in relation to their lived social and cultural experiences. The employment of textual analysis revealed how layers of messages were coded and structured in film texts, which later provided a basis for juxtaposing students' readings and responses to the films.

Textual analysis was employed according to the tenets of critical cultural studies, aimed at uncovering the processes and structures that worked to produce meanings in the films, focusing on the semiotic signs and representational codes embedded and produced in the films as well as the silences and absences. In 'Til Death Do Us Part, textual analysis of the film revealed that messages were constructed by the use of signs, symbols, and significations of the written and verbal texts to communicate (1) social codes of dress, make-up, dance, music, and gendered behaviors associated with African-American youth in inner-city urban communities; (2) ideological codes of
racial genocide, capitalism, patriotism, materialism, patriarchy and matriarchy reflected in mainstream society; (3) technical codes of contrasting camera lighting, long shot to close-up range camera angling, musical and vocal sound tracking associated with romance, socially deviant behavior, punishment and death; and (4) conventional theatrical codes accorded musical and dance narrations, dramatic action, conflict and tragedy.

In *Sex, Drugs and AIDS*, messages were constructed through signs, symbols and significations of the verbal and written text that revealed (1) social codes of dress and behaviors associated with stereotypical lifestyles of African-Americans, Hispanics and Caucasians identified as drug addicts, heterosexuals, homosexuals, bisexuals, and single parents; (2) ideological codes of maternalism, homophobia, and sexism prejudicially associated with the social and sexual behaviors of certain racial and gendered groups in society; (3) technical codes consisting of contemporary sound tracks, medium and close-up camera angles, and strong camera lighting imitative of popular television styles of documentary productions; and (4) conventional production codes of dramatic
narrative dialogues and testimonials to communicate with mass adolescent viewing audiences. Results of this textual analysis helped formulate the strategies of ethnographic participant observations and focused interviews in the final phase of the study with student audiences.

Significantly, the three selected schools represented a broad cross section of social, cultural and racial histories, located across a wide spectrum of demographic and geographic locations within the urban metropolitan area which encompassed the school district. Salient findings from each school were as follows:

1. Students at suburban Marshview High School were positioned in a racially integrated school setting that was highly structured and disciplined. These students were impacted by middle class consumerism, unprecedented fatal tragedies among the student body, and social changes encountered at home and in the community. Thus, the film readings by students at Marshview High reflected the tensions of the school and community, creating poor self-images of African-American racial identities from the film text
and low-self esteem projected toward their collective futures.

2. Students in the college preparatory setting of Harriet Tubman High School were proud of their African-American historical academic achievements in the community, and felt secure in a school climate that nurtured their social, cultural and racial identities. However, these students experienced many tensions associated with achieving high academic standards warranted by their parents, teachers and the administration. Thus, the film readings and responses by the students of Harriet Tubman High reflected their African-American racial pride, but their emphasis on academic competitiveness often displaced an aesthetic or cultural appreciation of film media experiences in the classroom.

3. Students at Gardenia High School were situated in the most oppressive social, economic and racial positions of inner city urban schools. The needs of these students were being met by a dedicated faculty and administration that labored to foster racial and cultural pride, as well as improved academic achievement. The pedagogical techniques emphasized by the school were directed toward
matching individual learning styles of students through more interactive instructional activities and uses of educational media in classes. Thus, the students at Gardenia High enthusiastically responded to both the factual and aesthetic components of the selected films. More significantly, however, the students at Gardenia High read the films more intrinsically and comprehensively from African-American perspectives that reflected their actual social, cultural and racial lived experiences.

In summary, the three schools significantly contributed to an understanding of how unique school cultures influence teaching practices and learning styles, demonstrated by students in conjunction with their readings and responses to selected instructional film media texts. Results of students' readings and responses to the films resulted in recommended guidelines for planning and developing film media productions for adolescent viewing audiences; and recommendations for the evaluation, selection and use of films in the classrooms.

Recommendations from the Study

Guidelines for planning and developing film media productions, with particular consideration for
African-American student audiences, were based on textual analysis of the two films and suggestions from students during unstructured and focused interview sessions in relation to their viewing experiences of the two selected films under study. Thus, recommended guidelines for film productions, with particular emphasis on African-American student audiences, are as follows:

1. Racial representations in films need not be racially exclusive, rather mixed races of social actors are acceptable and often preferred especially by students in racially integrated school environments.

2. Popular stars attract the attention of student audiences, particularly racially and culturally identifiable contemporary and popular youthful actors, rappers, singers talk show hosts, and athletes.

3. Musical selections and sound tracks that are contemporary, popular and professionally produced with social and culturally identifiable messages are preferable to amateur productions.

4. Contemporary popular dances that are professionally performed will appeal to adolescent
student audiences, but amateurish performances will be rejected.

5. Rap music has contemporary African-American appeal although it need not be exclusive to the production. It is an erroneous stereotypical assumption that the rapid pace and slang vocabulary of rap is universally recognized and comprehended by all African-American student audiences.

6. A variety of conventional production techniques will appeal to student audiences, particularly those adopted from popular television and movie styles including situational comedies, talk shows, dramas, testimonials, skits, documentaries, and musicals. African-American students in urban areas have often been deprived of live theater experiences; therefore, this genre appears less appealing only because students are less familiar with its conventional production codes.

7. Situational productions that include authentic characters (e.g., real AIDS patients) presented in the film's plot will appeal to student audiences and help them relate to the social and instructional messages of film texts. Unless students can identify and relate to actual AIDS patients, they will not be
seriously concerned or even convinced that the disease can really be transmitted to them.

8. Factual information is valued by student audiences, particularly presented in the context of a film's dramatic plot and illustrated with graphic presentations by professionals and specialists in the field.

9. Culturally identifiable music, language and dance will initially capture the attention of African-American student audiences, but only more substantive subject matter will sustain their interest and attention while viewing the entire film text.

10. Considering all of the above, students' receptivity to films will be largely influenced by the school climate and learning environment, and the teaching styles and practices employed by teachers in the classroom.

This study also resulted in reconceptualized approaches to the evaluation, selection, and utilization of instructional film media especially as media texts produced for African-American high school viewing audiences. These recommendations necessitate revisions in curriculum policies and procedures currently in practice by many school districts in
functions pertaining to curriculum development and educational media. Recommendations are as follows:

1. School districts must include students in the process of film evaluation and selection, based on their lived social, cultural, racial and gendered experiences within the context of their classrooms, school settings and communities.

2. Media selection committees in large urban school districts must include diverse representations of class, race, gender and sexual orientation in the process of making educational media decisions to meet the needs of students enrolled in a broad spectrum of school cultures.

3. The use of educational film media in the classroom should extend beyond the mandates of instructional subject matter in the curriculum. Instead, media such as film texts should be garnered to foster critical analysis and communications skills of students through textual analysis; and, film media should be used in group dynamics for social problem solving in relation to students' class, race and gendered positions and lived experiences in society.

4. Students should be encouraged to create, plan and produce their own film or video media productions.
to reflect their racial ethnicities, cultural identities, gender relationships, and social histories as means of empowerment in the process of teaching and learning.

5. Critics and evaluators of educational film media must subordinate their own subjectivities to acknowledge the voices of students who are indeed capable of creating authentic meanings and significations from film media texts.

6. Educators as advocates for students must commit to an uncompromising struggle in commercial media marketplaces to assure changes in media productions as they impact the racial self-images and cultural esteem of African-Americans and other ethnic minority viewing audiences.

7. Media education for students must be integrated across all curriculum areas with emphasis on critical analysis and deconstruction of media texts for instructional, aesthetic and emancipatory purposes in the classroom and community.

8. Pre-service and in-service programs of training for teachers must include media education courses that focus on critical textual analysis of representational codes and symbols in texts, and the
effective selection and utilization of film media texts for instruction and social action.

9. Teachers, library media specialists, counselors, other educators and support staff must utilize the techniques of textual analysis, focused media interviews and interactive dialogues with students to focus on issues that are relevant and empowering to their lived experiences at school, home and the community.

10. Teachers must develop a sensitivity to the racial, gendered, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds of students as they select and utilize film media texts for instructional purposes in the classroom; and thus, educate themselves as teachers to respect students' readings and responses to media texts as authentic reflections of their unique needs, interests and experiences in society.

In conclusion, this study has demonstrated a model for approaching textual film analysis as a means for understanding students' readings and responses to films. The Health and Family Living Curriculum, which included the subject of AIDS, was the focus of this study because it targeted a serious social issue of health in the world community. The subject of AIDS is
of particular importance in the African-American community because of its rapid increases there. Thus, it was expedient to approach the study of selected films on AIDS from an African-American perspective. Although the film study targeted African-American student audiences in a large southern urban metropolitan area, it is hoped that the findings and recommendations will be meaningful to students and teachers of all races and ethnic groups in classrooms and school settings across the nation.
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APPENDIX A

SUMMARY OF STUDENT PARTICIPATION

Marshview High School

Average number of students observed (3 classes): 45

Number of students interviewed: 30

Females: 20
Males: 10

Harriet Tubman High School

Average number of students observed (3 classes): 120

Number of students interviewed: 33

Females: 22
Males: 11

Gardenia High School

Average number of students observed (4 classes): 72

Number of students interviewed: 56

Females: 37
Males: 19

Summary

Total student observed: 237
Total students interviewed: 119

Females: 79
Males: 40
APPENDIX B
MARSHVIEW HIGH SCHOOL
Summary of Student Participation

Classes observed daily (minimum): 3

Average number of students observed daily: 45

Students Interviewed - 'Til Death Do Us Part: 11

Females: 8
5 African-Americans
0 Asian
3 Caucasians

Males: 3
2 African-Americans
0 Asian
1 Caucasian

Students Interviewed - Sex, Drugs and AIDS: 19

Females: 12
5 African-Americans
3 Asians
4 Caucasians

Males: 7
6 African-Americans
0 Asian
1 Caucasian

Total number of students interviewed: 30

Females: 20
10 African-Americans
3 Asians
7 Caucasians

Males: 10
8 African-Americans
0 Asians
2 Caucasians

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APPENDIX C
HARRIET TUBMAN HIGH SCHOOL

Summary of Student Participation

Classes observed daily (minimum): 3

Average number of students observed daily: 120

'Til Death Do Us Part: 15

7 Females
8 Males

Sex, Drugs and AIDS: 18

15 Females
3 Males

Total number of students interviewed: 33

22 Females
11 Males

NOTE: All students were African-Americans.
APPENDIX D
GARDENIA HIGH SCHOOL

Summary of Student Participation

Classes observed daily (minimum): 4

Average number of students observed daily: 72

Students Interviewed:

'Til Death Do Us Part:  24

17 Females
7 Males

Sex, Drugs and AIDS:  32

20 Females
32 African-American Males

Total number of students interviewed: 56

37 Females
19 Males

NOTE: All students were African-Americans.
APPENDIX E

LETTER OF REQUEST TO SCHOOL DISTRICT

7241 Lake Willow Drive
New Orleans, LA  70126
January 25, 1990

[Deleted]

Dear [Deleted]:

I am seeking permission to undertake a doctoral research project at three to four senior high schools in the [Deleted] Schools' district, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Ph.D. degree in Curriculum & Instruction at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge.

The schools that I have selected for my study include [Deleted] Senior High, [Deleted] Senior High and [Deleted] Senior High. It is possible that I will add [Deleted] Senior High to the selection of schools, since it was the site of my preliminary study. These schools have been selected because they represent a broad African American student population, which will be the focus of my research. I have spoken to the principals of these schools, and they have consented to the research study.

The purpose of my study is to analyze African American high school students' responses to two (2) contrastive prototypes of sex education films on the subject of AIDS. I am targeting this representative student population because there is a paucity of effort related to African Americans in current educational media research. These films have been selected from the school district's approved list of materials for the Health & Family Living Curriculum.

The methodological procedures that I shall undertake at the schools will consist of the following:

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- Participant observations will be undertaken in at least one Health and Family Living class in progress, over a minimum period of two weeks. A voluntary teacher for this study would be preferred, with the principal's assistance in the selection and final approval.

- Viewing of the films (on two different days) will be experienced by students in the selected Health & Family Living class, followed by a classroom discussion led by the teacher.

- Interviews will be held with individuals and groups of students, led by myself. All student interviews will be voluntary, and expected to last approximately thirty (30) minutes. Interviews will be audiotaped, with the students' permission. I am requesting that these interviews be held outside the classroom, preferably in a study room of the library or an alternative space that will foster an uninterrupted open discussion. The logistics of the interview schedule will be planned with the teacher and librarian in each school, and approved by the principal.

- Pre- and post-interviews will be held with the selected classroom teacher concerning the Health & Family Living curriculum; and the evaluation, selection and utilization of sex education materials, particularly related to the films selected for this research project.

- An interview will be held with the principal focused on the school's community, student population, health and family living curriculum, and the evaluation and selection of sex education materials.

- Related interviews will be held with other school support personnel (e.g., library media specialists, counselors, social workers, nurses, etc.), if required, as the research progresses.

I hereby assure you that all information and data obtained throughout this research project will remain confidential; and anonymity will be strictly maintained with respect to the schools, students and
staff. Results of the study will be made available to your office, if you deem it necessary.

Thank you for your professional cooperation and assistance. Please call me at (504) 244 - 8249, if you need to discuss any aspect of this research project further.

Sincerely,

Brenda G. Hatfield

CC: Dr. William Pinar
Professor and Chair
Department of Curriculum & Instruction
Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge
APPENDIX F

LETTER TO PRINCIPALS

7241 Lake Willow Drive
New Orleans, LA 70126
January 30, 1990

[School address deleted]

Dear [Deleted]:

Thank you for granting me permission to undertake a doctoral research project at [deleted] High School, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Ph.D. degree in Curriculum & Instruction at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge. I have scheduled field work at your school during the weeks of March 5-9; 12-16, 1990.

The purpose of my study is to analyze African American high school students' responses to two (2) contrastive prototypes of sex education films on the subject of AIDS. I am targeting this representative student population because there is a paucity of effort related to African Americans in current educational media research. Your school will be one of three to four high schools selected for this study. The films have been selected from the school district's approved list of materials for the Health & Family Living Curriculum.

The methodological procedures that I shall follow at your school are as listed below:

1. Participant observations will be maintained by me in at least one Health and Family Living class in progress, over a minimum period of two weeks. A voluntary teacher for this study would be preferred, with the principal's assistance in the selection and final approval.
2. Viewing of the films (on two different days) will be experienced by students in the selected Health & Family Living class, followed by classroom discussion led by the teacher.

3. Interviews will be held with individuals and groups of students, led by myself. All student interviews will be voluntary, and expected to last approximately thirty (30) minutes. Interviews will be audiotaped, with student and parental permission. I am requesting that these interviews be held outside the classroom, preferably in a study room of the library or an alternative space that will foster uninterrupted open discussion. The logistics of the interview schedule will be planned with the teacher and librarian, and approved by the principal.

4. Pre- and post- interviews will be held with the classroom teacher concerning the Health & Family Living curriculum; and the evaluation, selection and utilization of sex education materials, particularly related to the films selected for this research project.

5. An interview will be held with the principal focused on the school's community profile, student population, the health and family living curriculum, and the selection and evaluation of sex education materials.

6. Related interviews will be held with other student support personnel (e.g., library media specialists, counselors, social workers, nurses, etc.), if required, as research progresses.

This research study has been approved by the Department of Educational Accountability, [Deleted] Public Schools. I hereby assure you that all information and data obtained throughout this research project will remain confidential; and anonymity will be strictly maintained with respect to the school, students and staff. Results of the study will be made available to you.

Please call me at (504) 244 - 8249, if you wish to discuss any aspect of this project further. Indeed, I
look forward to working with you, the students, and staff at [deleted] High School.

Again, thank you for extending to me this professional courtesy and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Brenda G. Hatfield

CC: Dr. William Pinar  
Professor and Chair  
Department of Curriculum & Instruction  
Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge
APPENDIX G

LETTERS TO PARENTS WITH CONSENT FORM

February 5, 1990

Dear Parent or Guardian:

I am the Director of Instructional Media, Technology and Staff Development for the New Orleans Public Schools, currently on educational leave at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge.

I am conducting doctoral research concerned with educational films, under the supervision of the Department of Curriculum & Instruction at LSU.

I have received permission to conduct this research from your daughter or son's school principal, and the [Deleted] School District's Department of Educational Accountability.

My research is focused on students' learning experiences and opinions of educational films on the subject of AIDS. I have selected films from the school district's approved list of materials for the Health and Family Living course. I wish to show these educational films, and discuss them with students in individual and group interview sessions. The interviews will focus on the subject matter and production qualities of the films. These interviews will be audiotaped, unless otherwise determined by the students, in order to assist me in obtaining accurate data for the research. The final results of my research will be used to make recommendations regarding the evaluation, selection and use of educational films in the classroom.

In order to conduct interviews and audiotape students, I must have consent from their parent or guardian, as well as the student. I hereby assure you that the
interviews and audio recordings will be kept confidential, and real names will not be reported in
the research project or related publications, in order to maintain privacy and anonymity with respect to the
school, students, teachers and staff.

Would you kindly grant me permission to conduct a discussion interview your youngster, as I have
described above, by completing and returning the enclosed consent form. If you wish to discuss any
aspect of my research, please call me at 244-8249.

Thank you very much for your help and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Brenda G. Hatfield
CONSENT FORM

Dear Mrs. Hatfield:

Permission is granted for (student's name)__________ to be interviewed and audiotaped in your research project pertaining to student opinions on the subject matter and production qualities of selected and approved educational films on the subject of AIDS.

I understand that all records will be kept confidential, and real names will not be used in this research project or any related publication, in order to maintain privacy and anonymity with respect to the school, students, teachers and staff.

Signature of parent or guardian:

_____________________________ Date ______________

Signature of student:

_____________________________ Date ______________

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO THE SCHOOL
C/O Health & Family Living Class
Attention: Mrs. Brenda Hatfield
FOCUSED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

'Til Death Do Us Part (Durrin, 1988)

1. How were African-Americans identified and represented in the film?
2. How were females and males represented and identified in the film?
3. How did the production techniques of rap music and dance impact the film?
4. What were the instructional messages of the film, and were these messages sufficient to increase your understanding of AIDS?
5. How would you improve this film through its production techniques if you were the producer or director of a film on AIDS?
6. Would you recommend this film as appealing to all racial and ethnic student audiences (i.e., African-Americans, Hispanics, Caucasians, Asians, etc.)?
7. What was the symbolic representational role of the AIDS Siren?
8. How did you react to the treatment of the baby in the film?
9. Does it make a difference whether this film was written, created and produced by an African-American theater group of teenagers?

10. What did you like or dislike about the film, and do you have any other comments or observations?

11. According to your own experiences, with what messages in the film did you agree, oppose, consider neutral, or interpret in a different context?

12. How did you interpret the characters' dress, behaviors, beliefs as symbolized by backdrops, costumes, lighting, and musical background (e.g., the picket fence, the rainbow, the USA hat, hazy smoke, the young woman's frilly dress, the young man's short pants)?

13. Were there any hidden or unspoken messages in the film? If yes, discuss them.

14. Would you recommend this film to others? Why?

15. How does this film compare with other films that you have viewed recently, particularly in Health and Family Living?
APPENDIX I

FOCUSED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

_Sex, Drugs and AIDS_ (ODN Productions, 1987)

1. Was Rae Dawn Chong an effective choice as host narrator for this film? Why?

2. How were African-Americans treated in this film, especially compared to other races or ethnic groups represented in the film?

3. Were your opinions of homosexuals altered or changed by this film, especially after viewing the segment related by the brother of the deceased homosexual victim of AIDS?

4. How were females represented in the film?

5. How were males represented in the film?

6. What were the essential health messages in this film, and were there any moral or sermonizing messages?

7. What was your impression of the ballet school scene and the discussion among the three girls about their sexual experiences?

8. If you were the producer, how would you change or improve this film?
9. What aspects of the film impressed you the most? Why?

10. Did you identify with any particular parts of the film? Why?

11. Are there any questions that you would like to raise about this film?

12. How did this film compare with others that you have viewed in your Health and Family Living classes, especially on the subject of AIDS?
APPENDIX J

SCHEDULE OF INTERVIEWS

Marshville High School

February 13, 1990  Students interviewed on 'Til Death Do Us Part
February 14, 1990  Health and Family Living Teacher
February 15, 1990  Students interviewed on Sex, Drugs and AIDS
February 20, 1990  Principal
April 11, 1990    School Nurse
June 4, 1990      Social Worker
June 4, 1990      Librarian
June 12, 1990     Assistant Principal

Harriet Tubman High School

March 13, 1990    Students interviewed on Sex, Drugs and AIDS
March 13, 1990    Principal
March 15, 1990    Students interviewed on 'Til Death Do Us Part
March 15, 1990    Social Worker
March 19, 1990    Guidance Counselor
March 20, 1990    Health and Family Living Teacher
March 20, 1990    Librarian
Gardenia High School

March 23, 1990
Health and Family Living
Teacher

March 26, 1990
Students interviewed on
'Til Death Do Us Part

March 26, 1990
School Nurse

March 28, 1990
Students interviewed on
Sex, Drugs and AIDS

March 30, 1990
Health and Family Living
Teacher

April 4, 1990
Librarian

April 5, 1990
Principal

June 7, 1990
Assistant Principal

June 7, 1990
Guidance Counselor

Other Interviews

February 19, 1990
Family Living
Coordinator for School
District

September 13, 1991
Director of Facility
Planning for School
District

September 20, 1991
Director of Personnel
Department for School
District

NOTE: Names were requested to remain anonymous by the school district.
VITA

Brenda Garibaldi Hatfield, the daughter of Mary Ford Garibaldi and William Vainard Garibaldi, Jr., was born July 26, 1943, in New Orleans, Louisiana. She graduated from McDonogh #35 High School, New Orleans, Louisiana in 1961. She received her B.A. degree with a major in Spanish and a minor in Social Studies from University of New Orleans in 1965. She received her M.L.S. degree from University of Toronto, Canada, in 1973. She also studied at Howard University, Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico in Mexico City, University of Southern Mississippi, and Xavier University of the South.

Hatfield taught Spanish at Joseph S. Clark Senior High School in the New Orleans Public Schools District during the 1965-66 school year. She taught Spanish and English at Frank W. Ballou Senior High School in the District of Columbia Public Schools during the 1966-67 school year. She taught elementary emotionally disturbed children at Mount St. Joseph Institute in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada during the 1967-68 school year. She worked as a librarian assistant, children's librarian, branch head and director in the Hamilton Public Library, Ontario,
Canada from 1968 until 1976. She worked as a circulation head librarian and branch head for the New Orleans Public Library from 1976 until 1978. She worked in the New Orleans Public Schools District as Librarian for the Instructional Resource Center from 1978 until 1979 and served as the Center's Associate Director from 1979 until 1987. She is currently Director of the Center for Instructional Media and Technology, New Orleans Public Schools District since 1987. She also currently serves as a member of the Superintendent's Cabinet in the New Orleans Public Schools District.

Hatfield has been active and taken leadership roles in professional associations, civic organizations, educational advisory and editorial boards, and committees of state and local universities. She has been a speaker and presenter at state, national and world conferences including the Michigan State Department of Education Conference on Technology in 1988, the American Educational Research Association in 1989, the American Association of School Administrators in 1990, the Bergamo Conference on Curriculum Theory in 1989 and 1990, and the Organization for Economic and Cooperative Development.
Conference on School Facility Planning held in Rochefort, France in 1991.

In 1965, Brenda Ann Garibaldi and Charles Joseph Hatfield, Jr. were married in New Orleans, Louisiana. They have two children, Eric Charles Hatfield and Richard Fleming Hatfield. Currently they reside at 7241 Lake Willow Drive, New Orleans, Louisiana 70126.
Candidate: BRENDA GARIBALDI HATFIELD

Major Field: EDUCATION

Title of Dissertation: AN ANALYSIS OF EDUCATIONAL FILMS: AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE

Approved:

[Signatures]

Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]

Date of Examination: