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TEACHING ANOTHER LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM:
A STUDY OF THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF HIGH SCHOOL CONTENT
TEACHERS LEARNING AND TEACHING MEDIA LITERACY

by

Jeana Terry Rock

A thesis submitted to the faculty of

Brigham Young University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Theatre and Media Arts

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ABSTRACT

TEACHING ANOTHER LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM: A STUDY OF THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF HIGH SCHOOL CONTENT TEACHERS LEARNING AND TEACHING MEDIA LITERACY

Jeana Terry Rock

Department of Theatre and Media Arts

Master of Arts

Advances in communication technology have allowed for new ways for high school teachers to incorporate these technologies into their classroom practice. However, most teachers are uninformed about media literacy pedagogy. This study investigated how using a collaborative professional development group influenced teachers' understanding and use of media literacy concepts in their current practice. A professional development group with teachers from different content areas met for five months to study the theory and methodology of media literacy. This collaborative group provided opportunities for teachers to develop and share analytical and productions skills in media literacy, as well as design lessons utilizing media literacy principles appropriate to each teacher's field of study in order to facilitate better student understanding and application of media literacy as well as discipline-specific knowledge and skills. Results indicate positive development for the participants in using media literacy in their current instruction if adequate time and technology resources are available and that professional development groups for teachers of various content areas are an effective way to introduce them to media literacy.

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CHAPTER ONE

LITERATURE REVIEW

America exports more media to other countries than any other English-speaking country in the world, yet it lags behind every English-speaking country in its development of media literacy programs in public schools (Kubey, 1998; Semali, 2000). The media literacy movement in public education has been widespread in Britain, Australia, and Canada since the 1990s and in many non-English-speaking countries as well; however, the movement is slow in catching on in the U.S. One reason may be that media education is a convergence of a variety of disciplines, education, communication, cultural and media studies, literature and literacy, and library science fields, each with its own special definitions and demands. Another reason could be that in the U.S., central government does not dictate what is to be taught in school as in other countries, so states and independent districts must generate interest in the field. Recently, as evidenced by statewide initiatives in New Mexico, Florida, and New Jersey, and media standards in national educational organizations like the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and the International Reading Association (IRA), elementary and secondary education is encouraging educators to integrate media literacy in language arts, social studies, and health and consumer science fields. Similar to universities' adoption of African-American studies in the 1960s and multicultural and gender studies in the 1970s, the media education movement has attempted to align public education with cultural changes.

In this chapter I will

- present my framework for teaching students media literacy, which includes critical analysis and production;

- show what various theorists have contributed to the media literacy discourse and how they influenced my framework;
- provide an overview of how media literacy has developed in United States education and give reasons that teachers need media literacy and why it should be an integral part of high school curriculum in every context (Note: see Appendix A for details on sources useful for teachers in many content areas interested in teaching media literacy);
- show how teenagers are consumed with the media, but have not been taught to be critical of it;
- show why professional development/professional learning communities with hands-on experience are the best way to train teachers, since most have never been taught media literacy in their high school experience or in pre-service education;
- summarize what I have learned in my action research about the effective methods for teaching teachers media literacy skills to create a school-wide movement, teacher buy-in, and lasting change.

Media Literacy Framework for High School Teachers

Conceptual frameworks are essential structures for novice teachers learning a new field of study. They serve as maps in guiding teachers through a new territory. Several media literacy frameworks have emerged through the development of media literacy theories. Using these frameworks provides a basis of analysis and production of many media modalities, especially useful for teachers untrained in media education.

Core Beliefs

In my study and practice of media literacy, I have developed several core beliefs. These beliefs can be appropriated by most high school teachers in their own curriculum development and create a purpose

for teaching media literacy. These core beliefs are important to my study because they help teachers not currently teaching media literacy to understand the need to teach it in their practices:

1. Cross-disciplinary – Just like any literacy, to be effective in creating significant and permanent change in student understanding and application, media literacy must be taught in all disciplines.
2. Multimodality – Students experience messages from a variety of media sources, and therefore, must be taught to critically analyze these messages and create their own.
3. Popular culture – Media analysis should occur in contexts students encounter in their personal lives as well as in academic settings.
4. Student center learning – The most effective learning is student- rather than teacher-centered. After students develop critical media skills, they must make their own meanings from the messages they encounter. Teachers should take an inquiry stance, not an inoculation stance, in guiding students to meaning.
5. Production and digital divide – Despite all students having the right to access and create media messages, this is essential for a complete understanding of how and why messages are created.
6. Collaboration – In analyzing and creating media messages, students should work in situated practice in collaboration with others, including peers, teachers, and experts.
7. Social action – Students should be allowed to act on the messages they encounter to create a more democratic society.
8. Self-reflexivity – Although most students are passive audiences of media messages, popular media is a powerful influence in identity formation and cultural awareness.
9. Enjoyment – Media literacy is not a way of preventing students from taking pleasure

in the media they consume, but a way of deriving more pleasure from the media they choose to consume.

These core beliefs shape the choices I make in the specific framework I share with students. The following framework is structured to show questions and strategies that convey the core beliefs above.

Framework for Analysis and Production

Creating a framework of analysis and production for teaching media literacy helps novice teachers to create instruction that best suits content demands and student needs. Since teachers and organizations have been discussing how media literacy fits into various contexts since the 1960s beginning with television, a consensus has formed about what a media literacy curriculum should look like. The framework I present here is one that is useful to any content teacher; however, I use a more specialized framework in my language arts and media literacy curriculum to accommodate the demands of my specific core and my experience, just as any teacher will adapt frameworks to fit their needs.

My framework for media analysis, as well as production, is key to understanding the underlying principles of my core beliefs. My framework developed from five key questions developed by the Center for Media literacy in 1977 and enlarged by the National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE) into its six Core Principles (NAMLE, 2007; See Appendix B). NAMLE's principles form the basis of 20 questions students should ask about any media message in the analysis phase of media instruction. These questions are used to empower students to make good decisions about the kind and amount of media they consume. The first set of questions focuses on the author and audiences of the message: *Who made this message? Why was this made? Who is the target audience (and how do you know)? Who paid for this? Who might benefit from this message? Who*

might be harmed by it? Why might this message matter to me? What kinds of actions might I take in response to this message? These questions get to the principles that

- All media are constructed by people and /or organizations that have economic and sometimes political reasons for creating the messages.
- These messages have importance because they shape values, beliefs, attitudes, identities, and behaviors in the audience for good or ill, determine the culture of the society, and influence the democratic process.
- The audience has the power to choose to act on the messages given to ensure responsible media for all.

The next set of questions center around the actual messages of the text and the implications of what they mean: *What is this about (and what makes you think that)? What ideas, values, information, and/or points of view are overt? Implied? What is left out of this message that might be important to know? What techniques are used? Why were those techniques used? How do they communicate the message? How might different people understand this message differently? What is my interpretation of this and what do I learn about myself from my reaction or interpretation?*

These questions unearth the following principles:

- There is no “correct” way to interpret media messages. The audience is the final arbiter of meaning that emerges from their own backgrounds, skills, values, and beliefs.
- No message can convey everything about a topic. Choices media creators make about what to include and what to leave out are important in understanding whose ideas are being supported and whose are ignored.
- As in written texts, media have certain “grammars” unique to each, used to convey artistic as well as commercial or political messages. Understanding these conventions help students to

uncover meaning.

- Values and ideologies are imbedded in the messages, whether intentional or not, that affect the targeted audience in several ways.
- Students can learn about themselves through their media choices.

The last set of questions focus on the context and credibility of the message. *When was this made? Where or how was it shared with the public? Is this fact, opinion, or something else? How credible is this (and what makes you think that)? What are the sources of the information, ideas, or assertions?* (NAMLE, 2007, p. 3). These questions lead the student

- To understand that when and where the message was created reveal the culture of the time and place.
- To consult other sources to check the validity of the information contained in the message.

Media production is the second part of my framework and is central to media understanding.

When teachers create opportunities for students to create media for authentic purposes, students gain understandings of the creative and economic complications involved. With the previous analysis questions in mind and available technology, students can create powerful media messages. This is important in our media-saturated culture because students feel that they can contribute to the media discourse. This is one of the powerful implications of interactive media – it is democratic. If one has the knowledge and tools to create messages, there is no need for corporate or government backing. The specific ways teachers have students create media texts will differ depending on the field. In my own practice, I have students create blogs, podcasts, music videos, photo essays, lyrics, short documentaries, advertisements, movie posters, PowerPoint presentations, CD and book covers, and comic strips.

Definitions of Media Literacy

Defining what is meant by media literacy is important to my study since many teachers do not understand the term, while others think they are teaching media literacy because they use media in their instruction. It is important that teachers understand how media literacy relates to their field since I am advocating teaching media literacy across the curriculum. Historically the term “literacy” has meant the ability to read and write. In 2004, UNESCO defined literacy as "the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials associated with varying contexts" (UNESCO, p. 13), although later in the document it acknowledges literacy as “oral, written, visual and digital forms of expression and communication” (p. 14). Written language is only part of the way we communicate today in education and in personal experience. One need only compare the magazine advertisements from just a few decades ago or notice the number of films and television shows to see how much we depend on images to convey meaning. Certainly, to be considered literate today, one would need more than the ability to read and write words.

If one is to define media literacy, the definition of “text” must broaden beyond writing. The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) includes “spoken language, graphics, and technological communications” in its definition (1999, p. 2). Semioticians have long argued that anything that conveys meaning is a text, and indeed, many educators have widened the definition of “text” to include anything that can be critically analyzed in and outside the classroom. Semali (2003) says “ ‘text’ goes beyond a verbal or written artifact to refer to any communication or expression produced by artists, writers, or those in the media industries” (p. 271), and Kress (2003) suggests that text is “any instance of communication in any mode or in any combination of modes” (p.48). He further calls for “dislodg[ing] written language from the centrality which it has held, or which has been ascribed to it, in public communication” (p.182). Kress argues that all texts are multimodal,

although one may dominate; therefore, students must be literate in various modalities. One important indicator of how the definition of “text” has widened from being strictly written to include the visual is in the 2007 AP Language and Composition test (College Board, 2009) that used images as part of the “texts” students analyzed for their essays. The exams in 2007 and 2008 included an advertisement, a painting, a book cover, and photographs of pennies. This clearly indicates how even more specialized and respected educational organizations see the value of student understanding of how images construct meaning. This change in the definition of “text” is important in education because teachers have more opportunities to use multimodal texts in their classroom instruction, and they should be bringing the same kind of analysis to these texts.

Various advocates of analysis of multimedia texts have labeled it Cultural Literacy (Hirsche, Kett, & Trefil, 2002; Schirato & Webb, 2008), New Literacies (Gee, 2000; Kist, 2005; Leu, Kinzer, Coiro & Cammack, 2004), Visual Literacy (Chauvin, 2003; Kress, 2003), Multiliteracies (New London Group, 2000), media literacy (NAMLE, 2008; Center for Media Literacy, Media Literacy Clearinghouse, National Telemedia Council, Jenkins, 2006), Critical media literacy (Alverman, Moon & Hagood, 1999; Semali, 2000), and Media Education (Buckingham, 2005; Jhally, Klein, Kilbourn,). These different names embody many of the same elements and approaches used to teach students about the media with slight variations in perspectives and emphases. Accordingly, theorists and practitioners have defined media literacy differently. While some, like Kress, focus on visual aspects of media, others might focus on digital media, therefore, differing in the skills involved in decoding messages. The more research being done in the field and the more media literacy has been implemented in educational practice in many contexts, the definition has appropriately evolved, and with the creation of new media technologies, the definition has had to become more generalized to incorporate a wide range of skills necessary to deconstruct and construct media messages.

For the purpose of this study, media literacy is defined using the National Alliance for Media Literacy Education's definition. NAMLE's membership includes media experts at all levels of education and from the widest variety of fields concerned with the education of youth. Extensive discussions from many institutions, organizations, and individuals have created the definition, and I believe it to be the broadest and most useful to practitioners in any field. NAMLE defines media literacy as "... the ability to encode and decode the symbols transmitted via media and the ability to synthesize, analyze and produce mediated messages" (NAMLE, 2008, para. 5).

In the long term, this means that students will understand interpretations of media messages for themselves and how others different from themselves might read these same messages. They will understand whose point of view is acknowledged and what voices are missing, and what ideologies and values are contained in the message. Students will evaluate and make informed decisions about how they will use the media in their own lives and for their own purposes. Students will understand that media messages do not spontaneously appear, but are carefully created by organizations that usually have a commercial interest. An audience is targeted and the creators use specific tools to attract the audience's attention and sell a message of some sort. After students have understood how messages are constructed and for what purposes, they should construct messages of their own using their power to join the various discourses available in the media. It is essential that they see how this knowledge helps them to be better consumers and citizens.

Several theorists add a component about understanding the commercial and political implications of media messages as well, which is important in some contexts; however, my choice to use the NAMLE definition and its accompanying framework lies in its usefulness to *all* teachers, no matter their content area, because it encompasses pedagogy all teachers may use in their instruction

no matter their field of study. David Considine, media literacy education coordinator from Appalachian State College, summarizes a view that I agree with:

Media literacy, then, is an expanded information and communication skill that is responsive to the changing nature of information in our society. It addresses the skills students need to be taught in school, the competencies citizens must have as we consume information in our homes and living rooms, and the abilities workers must have as we move toward the 21st century and the challenges of a global economy.

(Considine, 1995, para. 6)

Although the focus of media literacy in this study is aimed at teaching students, Considine points out that all members of our society must become media literate. Parents and, as this study will show, teachers must acquire these skills as well if they are to have a positive influence on how our children use the media.

Specific Theorists of Media Literacy

The wide range of fields considering media literacy demonstrates its growing significance in education. While there are key differences, there are also important areas of overlap. The following theorists helped shape the framework I used to teach teachers in my study and students in my practice. The theorists come from diverse academic perspectives, which add authenticity to the framework for teachers from different content areas. These have added important dimensions to the discussion about the ways teachers can accomplish this task and have been helpful in creating my framework for media education.

Most theorists would agree that cultural understanding is one of the essential products of media literacy and one of the most engaging motivations for students to learn media literacy.

Connecting cultural contexts with academic pedagogy makes learning connect with students'

personal lives. They leave school with knowledge that is instantly applicable with what they do outside the classroom. Teachers need to realize this because using pop culture in the classroom to teach content is an alluring hook for students. In the 1980s E. D. Hirsch, Jr., retired Professor of Education and Humanities at the University of Virginia, advocated teaching what he calls a common culture literacy across the U.S. He defines cultural literacy as a “common knowledge or collective memory [that] allows people to communicate, to work together and to live together...that shifting body of knowledge that is found useful and therefore worth preserving” (p.x). Hirsch believes this body of knowledge is what all literate people know and what defines a culture. He stresses the importance of knowing stories from the Bible, mythology, history, and sports. The index of terms one should know covers everything from “Abraham and Isaac” to “yuppie.” Having a broad cultural knowledge “provides a sure avenue of opportunity for disadvantaged children, the only reliable way of combating social determinism” (Hirsch, 1987, p. xiii). Using cultural texts is important in education because it counters criticism that the current curriculum is elitist, because the increasing numbers of students immigrating to the U.S. each year need to be acculturated and because pop culture is easily accessible to most students. Schirato and Webb extend Hirsch’s view to include the use of media as a venue for acquiring cultural literacy. “Regardless of the field or fields to which we belong, we are required to negotiate, and be literate with regard to, different fields, media and modalities, and be able to read, relate, and contextualize visual images and other media texts. In other words, we are required to possess wide (cultural) literacies” (Schirato & Webb, 2008, para. 2). I find that adding pop culture to my curriculum is an easy and fun addition and one that all teachers can and should incorporate.

The multimodal nature of media is an important issue in teaching media literacy in the high school. Students not only write essays, but also create blogs, electronic presentations, podcasts,

videos, bulletin boards, and websites. They not only study textbooks and novels, but also watch documentaries, movies, commercials, and television shows; they listen to podcasts, music, and radio programs; they read newspaper and magazine articles, web pages, advertisements, and graphic novels. With the widened definition of “text,” anything can become an object of critical study.

As an example of how one could analyze a multimodal text, Kress (2000) suggests a mineral water bottle on a grocery store shelf. He discusses how the visual elements we see as we pass it in the grocery aisle-- the shape, color, and size of the bottle, the text and images on the label – all create meaning and influence our choice to purchase it or not. Once we purchase the bottle, our tactile senses kick in. We hold the bottle and feel its weight, temperature, and texture. This is a real sense of how students “read” bottles and make economic choices based on their cultural understandings derived from the messages it contains. Our students are constantly making these types of decisions as they face multimodal media messages many times a day, and it is necessary for teachers to make explicit how these decisions are made.

Critical Media Literacies combines work in sociology and cultural studies and is important in education because media is influential in creating identities. Alverman, Moon, and Hagood (1999) state that Cultural Media Literacies “provide[s] individuals access to understanding how the print and non-print texts that are part of everyday life help to construct their knowledge of the world and the various social, economic, and political positions they occupy within it” (p. 1-2). This approach sees students as a community of readers who accept or resist the popular culture messages they encounter. They advocate media literacy for teaching students to question ways their identities are formed by the media messages they consume, hoping they will become more informed consumers, and for evaluating media messages for political, economic, and aesthetic content. Semali (2003) agrees that text analysis must go beyond the aesthetic and include the social and political aspects because

ignoring them would make the examination incomplete. Teachers who advocate the development of “social consciousness” see students taking action as they come to realize that some popular media messages promote poor health habits, marginalize certain groups, promote stereotypes, or in general, have a detrimental impact on society.

Henry Jenkins (2006) brings into the media literacy lexicon terms like “participatory culture” and “convergence culture,” which are important because of the interactive nature of media. The media of the 21st century has increasingly allowed more local and individual participation with the advent of Web 2.0; therefore, production is an essential element in media literacy. Jenkins points out that students have more opportunities to join groups with diverse interests through common portals like social and online gaming networks. They have the ability to transform media through mash-ups, fan e-zines, and digital sampling. Collaborations through websites like Wikipedia allow individuals to share knowledge, and finally, they can create their own content through blogs and podcasts. Students creating effective media messages have more opportunities to learn, create, and participate in communities, and they will be more successful than other students will if they do. The unevenness of access for student to media has led to a concern about a “digital divide.”

When I first taught a semester media literacy class in the English department, I saw the relevance and need for all the students to participate, not just the 140 students I could have in one year. I have seen how life changing this new knowledge can be in the life of a teenager. When students have access to these skills, they have the necessary social capital to compete in the ever-changing media society. Giving all students in a high school access to the tools necessary for understanding the plethora of media messages they encounter is one method for closing the digital divide. Many theorists and practioners have focused on closing the “digital divide” through providing computer access to all students (Buckingham, 2003; Hobbs, 2005b; Jenkins, 2006).

However, giving a student access to a computer without giving guidance in the many ways she/he can use it does not solve the digital problem. All students must be taught how to analyze and to use the technology effectively, and traditional schooling does not do this to the full potential. Students may take required computer keyboarding classes or elective classes in media production, but I argue that all teachers need to include these skills in their instruction. To close the participation gap, Henry Jenkins advocates teaching eleven core media skills which could be included in any content: Play, Performance, Simulation, Appropriation, Distributed Cognition, Collective Intelligence, Judgment, Transmedia Navigation, Networking, and Negotiation. When teachers incorporate these skills into assignments for students across the curriculum, they provide them with abilities that are used in 21st century jobs, ones that require their knowledge and collaboration to contribute to discourse in all academic areas. Jenkins believes that media literacy is not an “add-on” content, which many teachers fear, but that it should be taught with all teachers contributing their own expertise in their own content. This is my belief as well and what drives my research.

David Buckingham advocates media literacy for its emphasis on its democratization of education, “a process whereby students’ out-of-school cultures are gradually recognized as valid and worthy of consideration in the school curriculum” (Buckingham, 2003, p. 9). This is important because many students feel a disconnect between what they learn at school and what they experience in life. If critical skills are used to analyze messages students encounter at home, they are likely to use those same techniques on academic texts. Although media literacy has been criticized for its analysis of “low culture,” Buckingham sees it essential that teachers “begin by working with the cultures that students [bring] with them into the classroom, rather than seeking merely to impose the values of ‘high’ culture” (p. 9). He is not advocating abandoning the tried and true canons that need to be taught for a common cultural literacy, but bringing into the literacy discussion popular culture texts

students know and love “represent[s] a direct challenge to the elitism of established literary culture; and in this respect, it...inform[s]...a wider class politics” (p. 10).

Buckingham also encourages a move away from a teacher-centered discussion that operates as “inoculation” against the negative effect of the media where students are “taught” to become sexist and racist or where media promote sexuality, violence, and consumerism, and move instead to a student inquiry pedagogy where students learn to interpret messages and make evaluations on their own. Media literacy is often seen as a panacea for these social ills and Buckingham fears that “the need to consider any of the more intractable causes of such problems – or any more thoroughgoing and potentially unpalatable ways of dealing with them – is neatly side-stepped” (p. 11). Buckingham sees that this protectionist view has faltered in light of research that shows students “are a much more autonomous and critical audience than they are conventionally assumed to be” (p.12) and that the media are recognizing this. This recognition is evident in the “Image is Nothing; Thirst is Everything” Sprite commercials, which show that just because Grant Hill drinks Sprite doesn’t mean you will be a great basketball player if you drink Sprite. In my experience, students may understand the dangers involved with certain media messages, but that does not mean that they do not enjoy them. Buckingham advocates a “student-centered perspective, which begins from young people’s existing knowledge and experience of media, rather than from the instructional imperatives of the teachers” (p.13) and moves toward an understanding of and participation in media. His framework reflects many aspects of mine, especially with respect to target audience, conventions, and representation. His approach “is oriented toward preparation rather than protection” (p. 67). Instead of viewing teens as “passive victims of media manipulation” (p.67), Buckingham hopes that these concepts will create an inductive approach to media literacy that will increase students’ pleasure in the media and allow students to discover the messages in media themselves.

Gee (2000b), a member of the New London Group who is a professor of literacy at Arizona State University, advocates a Bill of Rights for all children, but especially the minority and poor. He agrees with Jenkins and Buckingham that one of the goals of media literacy is to enable students “who can function in the new capitalism, but in a much more meta-aware and political fashion than forms of new-capitalist-complicit schooling” (p. 67). Students should be empowered with the ability to analyze standard media modes, but then to transform and create new ones for their own purposes. My framework also calls for *all* students to have equal access to media, which creates the social capital to participate in the global economy.

The reality of the global economy is important to The New London Group, which is composed of a dream team of education and media theorists from several continents. They too want to widen the current conception of literacy “to include negotiating a multiplicity of discourses” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2003, p. 9). They credit the need for change in terminology to the globalization of our world with its diversity in culture and language and to the array of text modes in informational and entertainment technologies, and they are concerned that “differences of culture, language, and gender are not barriers to educational success” (p. 10). Their research seeks to answer two questions: What do students need to learn? and What are the ranges of appropriate learning relationships? (p. 19). The New London Group enlists four components of pedagogy as a framework for teaching media literacy: Situated Practice, Overt Instruction, Critical Framing, and Transformed Practice. My framework allows for several of these components.

I agree that instruction is most effective if students are situated in authentic activities within a community of learners who have the ability to play several roles based on their interests and abilities. This community includes experts who may or may not be the teacher. Most students need some initial instruction from the experts that facilitate necessary skills, and then again, when it is most useful to

the student. Evaluation is usually formative to allow students access to the time and resources that lead to success. In analysis, decontextualizing messages and looking at the production values and messages that emerge is a way of “making it strange.” Finally, toward the end of the year, students should have the opportunity to choose to produce their own modes of media, which places their knowledge in a new context. This strategy is often difficult for teachers to construct in the limited time they have, but should be attempted at least once a year. In my practice, I created an advertisement simulation where students in groups contacted a local business, met with the owners, formed a creative brief, and presented an ad campaign. The assignment was fraught with difficulties, but students became much more aware of the complications involved in creating good advertisements on a limited budget.

Lewis and Jhally (1998) take a more political stance on media education, preferring students to understand how media messages are created within an institutional, cultural, and economic context, which relates to the social action aspect of my beliefs. Lewis and Jhally believe that media texts “should be analyzed as sets of institutions with particular social and economic structures that are neither inevitable nor irreversible. Media education should certainly teach students to engage media texts, but it should also, in our view, teach them to engage and challenge media institutions” (Lewis & Jhally, 1998, p.109). Their approach requires students to act on the knowledge they have gained by the critical analysis of media messages. They draw on the works of Herman, McChesney, Chomsky, and Schiller as textual critiques of the economic policies and power plays in media organizations. Jhally’s documentaries, which are useful tools in the classroom, are critical of the consumerism that drives most media and the power corporations wield over the ideology of our culture. Working with Jean Kilbourne, Naomi Klein, and Jackson Katz, Jhally has taken on the advertising media’s effects on men and women, globalization of media corporations, and music videos. Although he takes an

inoculation stance, his ideas are provocative and cause some serious discussion and contemplation. While I do not take an inoculation stance, my framework assumes that political factors are embedded in the analysis and production of media messages as a way to “talk back” or resist messages students find injurious to them as they become active in the production aspect of media.

Hobbs focuses on media literacy in the language arts curriculum, which is important to my study since most of the teachers participating are from that field. She brings discussion about the disparate concerns in media literacy emerging from the various practitioners and organizations involved in this discourse. She questions, “Does the wide diversity of perspectives among educators serve as a source of strength for the emerging media literacy movement, or does it suggest the essentially problematic nature of recent attempts to define and implement such an expansive and unstable concept as media literacy?” (Hobbs, 2001, para. 3). Her discussion focuses on answering seven questions that have been debated in the media literacy community, which has been helpful to me in overcoming objections peers have raised about the place media literacy should have in high school education. Her answers to these essential questions validate what the previous theorists have already proposed. She agrees with Buckingham that media literacy must be student-centered and inquiry-driven to allow students to come to their own judgments about the media. She states that “by focusing on the problematic features of the mass media, we neglect young people’s emotional engagement with the media, and we may ignore the genuine pleasures they receive, substituting cynicism and superiority instead of promoting real questioning and analysis” (para. 14). She also agrees that individual and group production is an essential component to media literacy, but may have serious limitations. Money for the technology necessary for production is limited in public education and is used primarily for low-achieving students and where money is available students may create products that “ape the professionals, and that a critical, analytical perspective will be lost” (Stafford,

1990, cited in Hobbs, 2001, para. 19). Clearly, this is an ongoing discussion with no easy answers, and as new work in secondary education is done and as more disciplines recognize the need for media literacy in their instruction, less debate may occur.

Problems of Youth Media Consumption

Media's profound influence on adolescents drives the demand and need for media literacy in education and my own efforts to integrate it my school. The problem is not the level of media saturation, but its invisibility to students – their lack of awareness or criticism. Teachers need to make the operation of media transparent to students.

Media Saturation

According to the Kaiser Family Foundation's 2005 study *Generation M*, an exhaustive study of teens' media use, students in American schools today are more immersed in the media than they were in 1995. They spend almost four hours a day watching television compared to 45 minutes reading (Roberts, Foer, & Rideout 2005), and more than half of teens have online social networking sites (Lenhart, 2007). According to the study:

The typical 8- to 18-year-old lives in a home with an average of 3.6 CD or tape players, 3.5 TVs, 3.3 radios, 2.9 VCRs/DVD players, 2.1 video game consoles, and 1.5 computers. Indeed, one in four (24%) live in homes with five or more TVs, half (53%) live in homes with three or more VCRs/DVD players, half (56%) have two or more video game players, and one-third (34%) live in homes with a digital video recorder. Cable or satellite TV service is widely available (more than eight in ten young people have one or the other), and a majority of youth (55%) gets premium channels such as HBO at home. (p. 9)

It is indisputable that teens live in a highly mediated world with little expertise in managing it. With

so much access to media and the challenges confronted by it, children need help in navigating this sometimes-treacherous territory with its abundance of misogynistic, violent, and sexual messages, stereotypes, and unhealthy body images.

Digital Natives/Digital Immigrants

Parents have not been helpful since this is unfamiliar territory for most of them, and they are equally naïve about the subtleties in the messages. Add the lack of technology expertise and it is even more of a problem. The majority of parents and teachers of teens today did not even own a computer in high school, let alone have access to video games, cell phones, cable TV, and the Internet. Adults and students alike need to be less passive consumers of media messages. In addition to his concerns about the digital divide and unequal opportunities based on socio-economics, Marc Prensky (2001) calls adults with little knowledge about or experience with the new media Digital Immigrants and our students who have grown up with it Digital Natives. He asserts that the brains of our children today are wired differently because of access to the “multiplemedia” that they are all “native speakers” of the digital language of computers, video games and the Internet” (p.1). He claims that even those adults who have embraced the new media will never be as adept at using it as our children. We learned the “language” too late in life to become “fluent.” This difference in brain wiring is one of the obstacles educators have had to overcome in creating interest in media literacy programs. Teachers have difficulty using and understanding media themselves, and therefore, are hesitant to try to teach it. The learning curve for teaching teachers how to use the media is far steeper than the curve for teaching students how to use it. Many students are more adept than I am. This is why my study is so important. It shows a framework for creating interest in media literacy and gives methods for helping teachers learn how to use it in their practice.

Participatory Culture

The positive side of these Digital Natives is that they are using media in their academic and private lives. Not only are they consuming it, they are now creating it. “Web 2.0” is a term used to describe the interactive nature of the Internet today. The ability to participate in the creation and evaluation of content on websites such as Facebook, Youtube, and Blogspot, has lead to the creation of a participatory culture which Henry Jenkins defines as

[A] culture with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing one’s creations, and some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices. A participatory culture is also one in which members believe their contributions matter, and feel some degree of social connection with one another (at the least they care what other people think about what they have created). (Jenkins, 2006, p. 3)

This amazing ability to create media content so easily begs teachers to help students become aware of the implications their messages have on their audiences. If teens use this technology, they must learn the codes and etiquettes it demands. Rather than just shooting video footage and posting it to Youtube, with careful analysis, students can take the next giant step and create powerful, artistic messages that could have a profound influence in society.

Changes in Access and Content

The most compelling reason to study the media lies in its ubiquity. Americans cannot escape it, even if we wanted to. It is at the core of our communication. It is how we negotiate symbols and meaning. Indeed, it is one of the most powerful socializing influences today (Silverblatt, 2004). Through the media, teens find their identity and establish relationships with others (Buckingham, 2003; Hobbs, 2004). Students ought to be taught how media influences and shapes their ideas about

the world because “the media have become part of the texts of students’ everyday lives. This reality is not going away soon” (Semali, 2000, p.45). 81% of children watch an average of 3 hours of television a day. 68% have televisions in their bedrooms (Roberts, 2005). These statistics do not include the amount of time they spend listening to CDs, tape players, radios, or MP3 players, or viewing video games or computers, or even texting friends on cellphones. Certainly, access to more modes increases the amount of time spent consuming media messages. One can see that media have a huge impact on the lives of our children. With so much time being spent with the media, teens need to become critical consumers and producers of the messages they receive there, and they need to be taught how to do this. In the past, this was the responsibility of parents, but just as we, in our democratic society, cannot depend on the home to teach reading, writing, and arithmetic to all our children, media literacy now must be the responsibility of schools. This means including media as another area to apply critical thinking strategies beyond reading, writing and arithmetic, and educational practices must change to meet the changing needs of our students.

Students in the 2004 graduating class began school with the simple pencil, paper, book, and film technologies to communicate. In the intervening years changes in technology has brought into the home and classroom computers with software for word processing, presentations, video and audio recording and editing, mp3 players, and spreadsheets. Added to that was the Internet with email, blogs, social network sites, instant messaging, bulletin boards, encyclopedias, and virtual worlds (Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, & Cammack, 2004). Changes in computer technology include satellite access to over 100 television and radio channels and to cell phones. These new technologies not only allow students access to consume content, but also allow students to participate globally by creating their own content. If these are the changes in technologies requiring literacy in the past 12 years, what do the students graduating in 2020 have in store for them?

Not only do students have greater access to media messages, but also the messages themselves have changed. Parents' concern about television content spurred the television industry and advocacy groups to announce that on October 1, 1997 new TV Parental Guidelines system would be implemented similar to the ratings established by the MPAA in 1968. A longitudinal study by Chandra, Martino, Collins, Elliott, Berry, Kanouse, et al (2008) found that teens who watch programs with high levels of sexual content were twice more likely to have sex than those who didn't. However, sexual content in television programs and advertisements has increased to where children are exposed to >14,000 sexual references a year (AAP, 1999), most failing to show responsible sexual behavior or to give accurate information about abstinence, sexually transmitted diseases, birth control, or even risks of pregnancy. While sexual content has always existed in media, it is more overt today. In a study of the effects of televisions in adolescents' bedrooms, researchers Jackson, Brown, and Pardun (2008) found that adolescents with bedroom TVs spent more time alone, were more likely to participate in sexual behavior, and smoke. Additionally, the more children watch television the more likely they are to be obese and have low academic achievement (AAP, 1999). It is hard to argue against the need for children to understand the effects of media on the choices they make.

Media Literacy in Public Education

The role of educating students regarding media has shifted as the media themselves have developed. As media becomes more pervasive and as more students are participating as creators, educators are seeing more need to include critical analysis in their pedagogy. As I have previously shown, the definition of text and literacy has shifted to accommodate the changing environment students today find themselves in respect to what skills they need to be contributing members of a

democratic, capitalistic, and global society. I will now outline how this shift in education has come about.

Media Education Historical Overview

For over 40 years, Americans have been enjoying film and television as popular forms of entertainment and information. In the 1950s and 60s television consisted of three channels, all in black and white. With cable and satellite television widely available in the 1970s, access to over 300 channels became available with original programming. If you miss an episode today, you can just record it using your DVR, or simply log on to the program's website and catch up anytime. Movie theaters during my childhood showed only one film and might offer a double feature. When the film ended its run, it would take two more years before it was broadcast on television, in black and white. Today once the film hits the screen, you may watch it at the theater with 20 screens, or wait and rent or buy the DVD version after its first run is over and watch it in color on your 54" flat screen TV in high definition.

Early movements in media education focused on the easy access to television broadcasting. One of the earliest national groups to form was the American Council for Better Broadcasting (ACBB). In 1953 this group of 18 national organizations and 18 state groups met in Minneapolis to organize with the focus on improving radio and television programming. They met in Washington, D.C. in 1979 before the FCC to ask broadcasters to promote critical viewing skills in children. Some funding had been offered to Yale University, some parent groups, and other reading projects by the three major television broadcasters; however, the ACBB requested "more massive effort." They concluded, "We believe that critical viewing skills are an essential necessity for the generations to come, who will have to cope with an increasingly complex global 'information society.' We are convinced that children can be helped to walk into the future equipped with the tools for intelligent,

discriminating use” (National Telemedia, 2006, p. 7). This early grass-roots organization, now called the National Telemedia Council, continues to advocate media literacy in education and publishes a journal called *The Journal of Media Literacy*.

Although film has been popular as entertainment since the 1930s and seriously studied in university courses in cultural studies and the humanities, it was not until John Culkin’s dissertation at the Harvard Graduate School for Education in 1964 that this form of entertainment was deemed worthy of critical study in high schools (Moody, 2007). Following in Culkin’s wake, other visionary teachers brought film and television study to elementary schools in Mamaroneck, New York and in high schools in Ohio. Unfortunately, these programs failed to catch on.

Religious organizations, concerned about the influence of media on families created an organization called Media Action Research Center and a non-denominational program for adults called Television Awareness Training in 1979. This phase of media literacy in the 70s has been referred to as the “inoculation phase” (Buckingham, 2005; Masterman, 1990) where the emphasis was on protecting children from the “evil” influences of the media. Elizabeth Thoman, teaching media literacy at a private Catholic school, founded *Media & Values* magazine in 1977 and The Center for Media Literacy in 1989. Still little was being taught in most schools, although the National Council of Teachers of English, in their annual meeting in 1975, made a resolution that:

grew out of awareness among educators that understanding the new media and using them constructively and creatively actually required developing a new form of literacy—new critical abilities ‘in reading, listening, viewing, and thinking’ that would enable students to deal constructively with complex new modes of delivering information, new multisensory tactics for persuasion, and new technology-based art forms (NCTE, 1975).

Although Len Masterman is British, his seminal work, *Teaching the Media*, published in 1985, has had a huge impact on educators interested in media literacy in the U.S. In his keynote address to Canada's Association for Media Literacy conference in 1990, he calls for the study of advertising and the impact marketing has on media audiences. He states, "Marketing is a key concept which is going to have to be brought into play as a way of making sense of any and every media text, and will occupy a central position in our understanding of the mass media today" (Masterman, 2007, p. 15). He summarizes his approach to media education: "I don't think that anyone could claim to be media literate today without understanding that it is the audience which is the real product of the media and not the programs" (p. 18).

The 90s brought a new definition of literacy to include media in light of changing media forms. In 1990, Barry Duncan argued that we need an expanded view of literacy; one that recognizes the impact media has had on traditional texts. He pointed to the change in newspapers' content and layout, especially *USA Today*, which reflects television's rapid-fire delivery and heavy dependence on images. Several novels have media themes and students come to classes saturated with media messages. The New Mexico Media Literacy Project, based in Albuquerque and created in 1993, has had a profound impact on educational programs by providing teachers with tools to help them teach media literacy. The organization offers several contests to get students writing about and creating advertisements. Other U.S. organizations that have supported teachers and promoted media literacy in education include NAMLE (the largest organization in the U.S.), Project Look Sharp from Ithaca College, Just Think (organized in 1995 in the San Francisco Bay Area), and Media Literacy Clearinghouse (founded by Frank Baker who provided many activities I have used in my practice). These organizations have been instrumental in creating a wave of interest in media literacy and have provided theoretical and pedagogical support for teachers venturing into the field.

At the beginning of the new millennium, media literacy is becoming institutionalized; although there is no new clear-cut pedagogy, many in education, as well as those in other organizations concerned about adolescent well-being and justice, are embracing media literacy. In 2008, the first national teachers' organization, National Council of Teachers of English, created *The NCTE Definition of 21st-Century Literacies*. It states, "As society and technology change, so does literacy. Because technology has increased the intensity and complexity of literate environments, the twenty-first century demands that a literate person possess a wide range of abilities and competencies, many literacies" (NCTE, 2008). NCTE and the International Reading Association (IRA) have joined to support teachers in language arts, while, NAMLE supports teachers in every discipline. NCTE and NAMLE have made great progress toward institutionalizing media literacy at the national level.

Other English-speaking countries have recognized the need for schools to teach media literacy and have mandated it in their curriculum. All English-speaking countries outside the U.S., including South Africa, have required media education in their K-12 curriculum since the late 1980s and early 1990s (Kubey & Baker, 1999). Today national educational organizations like the NCTE, IRA, and the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) in the U.S. are beginning to include media standards in their core. Of the twelve NCTE standards, six contain some reference to non-print media. A study by Kubey and Baker (1999) shows that all 50 states have a media literacy thread in at least one content area, with most states requiring some form of media literacy in three content areas: language arts, social studies, and health and consumer science. Although most media education has largely taken place in language arts classes (Buckingham, 2003; Hobbs, 2007), the majority of content area teachers can easily incorporate media literacy into their practice. Several media educators insist that media education should extend beyond the language arts class. Indeed, it should be taught across all content areas (Buckingham, 2003; Considine, 2002; Hobbs, 2005a; Jacobs, 2006; Kubey & Baker,

1999; Semali, 2000) because media texts are used in all content areas.

Professional Development

If teaching media literacy in schools is to be successful, teachers need to be trained to teach it. Most teachers, even those just arriving in education, may be using media in their personal and professional lives, but few have been taught to be aware or critical in using it. As Prensky (2001) points out, “the single biggest problem facing education today is that our Digital Immigrant instructors, who speak an outdated language (that of the pre-digital age), are struggling to teach a population that speaks an entirely new language” (p. 2). Although Prensky postulates that we will never be fluent, we certainly can learn to speak the language well enough to guide our students.

All teachers use some form of media in their instruction and many are having students create media products, some as simple as PowerPoint presentations. However, “[teachers] need to establish a set of working criteria to evaluate commercial media products for use by their students and to assess the media productions of their own students in a developmentally appropriate fashion” (Semali, 2003). Rogow (2004) states, “Educators will need the time and training to integrate media and media literacy into what they do or they will continue to use media the way they generally use it at home (i.e., for entertainment)” (p. 32). Teachers need to develop awareness, a media vocabulary and a set of criteria for evaluating media in their practice. Rogow further argues that media education is not a movement, but a new field of study. When she envisions a media education department, it “makes clear the interdisciplinary nature of media literacy. To be comprehensive, the faculty would have to include specialists focused on research, practice, and theory with expertise in health issues, K-12 education and pedagogy, political and business analysis, media effects, cultural criticism, production, visual literacy, art, ethics, journalism, and more” (32).

The success of school reform in light of No Child Left Behind hinges on the success of teachers. Studies have shown that quality teachers produce high achieving students (Little, 1993; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001). To gain the respect they deserve, teachers must see themselves as professionals and keep abreast of new changes in educational theory and pedagogy just as those in other professional fields do. It would be absurd to think of a doctor, lawyer, or accountant beginning his/her practice and never learning anything more about changes in their fields. Just as laws and medical practices change regularly, so does our knowledge of how students learn, what students should learn, and how to teach students. Teachers must be aware of changes in technology as well and “exercise deliberative and creative thinking in regard to the growing repertoire of pedagogies and tools learning” (Laferriere, 2006, p. 76). Professional development opportunities are the ways practioners keep abreast of new developments in their fields and teaching is no different. Media literacy is one of the developments that have not been explicitly taught to most teachers. Teachers must not only learn new pedagogy, but also continue to improve their effectiveness. Research has proven that the effectiveness of teachers influenced student achievement more than any other factor (Crowther, 2002). Individual schools, school districts and local universities have offered professional development opportunities to learn new methodology and pedagogy because most states require additional training to continue certification; however, historically these opportunities have been one-time meetings with expert presenters with little to no follow-up, and teachers rarely implement real change in their pedagogy. Borko (2004) found that each year millions of dollars are spent on “in-service seminars and other forms of professional development that are fragmented, intellectually superficial, and do not take into account what we know about how teachers learn” (p. 3). To implement long-lasting change in the way teachers teach and in the way schools prepare

students, the structure of professional development is evolving from the “one-size-fits-all” model of the past to professional learning communities, which is at the forefront of school reform.

Effective professional development seeks to provide teachers with high quality instruction to enable them to change pedagogy and improve high student achievement in conjunction with local vision, mission, and goals (Crowther, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 1995; Hord, 1997). Little believes that the most promising forms of professional development engage teachers in the pursuit of genuine questions, problems, and curiosities, over time, in ways that leave a mark on perspectives, policy, and practice. They communicate a view of teachers not only as classroom experts, but also as productive and responsible members of a broader professional community and as persons embarked on a career that may span 30 years or more. (Little, 1993, 133)

As researchers studied best practices for teacher learning, six components emerge that redesign or increase the effectiveness of professional development and these structures can provide an effective framework for preparing teachers to teach media literacy.

Components of Effective Professional Development

Intentional collaboration

Although teachers are required to keep abreast of changes in their field and seek ways to improve their practice, mandating certain professional development experiences does little to create long-term change. Nevertheless, when teachers chose to participate in professional development and are actively engaged in planning, setting goals, and selecting activities, they do not revert to former methods. Teachers leave the isolation of their classrooms and work together as a department or school community to achieve common goals. The old adage “two brains are better than one” is true. Teachers working with other teachers are able to create new ways of teaching, solve problems,

provide support, have higher expectations of students, and are more willing to experiment with new ideas (Crowther, 2002; Darling-Hammond & Milbrey, 1995; Grangeat & Gray, 2008; Porter, Garet, Desimone, Yoon & Birman, 2000). Instead of keeping good ideas safely in their personal file cabinets, collaborative teachers share and mentor other teachers. This supports Dewey's hope for "a laboratory model for schools where teachers engage in collective inquiry in order to weigh their practices and innovations against empirical evidence and critical dialogue" (Wood, 2007, p. 282). DuFour states, "Researchers consistently report that the collaborative cultures created by these educators [in collaboration] have helped students achieve at higher levels, fostered a powerful sense of professional efficacy among teachers, and made the teaching experience more rewarding and fulfilling" (Erkens et al., 2008, p. 1).

Another benefit of collaboration in professional development is the support teachers receive from each other. Thibodeau (2008) mentions that in her cross-disciplinary group, members persevered when they felt like quitting because "they knew they could count on support and assistance from their peers in the collaborative group" (p. 59). A third benefit of collaboration is the development of teacher leaders (Porter et al., 2000). Muijs & Harris (2006) found that within school collaborations "the power base is dispersed within the teaching community. In this sense, leadership is widely distributed amongst organizational members" (p. 962) and the division of work is more widely shared. This effect is important and teachers need to feel their ideas and skills have value in the organization and that they can make a unique contribution. If teachers expect students to create communities of learning within their classrooms, they must model that same type of community of learners with their own peers (Borko, 2004).

The most effective collaborations are ones within the same school. Laferrière, Lamon & Chad (2006) state: "We know that deep teacher learning does not come from one-shot training

courses with experts transmitting de-contextualized knowledge to teachers; learning is situated and we need an ecology that grounds teachers' learning experience in their own practice, experience, and culture (community)" (p. 77). Garet et al., (2001) outlines four benefits of in-school collaboration: 1) Teachers who work together have more opportunities to discuss "concepts, skills, and problems" (p. 922) that might come up in their sessions; 2) They are more likely to share common materials, etc.; 3) If teachers share the same students, they probably will discuss students' individual needs; 4) Teachers from the same school are more likely to maintain the same practices over time and develop a common culture revolving around changes refined during professional development.

Scheduled time

To achieve the kind of professional development that creates reform, schools must rethink scheduling. One of the main challenges of creating effective training is lack of time (Garet et al., 2001; Peixotto & Fager, 1998). Parents tend to think that the workday of teachers includes only time spent actually in front of the class (McDiarmid, 1995). Nevertheless, if parents of students value teachers' improvement, they must consider how professional development can be incorporated into the school day. Schools have adapted schedules to allow early-out days or late-start days to accommodate teachers working together. Some districts have experimented with using permanent substitutes on certain days, which allows classroom teaching and allows collaboration and development time for teacher-planning sessions into the daily schedule. Garet believes that by allowing collaboration in the regular school day "professional development may be more likely than traditional forms to make connections with classroom teaching, and they may be easier to sustain over time" (Garet et al., 2001, p. 921). It is clear that providing time for teachers to collaborate validates the importance of this work, and that teachers feel more disposed to participate.

Direct application to classroom content

Often past professional development activities have left teachers hard pressed to apply the strategies in their own practice. Teachers are more willing to participate in improvement where content is at the forefront of planning. Teaching content is essential to helping students achieve their Adequate Yearly Progress. To create better classrooms “teachers must be immersed in the subjects they teach, and have the ability both to communicate basic knowledge and to develop advanced thinking and problem-solving skills among their students” (Garet et al., 2001). This is where collaboration with university personnel is helpful, since faculty there are more likely to be knowledgeable of new research in theory and best practices in pedagogy (Little, 1993). Additionally, cross-curricular groups provide teachers with opportunities to extend learning skills in multiple content areas, like those that study writing across the curriculum. Garet et al. (2001) summarizes two studies of math and science teachers where students in schools involved in professional development focused on content achieved better scores than those students in schools where teachers did not. Garet et al. concluded: “We view the degree of content focus as a central dimension of high-quality professional development” (p. 925).

Intensity and duration

Almost all the literature on teacher development shows that professional development over time is most effective (Crowther, 2002; Darling-Hammond & Milbrey, 1995; Garet et al., 2001; Little, 1993; Porter et al., 2000). In fact, one study by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory stated that it took over 13 months to create permanent change in science teachers’ pedagogy (Peixotto & Fager, 1998). Teachers learn in the same ways as their students and time and practice are the tools of retention. When professional development is prolonged, teachers have time to try out new strategies and have in-depth discussions. They can model and coach others in new

methods. Finally, the most important reason for extended professional development is that the more immersed teachers become in their collaboration, the more likely they are to change their practice, which is the core of professional development (Garet et al., 2001, p. 917).

Active learning/Reflective practice.

Since best practice for student learning is best practice for teacher learning, professional development experiences must provide “activities for teachers to become engaged in meaningful discussion, planning and practice” (Garet et al., 2001, p. 925). Inquiry learning is a current issue in educational circles because “learning theorists and organizational theorists are teaching us that people learn best through active involvement and through thinking about and becoming articulate about what they have learned” (Lieberman, 1995, p.591). The following are examples of the types of active learning that can take place in a professional development group:

- Observing and being observed. (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Garet et al., 2001; Hord, S., 1994; Peixotto & Fager, 1998): Teachers must have opportunities to watch master teachers in action and be observed as well. Feedback is necessary to all teachers’ growth, whether they are new to the field or experienced.
- Reviewing student work. (Garet et al., 2001; Peixotto & Fager, 1998): “Reflective practioners have a strong sense of their personal strengths and learning curves, but they take it one step further and seek confirmation of their strengths in student results. They set aside personal defensiveness regarding past efforts and preconceived notions of what may or may not work regarding future efforts” (Erkins et al., 2008).
- Planning classroom work. Working together in a professional development project on content taught in their classes relieves some of the individual burden of lesson preparation.

Additional, more thoughtful and useful assignments emerge when several people have input.

- Peer reviews of practice. (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995): Although some teachers are intimidated by having another adult look the lesson plans, providing feedback on instructional strategies improves everyone’s work in the same way as peer reviewing student papers helps both the writer and the reader. As Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) note, “...teacher-driven assessments of teaching and learning are proving to be powerful tools for learning. Looking closely at one’s own or someone else’s authentic work stimulates tremendous growth” (para. 37).

When teachers overcome their fear of being monitored and observed by other teachers and open themselves to sharing ideas, real change can occur in schools. Symbiotic relationships have, by nature, more impact on participating teachers than on those going it alone. Students also notice when teachers are working together.

Successful Cross-Curricular Professional Development

It is widely accepted that literacy should be taught across the curriculum (Jacobs, 2006; Langer, 2000; Vacca & Vacca, 1999). An important reason is that, “All teachers play a critical role in helping students learn with texts” (Vacca & Vacca, 1999, p. 2). Since the definition of texts has changed from primarily print-based to the current incorporation of non-print texts (NTCE (n.d.); Buckingham, 2003, Semali, 2000), students must be able to decode non-print texts as well as those in print. Many educators and researchers are making cases for studying media across the curriculum (Buckingham, 2003; Considine, 2002; Hobbs, 2005a; Scharrer, 2002; Semali, 2000).

Educators have found that students need to learn skills that cross content boundaries. All students must read and write in every class, and educators have promoted this type of literacy across the curriculum for 20 years. The disjointedness of our “factory design” of schooling is one of the major targets of reform. When we help students see connections among the disciplines, school takes

on a purpose previously disguised. Patti Kinney, principal at Talent Middle School in Talent, Oregon and immediate past president of National Middle School Association, observes,

We live in a world where all our learning is connected... Students need to see that everything is connected and reading and writing are not just for English class; they must be practiced across the board. Then the skills become part of their daily life. I strongly believe that reading and writing have to be infused into everything we do and teach in schools. (qtd. in Paterson, 2007, para. 4)

Even though Kinney is taking the idea of literacy to mean simply reading and writing, her statement is still true if media are added, since all disciplines have some aspect of reading, writing, and media. Reading and writing are ways to promote critical thinking, and so is the addition of media analysis and production in instruction. Brewster and Klump (2004) from the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory state, "Writing in the disciplines is premised on the idea that students become better readers, thinkers, and learners in a discipline by working with the forms and conventions specific to it" (p. 19). Having students analyze media messages also help them become better readers, writers, thinkers, and learners. While more research is needed to prove this true, it seems clear that having skills to critically analyze and create media messages would improve student thinking in many areas.

The idea of cross-disciplinary modes of learning is not limited to reading and writing alone. One must include spelling, vocabulary, speaking, and listening as well, since these are parts of the discourse unique to each field. Many teachers in non-language arts classes have discovered the benefit of having their students read fiction or poetry as ways to strengthen their content. Media is an obvious follower in this respect. The more teachers connect their subject matter to other content areas, the better students see the interconnectedness obvious to adults, but invisible to students whose instruction is compartmentalized by rooms and clocks.

Need for Study

Media literacy is a relatively new field of study; therefore, limited formal research has been done. This is an important study because the literature indicates no high school has tried to incorporate media literacy across the curriculum in that setting. NAMLE and Just Think sponsored a program called Media Education, Arts and Literacy (MEAL) in two San Francisco middle schools in 2003 (Michael, 2006). This experiment focused on student learning outcomes; whereas, my research studies how teachers work together to incorporate new curriculum within their own content. A high school setting with its more mature students presents other complexities, especially where teachers do not naturally collaborate on cross-curricular content. With the recent emphasis on media literacy in core standards, many teachers are looking for ways to implement it. My study could provide guidance for other high schools in creating professional development in media literacy, and it could provide individual content-area teachers with proven examples of lessons they can use in their own practice.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

This participatory action research (PAR) study had three purposes. First, this research explored the experiences of a small, collaborative group of secondary teachers as they strove to create lessons that match the goals of their content areas with those of media literacy. Second, it examined changes in individual participants' abilities to analyze and produce media messages through instruction from experienced teachers. Third, the project explored how effective collaborative learning communities are in professional development of a new field of study.

The specific research questions that guided this study were:

1. What practical ways can all teachers apply media literacy in their content?
2. How can teachers from content areas collaborate to prepare media literacy lessons?
3. What are the processes of professional development as a method of instructing and encouraging teachers across the school to incorporate this new literacy?

This chapter reports the perceived benefits and impediments shown by analysis of the data collected in this professional development experience. It will consider how teachers were able to provide meaningful, content-specific lessons for their practice, how collaboration with teachers from differing fields affected these lessons, and the efficacy of the procedures of a professional development group to assist and encourage them in the process. I will first present the professional development group organization, and then describe the participants. Next I will present the specific findings of the data analysis, following the research questions. This includes information regarding the increase of media literacy in terms of practical pedagogy, the effects of collaboration on participants' skills preparing media literacy lessons, the progress of the professional development group throughout, and how the

lack of technology hampered professional development. One significant phenomenon that emerged was the teachers' interest in providing media literacy experiences for their students.

Research Design

This participatory action research (PAR) study was conducted in a suburban high school in the Intermountain West over a five-month period from October 2008 to February 2009. It explored the experiences of a small, collaborative group of high school teachers from different content areas in the same school. I chose participatory PAR as my research design because it allows teachers “to gather information about, and subsequently improve, the ways their particular education setting, operates, their teaching and the student learning” (Creswell, 2008, p. 597). This research design permits the educator or groups of educators to explore issues confronting them in the classroom setting and creates change in methods of instruction. It is conducted for teachers by teachers within the context of their own classrooms, departments, schools, or districts (Donato, 2003).

Participatory action research emerged from the social sciences combining the work of Kurt Lewin and Pablo Freire. Wadsworth (1998) differentiates it from traditional scientific research as a kind of “social research which is more conscious of its underlying assumptions, and collectivist nature, its action consequences and its driving values” (para.4). Whereas traditional research involves academics researching people and then returning to the university with the data to analyze and a paper to publish (Gardener, 2004; McTaggart, 1991), PAR involves people within a community (which may include an academic one) working together to change a common problem. Gardner describes this as “remov[ing] the distance between the objective observer and subjective subject and includ[ing] the community being studied as an active participant in the research, with the end goal of empowering the community to create change” (Gardner, 2004, p. 52). In other words, PAR is a grassroots research method.

PAR also cultivates a democratic approach to changing educational practices and empowers disenfranchised people by “[a]ffirming the notion that ordinary people can understand and change their own lives through research, education, and action...” Some feel “PAR openly challenges existing structures of power and creates opportunities for the development of innovative and effective solutions to the problems facing our schools and communities” (Brydon-Miller & Maguire, 2009, p.81). It is an important research method in education today because of the pressures put upon teachers by No Child Left Behind and budget cuts that leave little time for practioner inquiry. Currently in my school district, teachers face the loss of teacher quality days specifically designed for professional improvement. It is difficult for teachers to be agents of change in school reform with no funding. PAR allows stakeholders the opportunity for change from the ground up.

PAR is particularly suited for media literacy professional development because it aids teachers to work in collaboration to solve a school problem. Teachers combine insights gained in a practical environment focused on integrating media literacy with insights gained from the study of theory. Indeed, “action research is one of the few research approaches that embraces principles of participation, reflection, empowerment, and emancipation of people and groups interested in improving their social situation or condition” (Berg, 2007, p. 223). PAR was appropriate for this study because it “emphasizes the active participation of researchers and participants in the planning, implementation, and dissemination of research” (McIntyre, Chatzopoulosa, Politia, & Roza, 2007, p.748). It is a fundamental way to empower teachers to create their own professional development to improve schools by expanding the understanding and use of media literacy in high school. This design also allowed me to be a researcher as well as an instructor and participant in the group.

Many researchers, including Mills (2000) and McTaggart (1991), promote a four-step spiraling process of identification, data collection, data analysis, and finally action plan development

in action research procedures. I adopted a slightly different framework established by Ferrence (2002) and Johnson (2000) because it includes a publication phase. Creswell (2008) and Berg (2007) believe, as I believe, that publication is an essential component of school reform. Berg states: “One of the operative principles of action research is to inform and empower people to work collectively to produce some beneficial change (p. 229). This “publication” can take place in formal or informal settings, but the stakeholders have a right to know the results of the study. The participatory action research process, according to Ferrence and Johnson, has five main recursive steps: identify a problem or question, determine the data collection needs and method, collect and analyze the data, create an action plan and describe how findings can be used, and report data and plan for future action. (See Figure 1)

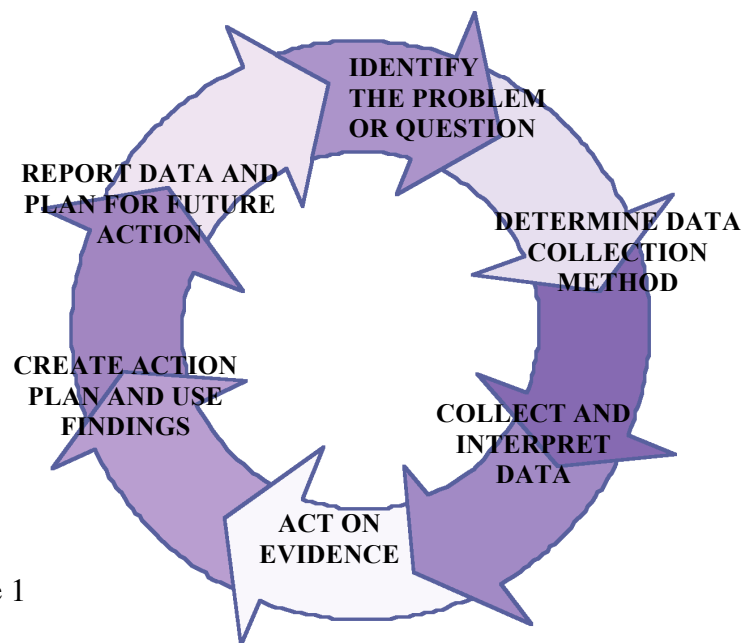


Figure 1

These steps help ensure that the action research will be professional, complete, and valid, but will also lead to other projects (Johnson, 2002). Because action research is user-friendly and requires little prior experience on the part of the researcher it is useful in varied academic settings.

An additional benefit of PAR, especially in my research, is its collaborative nature. Collaboration is important in my study because it is an effective way for novices and more experienced teachers in professional development to learn from each other to create new pedagogy (Gangeat & Gray, 2008). This is particularly relevant with media literacy since it is a relatively new field of instruction (Hobbs, 2004). This collaborative group provided opportunities for members to share literacy and production skills, explore the theories and methodologies of media literacy, and design lessons utilizing media literacy principles appropriate to each teacher's own field of study. This facilitates better student understanding and application of the media as well as discipline-specific knowledge and skills.

PAR allows a researcher to collect a variety of qualitative data for analysis. This offers better triangulation, creating greater depth and dimension of the data, which leads to improved accuracy and credibility (Johnson, 2002). Data collected from discussions, lesson plans, observations, field notes, and interviews over the five months of the study were used to identify:

- how the teachers were able to use media literacy in their personal education and in their instruction,
- how the group collaborated to assist each other in creating lessons,
- how useful media literacy is in their content area, and
- if professional development is the appropriate method for instructing and encouraging teachers to use this new literacy in their practice.

Researcher's Stance

PAR allows the researcher to be both a leader and participant in the group (McTaggart, 1991). I am qualified to lead/teach the group because I have been teaching media literacy for four years at the high school level; I have done extensive personal study of media literacy pedagogy for language arts;

I have taken 12 hours of college-level courses on various aspects of media literacy; and I have facilitated several professional development groups on many levels, including one sponsored by the Utah State Department of Education, demonstrating how the new English core could be implemented in teachers' current pedagogy.

It must be noted that I have a strong conviction that all secondary students (and adults) need to understand and incorporate media literacy into their personal lives. After teaching media literacy to sophomores and seniors, I see the effect of media in the choices they make and the actions they take. Students (and adults) need to be more active consumers of the media surrounding them. I believe the best place to learn about media, next to the home, is in the classroom. I assert that all teachers could utilize media literacy lessons to accomplish many demands created by their core requirements, and that the best way to help teachers learn and practice media literacy is through collaborative professional development.

Procedures

Participant Selection

I hoped to create a study group consisting of teachers from various content areas and experience in the high school where I teach. I sent an email invitation to all teachers, inviting them to participate in a professional development team that met twice a week from October to February, where participants learned basic media literacy concepts, studied media literacy theory and methodology, and collaborated on lesson plan development. Six teachers accepted: three English teachers, one French teacher, one business teacher, and the school's media specialist. The participants included only female teachers primarily from the English department who were motivated to learn. They had various reasons for acceptance, including seeking to fulfill state core requirements, looking for ways to engage students in learning content, and preparing AP Language students for the exam.

No monetary compensation was offered for participation, but I could offer the following as incentives:

- One lane change credit was offered to each participant. Since my study extended for 14 hours, each participant received state and district credit. These credits are used to meet requirements for salary increases.
- Participants also received all personal and professional benefits inherent in this study. These benefits included, but were not limited to, specific instruction on theory and pedagogical content knowledge, time for production and application of media messages both personal and pedagogical, collegial support, and helpful feedback,

Participants were protected using pseudonyms throughout the study and will continue to be protected in any ensuing publications and presentations. In addition, the Institutional Review Board of Brigham Young University reviewed and approved research procedures for this study before its initiation, and each participant signed an informed consent form (see Appendix C).

Data Collection

Qualitative research depends on data collected through protocols. I chose Creswell's data collection framework that involves three Es: Experiencing, Enquiring, and Examining (Creswell, 2008). Experiencing means the researcher observes the subject either as an active participant in the study or as a distanced observer. As an active participant in the study, I observed teachers as they engaged in discussion in our group's meetings as well as when they taught their media literacy lessons to students. Using interviews and questionnaires to collect data falls into the Enquiring category. I interviewed each teacher at the conclusion of our professional development. Creswell's final protocol is Examining. This is where the researcher creates and uses records such as journals, audio and videotapes, fieldnotes and other artifacts. I collected field notes on conversations with

teachers outside our group discussions and during my observation of their lessons and made transcripts of our discussions. I also collect their lesson plans. McClure's preferences overlap Creswell's framework. She prefers the three protocols of interviewing, observation, and questionnaires "because they provide the most accurate information regarding the effectiveness of technical and operational training in the researcher's current environment" (McClure, 2002, pg. 1). I included McClure's protocols to provide ample data to examine and triangulate.

Interviewing

Interviewing is important in qualitative research because it allows the researcher to understand the background, experience, and context from which the subject makes her decisions (McClure, 2002). I used the protocol of informal interviews with each of the participants to help me understand their experience with teaching media literacy and the level of their need for instruction in media education. Interviews after each made a presentation of the media literacy lesson they created helped me understand problems and successes the subject encountered in actual instruction (See Appendix D). This allowed for more immediate and candid responses.

Group Discussions

The interviews were helpful in that they were personal one-on-one conversations, but group discussions are the main sources of data, especially since I am studying the effectiveness of professional development to inform teachers of media literacy. The group met semi-weekly to discuss and practice media literacy in the context of their discourse. These discussions were audio taped and transcribed. The intended purposes of the transcriptions was discovering

- Challenges teachers encountered working to understand and implement media literacy in their content area. These challenges may come from a lack of perceived relevance

or lack of time in adding media literacy to their practice, resistance to change, or resistance from students, peers, administration, and parents.

- Disciplines most congenial for incorporating media literacy. Language arts is where most media literacy has been most widely practiced. Nevertheless, many other content areas are finding significance in their disciplines. To date, Utah has media literacy threads in four content areas – language arts, social studies, health, and financial literacy (Baker, 2008).
- Multiple ways media literacy can be used in teaching content in varying disciplines. For example, podcasts may be used in many ways in language arts, from consumption (as in *Grammar Girl* podcasts) to production of audio autobiographies. Podcasts could also be used in a foreign language or a social studies class in other ways.

Observations

Observations of the group's discussions provide a rich source of data. One advantage of observation is it places the participant in real time and in context. McClure (2004) notes that a benefit of observation over other forms of data collection (such as participant journals) is that “the observer [can] identif[y] routine, unconscious things, often overlooked by the participants. Disclosure of facts that individuals generally do not share during an interview may also surface” (p. 5). Teachers were observed in group meetings producing media products for their own benefit or for use in class instruction. In addition, each teacher was required to present a media literacy lesson designed for her content to the professional development group. The group engaged in the lesson as students, and then offered suggestions to the presenter. This was important for the study to see the dynamics of the group as they attempted to assist the presenter and engage in conversations about media literacy. I also observed each participating teacher in actual practice with her students. In addition to observing

the teacher in context, this provided data useful for identifying student reaction and interaction with the media literacy content.

Lesson plans

Each participant was required to submit a lesson plan for the lesson they taught in their classroom and I observed. Analysis of the lesson plans reveals the objectives of the lesson, core requirements for media literacy, content specific aspects, and teaching techniques for analysis or production of media messages.

Data Analysis

PAR allows multiple types of data, which leads to a richer description of the participation and interactions of the group and greater validity of results. To analyze the qualitative data I used grounded theory, which functions in an opposite direction from scientific method where research begins without an hypothesis. Using guiding questions like “What is happening here?” and “What is this about?” the hypothesis, or in this case the theory, emerges. I coded for similar themes that appeared in the data collected in the study. Schwandt (1997) defines coding as “a method that disaggregates the data and breaks it down into smaller parts which can be identified” (as cited in Dana & Yendol-Silva, 2003, p. 16). My first procedure was to open code the data according to themes, or more specifically, the questions that began my research. These questions, again, were

1. What practical ways can all teachers apply media literacy in their content?
2. How can teachers from content areas collaborate to prepare media literacy lessons?
3. What are the processes of professional development as the method of instructing and encouraging teachers across the school to incorporate this new literacy?

Open coding showed data relating to of these questions. I analyzed the data using participant

teachers' attitudes about the discussions, assignments, and media literacy in general.

Next, I used axial coding to find subcategories. Axial coding “emphasize[s] causal relationships, and fit[s] things into a basic frame of generic relationships” (Borgatti, 2008, p. 3). Borgatti lists elements that guide these relationships: phenomenon, causal connections, context, intervening conditions, action strategies, and consequences. Axial coding helped me further categorize and analyze the data discovered in open coding.

Throughout the data analysis process, I used memoing to record the findings. This is simply a process of writing short memos to one's self to record important comments, insights the researcher receives reviewing the information that will be used in the writing phase.

I created notations to explain the data sources presented in chapters three and four to help the reader identify those sources. Each notation begins with the pseudonym initial of the participant followed by the data source from which it was obtained as follows: (1) Al for Alice, (2) Am for Amelie, (3) J for Janet (4), L for Lori, (5) S for Sydney, (6) Ta for Tammy, and (7) Tr for Tricia. This notation is followed by the type of data source quoted: (1) I for interview, (2) D for group discussion, (3) L for lesson plan, and (4) O for observation. As an example of this coding of a reference in a group discussion from Alice would be noted AD; an observation of Janet would be JO.

Limitations

The results of my study were limited in two ways: Most important is my own strong personal predisposition. I have been teaching media literacy at this Intermountain State suburban high school for four years and feel strongly that all teachers need to incorporate it in their curriculum. My passion about it is the reason for my being in this graduate program. I minimized my bias by reporting as objectively as possible. I also enlisted the aid of the participants in crosschecking the results, triangulated data, and shared my findings with a thoughtful peer whose opinion often differs from

mine.

Another limitation was the participant selection process. I enlisted volunteers, which eliminated teachers resistant to change and restricted the variety of content areas represented in the group. For example, there were no participants from science, health and P.E., math, fine arts, or consumer science in the group. My hope is that others will see the benefits of our professional development and be more willing to participate in a similar effort offered another year. Eventually, I foresee all teachers using media literacy in their practice just as education has seen all teachers requiring reading and writing literacy in the content area they teach.

CHAPTER THREE

RESULTS

The following chapter will consider the results of data collected during this study considering these research questions:

1. What ways can all teachers apply media literacy in their content?
2. How can teachers from differing content areas collaborate to prepare media literacy lessons?
3. What are the processes of professional development most effective as the method of instructing and encouraging teachers across the school to incorporate this new literacy?

This chapter will consider the perceived benefits and impediments that emerged in a professional development group of teachers as they were encouraged and instructed how to provide meaningful, content-specific lessons for their practice, how collaboration with teachers from differing fields influenced these lessons, and the efficacy of a professional development group in assisting and encouraging them in the process. I will first present the professional development group organization, and then describe the participants. Finally, I will present the data according to the research questions.

Professional Development Organization

The nature of the professional development group is important in understanding how the group evolved over the five months and how each teacher was impacted by his/her participation. The participants were recruited from the same high school, as I, the researcher, was interested in working within the school for convenience and for school-wide change. My goal was to recruit a group diverse in experience and content. Since teachers would normally select into a group that presented material they thought they needed or could use in their instruction, teachers from math and science failed to see a connection to media literacy, while English teachers already have state core elements tied

directly to media literacy strands. No teachers from consumer science and health could participate, and only one from social studies participated sporadically, although those courses also had state core requirements in media literacy.

There were two primary objectives to this project: teach media literacy to teachers in varying disciplines through professional development processes and assist them in developing lessons useful in their instruction. I created the curriculum to meet these objectives from theoretical and practical articles and production lessons I received in my university master's program and from my own practice with teaching media literacy. I used five theoretical and practical reading (See Appendix E).

The group met and discussed meeting times that matched the hours needed for district inservice credit within my thesis timeline. We originally planned on meeting for seven hours, but as the group progressed, the participants wanted to learn about more media forms and have production lessons they could use in their classrooms, so eventually we met for fourteen hours. This was the first indication of the level of their interest. We agreed to meet twice a week for 45 minutes at the end of the school day. The first meeting of the week would be a discussion of the assigned media literacy theory and pedagogy reading, and the second day we would participate in practical classroom application. For example, the week we studied podcasts, we read and discussed "There's Something in the Air: Podcasting in Education" (Campbell, 2005) and listened to some professionally created podcasts and some that I created. The next meeting they created their own podcasts.

I structured the course in a chronology similar to the one I use teaching my own students with the addition of theoretical readings. Learning first to analyze basic rhetorical devices in images and audio with a useful framework created by NAMLE (2006) is essential to understanding how photos, advertisements, TV shows, and films create meaning. Building on these analytical skills, the participants were able to identify more complicated media and discuss issues such as ethics of digital

manipulation, how to recognize bias, and the effects of objectification of women in advertising; media modalities such as comics and graphic novels; and the production of short audio and video documentaries. Discussions always focused on the practical application of these media in our instruction. We finished with lessons created for classroom instruction presented by each participant and I scheduled a time to observe them teaching the lesson to their own students.

In our first meetings, I was the instructor and they were the students. We discussed media theory through the reading of Jenkins' occasional paper and two chapters from Buckingham's text with alternating days of visual literacy (See Appendix F and G for handouts). We next moved to advertising with a chapter from Silverblatt's (2008) text and ad analysis (See Appendix H). I showed them how to use a freeware program called Handbrake to rip video clips for classroom use. Next, we read and discussed an article on podcasting and created podcasts. I demonstrated the conventions of comics and we discussed how comics and graphic novels could be used in instruction. Our concluding project was creating an individual short documentary film using a digital camcorder and iMovie. In the final weeks, we shared and critiqued media literacy lessons created by the teachers for use in their own practice.

Description of Participants

The study began with seven participants, but two dropped out by the end due to conflicting schedules. Because I make some references to all members, even the ones who dropped out, I will describe them in this section. In keeping with the Institutional Review Board guidelines, all participants are referred to using a pseudonym and will continue to be referred to in that manner in any subsequent publications or presentations.

- Lori (L) is an experienced (18 years) ELL and AP Government teacher who also has some experience with media literacy. She is in the same master's program as I, and was reluctant to

participate in the group because of time commitments until I asked her to represent the social studies department and add her experiences with media literacy.

- Amelia (Am) is a second-year French teacher. She is young and has plenty of enthusiasm for teaching and is eager to use popular media with her students, but lacked understanding of media literacy and wondered how she could incorporate it into a foreign language class. Amelia uses podcasts in her class to listen to native speakers and has had some production experience creating a few movies with her husband using iMovie.
- Tricia (Tr) is an experienced media specialist. Our school was very eager to hire her two years ago as she had previously worked at the middle school and is a very creative librarian, interested in keeping current with new books and technology. Although she does not teach specific classes, she is available to assist teachers at the school by teaching research skills to the students. I met her the previous year at a graphic novel workshop and knew that she would be an interested participant in my study. She knows how to create video films in iMovie, and is experienced with many aspects of Internet research.
- Sydney (S) has been teaching eight years in the business department. Since most of the other teachers teach reading, her content area would supply some much-needed diversity. One question I wanted to answer was whether media literacy could be taught across the curriculum, and Sydney's experience would partially answer that question. She is admittedly the least experienced with media analysis and production of all the members. She was frustrated at the beginning when we discussed analyzing still and moving images. The concepts were foreign for her and she felt "stupid." Like Amelia, she initially wondered where she could incorporate media literacy into her instruction and found that it was not difficult.

- Janet (J) is an intern from a neighboring university and was willing to participate during her hectic first year of teaching. Janet is young and having just completed her undergraduate classes in English Education, she brings many media literacy skills. One of her English classes was Literature and Film. She already understood the power of image as a rhetorical device and used visual literacy in many of her media literacy activities with her own freshman and sophomore students.
- Tammy (Ta) has been teaching two years in the English department and became a new mother. After her baby was born in January, she quit participating in the group, but continued to use media literacy in her instruction. She is very enthusiastic about trying to use media literacy. She sees how it engages her students and knows that the English core is highly suitable for media analysis and production.
- Alice (Al) has been teaching for 14 years at this school. She teaches 11th grade honor and AP Language English classes and Journalism. She wanted to participate because she uses film and political cartoons in her instruction and because the AP test demands visual literacy. She did not complete the study due to a family situation.

Findings

Findings from this study are divided into three sections according to the research questions. The first section concerns how the teachers were able to incorporate media literacy instruction into their content. The second section explores the effectiveness of collaboration among teachers from multiple disciplines in supporting each other in their media literacy development through a professional development model. The last section discusses efficacy of professional development in encouraging and assisting teachers in developing media literacy curriculum.

Practical Pedagogical Growth toward Media Literacy

The most important goal of the group was to help teachers create media literacy lessons for their own practices. A number of factors impeded this goal: (1) lack of access to the necessary technologies to support media literacy, and (2) lack of time to read/study and create media for the class, as well as to teach extra content. Several factors did help the teachers to progress toward incorporating media literacy into their content: (1) media literacy's application to state or national core standards requirements, and (2) participants' positive beliefs toward incorporating media literacy into their instruction.

Lack of Access to Technology as Impediment Toward Media Literacy Pedagogical Growth

A major concern of the participants was the lack of access to technology to create media messages. All the teachers needed access to a Mac computer in order to use the Garageband software to create their podcasts. One teacher had to give up her Mac laptop to another teacher and was forced to use the freeware Audacity on her PC, and was very disappointed in that program. Microphones would have improved the quality of the voice recordings, but no one had access to them. Most of the teachers did not create the video documentary because they either missed getting a camera or didn't attend the session on using iMovie and were unable to edit on their own computers. I tried to compensate by reserving a few Mac computers for after-school lab time, but few teachers were available at those times to use it.

Although my district has been supportive in training teachers to use technology in their classrooms, funding has not been provided to actually allow them to practice what they learn. The high school provides all teachers with a computer, but it is not necessarily in the classroom. The school has two open PC labs with 36 computers and 3 portable Mac labs with 18 computers that teachers can reserve. Some days it is difficult to reserve any of them, especially at the end of the year

with state testing taking all the labs for six weeks. New technology is distributed through incremental rollout. Teachers using technology in their practice get it first, while the others have to wait for more funding. Several teachers (including me) have been granted the use of a MacBook, and several (including me) have digital projectors. The school itself does not own any digital camcorders, cameras, or voice recorders for teachers or students to use outside the multimedia classes, although it has site licenses for the Adobe Creative Suite. Few teachers have been trained on any of the Adobe software. With additional funding through a local university, I have purchased three digital camcorders and two digital voice recorders – hardly sufficient equipment for one class, let alone six! The teachers participating in the group have projectors and PC computers in their rooms, and Sydney as a business teacher has a PC lab, but none has sufficient access to recording devices to utilize even the simplest production elements I have taught them.

Amelie wanted her French students to create videos and purchased several inexpensive camcorders, but since only a few of her students had access to the camcorders at a time, the assignment took much longer than anticipated to complete. When it was time to edit the video Amelie said, “I trained them on Premier (an Adobe program), and when we went to the labs, no computer had it. I just botched the project” (AmI). The difficulty of completing the assignment was directly related to availability of technical resources, as well as clear information about the software available in the school’s computer labs. I had a similar experience last year when my seniors created music videos. I had access to only a few camcorders through the university, so students had to work in groups of four. Although the end products were amazing, and the students really showed a personal interest in their videos, it took over three weeks of class time and complex scheduling of student use of the computers to finish the assignment. Many students were not as involved as they might be if they had been in pairs.

Another technology problem the teachers participating faced is blocked websites. Several teachers complained to me that at home they found interesting sites to show students only to find them blocked at school. My district is particularly severe in their censorship of websites. As I was creating a school Wikipedia page for my seniors to edit, I found the district had blocked the site. This is the first year we have been able to access Blogspot, which has great educational potential, but all other blogging sites are blocked. I showed television shows on Hulu.com until I found it also blocked at school. It is difficult to help students learn media literacy related to social network sites like Facebook when they cannot be accessed at school. Many videos on Youtube have instructional purposes for classroom use and are places open for publication of student-created videos, but students can only access them at home.

Time Constraints as Impediments Toward Media Literacy Pedagogical Growth

Time constraints were the main deterrent to group members' ability to implement media literacy pedagogy. Often professional development occurs during summer when teachers have no school obligations. This is an advantage because teachers can focus on the instruction. However, the application to actual practice is less immediate because they must wait until fall to apply new knowledge. Participating in professional development during the school year allows teachers to apply what they learn immediately in the classroom.

Initially, to provide a theoretical background for the content for the project, I emailed several articles to the group with reading assignments to discuss in class. The articles went out a week in advance to allow plenty of time to complete the reading before we met each week, but rarely did anyone read the articles. For example, I sent the participants the Harrison (2005) paper a week in advance and no one had read it when we met for our discussion. It took several weeks for all members to finish reading the Jenkins paper (if they actually did finish). Amelie explained,

I feel like the reading was extremely difficult to get done when I had so many other things going on. I did the reading the first few times, then I started feeling overwhelmed and started skimming. I did find good information while skimming. I think I would've appreciated shorter reading, or have sections in which to focus. (AmI)

I scheduled the course for seven hours, but extended it to fourteen because participants felt more time was important. Teachers needed more lab time to work on their podcasts and documentaries. Tricia mentioned that making her podcast was “Time intense. It would be a good collaborative project.... I think I want to get NPR quality, and it’s frustrating when you don’t have the skill level. It takes... equipment, and it takes time to experience or experiment” (TrD). Clearly, the limits on technology availability directly influenced time constraints even when participants were motivated! Sydney said, “There’s so much information. I mean, we learned so much. And I can only take small parts of it to introduce to my class at one time, so deciding what I can take and introduce [is difficult] (SI). Sydney suggests that next time I organize a professional development group to work specifically on one form of media. Several members reiterated the importance of this time difficulty. In closing interviews, they expressed interest in continuing the group next year with more time spent on learning production.

Whenever new strategies are introduced to teachers in professional development, one of the first questions asked is, “How do I find the time to include this in my instruction?” This was a questions raised by Alice (AID). How does a teacher add more content into an already overcrowded curriculum? Sydney thought producing media as an assessment tool was one. She commented, “Maybe I could have students create a podcast of something I have presented” (SD). Amelie stated her frustration about the apparent lack of alignment of media literacy to her content: “Truthfully, I had a difficult time making things ‘media literate’. I felt like it wasn't exactly part of my curriculum or goals. At least I felt like I couldn't teach a real media literacy lesson while trying to focus on

building the language and fluency” (AmI). However, ultimately she did decide that having students create French podcasts would fit her language fluency requirements.

A further aspect of time as hindrance to pedagogy growth is the amount of time needed for production, as teachers realized in their own production assignments. Teachers do not have the time to devote two to three weeks to a production assignment. Participants observed that the time for production and the sharing of equipment meant that any integrated media literacy assignment could not be completed as quickly as more traditional methods of learning or assessment.

Application to Content as Advancement toward Media Literacy Pedagogical Growth

Although Amelie and Sydney had a more difficult time connecting media literacy to their instruction, all teachers identified standards in their curriculum which related to it. Amelie taught her students to look at Internet sites to plan a trip to Paris. “[The standards] covered having students be exposed to real life travel experiences and also deal with authentic French and experiences” (AmL). When she considered what she would change about her lesson she said, “I would make it more about media literacy. I didn't really teach them how to interpret the media. But I did notice that there were many students who were "buying" plane tickets or tours from not very reputable sites and that didn't include tax” (AmI). This was an important step for many teachers – realizing that they are using media, but not necessarily teaching media literacy.

Sydney has state requirements for media literacy in her marketing classes where they discuss advertising and in her computer tech classes that require analysis of websites (SI). In addition, her lesson on film techniques used clips from *Apollo 13*, a film she shows in her Principles of Leadership class, which is a concurrent enrollment course at one of the local universities. This curriculum requires that students watch movies which show examples of good leadership. She ended the year with students analyzing how magazines portrayed famous leaders on their covers. She noted that “I

was learning these lessons along the way as I was teaching my classes. So after having the instruction, maybe going into it with the background will help me prepare them as they're starting to view movies and such." She added that the lesson Tricia taught on websites showed her how she could better teach the use of Internet websites to her computer tech classes (SI).

The English teachers had no trouble fitting media literacy into their instruction. Alice explained how using media as texts already fits into her AP Language instruction:

The major goal of my course is identifying arguments in texts and determining how these arguments are constructed. Media education seems to emphasize those same goals, so really lessons like this serve the purposes of my course perfectly...When we learn about logical fallacies, I'd like to teach students to analyze advertisements. I already used both political ads and political cartoons this year but would like to include other types of media as well (All).

Alice had her AP Language students analyze the rhetorical effects of editorial cartoons. She commented:

Students reacted very positively [to her lesson on editorial cartoons]—enjoying visual texts as opposed to the print texts we always analyze. Plus, it was enlightening to them to realize that visual texts work in very much the same way as other texts—that they can use many of the same skills as part of their analysis. (All)

Janet taught visual literacy through analyzing *The Dark Knight* and *Twilight* movie posters and several advertisements (JL). She further spent time teaching her students film elements to analyze the various films and film clips she showed in her hero's journey unit (JO). She finished off the year having them create posters of all the units they had studied for next year's students (JO). Tammy used the recent national election to draw her students into understanding pathos, ethos, and logos. She showed political advertisements from Obama and McCain to examine for these rhetorical devices (TaL).

Tricia also had core requirements in her library curriculum that related to "finding, evaluating and using [media literacy] information" (TrI). She presented a lesson to the group on noticing bias.

She showed several web pages on Martin Luther King and asked us to discover the reliability of the information given on each. She directed us to examine the front page of several local newspapers to see if there was bias present in them (TrL).

Participants' Positive Beliefs Related to Media Literacy Pedagogical Growth

Several participating teachers felt confident about experimenting with media literacy immediately but had differing results. In mid-November, Alice shared an activity she created for her junior English class:

I just did something really ridiculous today. We're reading the *Scarlet Letter*, and we just read chapter 5, about Hester Prinn, so I had them make a MySpace page about Hester Prinn, but we don't have MySpace here, so they did them on paper, and they are the coolest things ever!
(AID)

She felt confident to try a media lesson that proved successful for her and her students while Amelie's eagerness did not go as well. Amelie wanted her French students to analyze advertisements. When asked how it was going, she responded,

I don't know. I'm feeling kind of frustrated. It's not going very well, but we'll see. But the last thing we did was myths, and we pretty much spent the whole last period talking about them. These are different ideas that we all seem to have. Do you agree or disagree? Why? Stuff like that. And then I gave them an article to read and it was about how TV is creating the myths in our time and the stories that we tell. And just how myths basically told us how to look at the world in ancient days, and television tell us how to look at the world now. So I sent them home and asked them to look at commercials and see how many times the commercial portrays the six media myths, and then asked them also to watch at least one television show and tell me how it represents one of the three types of stories, something like how things work, what things are, and a story of action (Gerbner, n.d.) So once you know all of that what are you supposed to do? How are you supposed to act? We'll see how that turns out. We're going to talk about it tomorrow. So, I'm worried. Are they going to be able to do this? And if not I thought, well let them keep doing it next week and talk about it some more, and see if I can't get more out of them. Try again, go home, do the same kind of activity, see what you notice this time. But I'm completely playing it by ear. (AmD)

In her closing interview Amelie said, "The activity bombed!" (AmI).

Many teachers believed that students were more engaged with content when media was used as an instructional element. In English, Tammy reported on her experience in an English class with her lesson on applying logos, ethos, and pathos to political ads during the Presidential elections:

I felt that the lesson went really well. I liked that it helped students be able to see, hear and feel ethos, logos, and pathos. Because it appealed to those senses and it was something they could see all around them. I felt it was extremely effective...The visual and audio elements allowed students to be more involved in their own learning.

They are surrounded by media and they are interested in learning about it. When I used this lesson and other media rich lessons, I had more involved learners. (TaI)

She added:

They do care about it. That's one of the reasons I love teaching media, it's engaging. They come in and they see we're going to do *Saturday Night Live* everyone's paying attention. But do I get rich discussion from it? Yeah, totally. We looked at bias; we looked at all kinds of stuff in those little parodies on the debates. And they were all engaged, and they were all contributing to the conversation. (TaD)

Another English teacher believed that visual literacy would lead to better literary criticism.

Alice notes:

So teaching them [critical media literacy] will help them be able to understand literature better, and vice versa. Showing that knowing and analyzing the shots [in film] plays into their understanding of symbolism and that there are a lot of these things that students connect with, and so they're going to be better. If they learn one and the other, they're going to be better at both. (AID)

However, Amelie found in her French class that her students complained when she tried to engage them with media. She required her French students to listen to podcasts and here is her experience:

Do you make your students [listen to] the podcast? Because when I introduced the podcast, I was going to require them to listen to this podcast, so they would listen to one every two weeks or something, and they were complaining. I had five kids that were like, 'I can't access it. There's no way I'm going to do that, blah, blah, blah.' And I was like, 'No, you can access it. The library has iTunes on the computer, I'm pretty positive' (AmD).

This negative reaction may be because her students have no experience listening to podcasts.

However, student engagement in another discipline, with a different pedagogical style produced another insight. Lori, who primarily teaches ELL students, observed,

One thing that occurred to me, [is that] I couldn't see any of my students plugging in to listen to anything that I created on their way to school, or anything like that, but I [already] have a hard time getting them to read parts of the text. And so I wondered if I just gave a small chunk to everyone in the class, and said, practice reading this, and read it so that it's understandable and fluid, and make a little podcast out of this tape, or this biography – if it's a student created thing – then maybe the students would rather listen to that (LD).

Effects of Collaboration on Teachers' Ability to Prepare Media Literacy Lessons

Inherent in most well-designed professional development groups is the effect of collaboration. In this particular group, one factor inhibited the effects of successful collaboration while several factors enabled teachers to have a positive experience collaborating. The effects were related to diversity of contents among the group participants, lesson sharing, and size of the group

Effects of Group Content Diversity on Effective Collaboration

The diversity of the areas of instruction among participants was a minimal impediment to the progress of the group. Sydney commented that working with other teachers in her department on similar goals would have been helpful. The down side of diversity hinders teachers without others in their department in the group who have no other participant with close/common connections. They would feel more support if they shared discipline concerns.

Another difficulty was that as the facilitator and an English teacher, I could only share ideas that were effective in my English classes, which was helpful for most of the group, but not all. Although I tried to compensate for this lack of knowledge by reading articles about how teachers in other content areas used media literacy, I lacked first hand experience with the effectiveness or implementation of these activities into those particular courses.

The diversity of the group in this project also enhanced the professional development group in two ways. First, the content areas the teachers represented were diverse enough that several disciplines were represented. This helped teachers see other applications of media literacy they could make in their own content that were practiced in other disciplines and to pool any background information they already had. For example, Tricia, the media specialist, has attended several workshops of copyright issues. She was able to share current copyright rules regarding music, photos, and movie clips we could use in the classroom without infringing on legal concerns. She also stated, “I support all curriculum areas, so this will make me more aware when I make choices about what materials to include in the collection” (TrI). Tammy commented: “I really enjoyed the [media literacy] content, but I also enjoyed considering different departments and what they teach. The interaction with teachers of other subjects was eye opening” (TaI).

Lesson Sharing as Evidence of Progress toward Effective Collaboration

Effective collaboration also occurred when teachers shared their content specific media literacy lessons with the group. Alice shared her visual literacy lesson using political cartoons as a means of analyzing rhetorical effect. Participants noted political cartoons could be useful in persuasive analysis in many different classrooms. Lori commented that this lesson would be especially useful in her AP Government classes.

While discussing advertising in the group, I indicated that I wanted to create a simulation for an advertising unit. Amelie suggested that I have the students work with local businesses to create an ad campaign, which I developed into an interesting unit that taught my students the difficulties of creating an effective ad campaign on a budget.

The group was able to assist Amelie in her lesson on planning a French vacation using the Internet (AmL). She initially used the Web as a tool without teaching students to be aware or critical

of the websites they encountered. We gave suggestions on how to help students analyze the sites for reputability, suggesting that the students also look for ways the site attracted attention to bring users into the site. This helped Amelie see how her lesson could help the students think more critically during their cultural experience.

Janet's lesson on visual literacy gave the teachers ideas of ways to use movie posters as rhetorical tools to attract moviegoers and to hint at the content of the film being advertised. This method was useful for most group members since we regularly show Hollywood films applicable in many content areas.

As previously discussed, Tricia's lesson on bias had the additional collaborative advantage of being useful to all members of the group since all had some content requirements regarding the reliability and authenticity of sources.

Group Size as Progress toward Effective Collaboration

The original intent of the PAR was to recruit several teachers from many disciplines to participate in this study; however, the number of volunteers was small. This was an advantage because the smaller size enhanced the ability of the group to discuss and feel comfortable sharing. Sydney commented that she preferred having a small group to the larger ones she participated with in the past. She particularly liked getting to know the members on a more personal level, which is less likely to have occurred in a larger group.

Progress of Professional Development in the Group

As the group met over the five months of the study, several factors affected participant's professional development negatively and positively. The impediments to the development within the group were (1) time constraints, (2) lack of access to technology, (3) limited member preparation, (4)

poor attendance, (5) group size, and (6) diversity of the content teachers taught. The benefits were (1) the role of facilitator to assist participants, and (2) personal media literacy to create unity.

Time as Hindrance to Professional Development Progress

It was difficult to schedule a time and day when all participants could easily attend. In fact, we rescheduled our meetings several times to accommodate conflicting plans. Alice had family obligations after school, and several times other teachers had student-related issues that caused them to either be late or miss the discussion completely. Janet, as a new teacher to the school, was often trying to prepare for the next day's instruction. Amelie added, "I think the schedule was sometimes difficult because after school I just want to go home and relax if it's been a long day" (AmI). In fact, as the facilitator/participant I also found it difficult to plan lessons and materials for this group while attending my university courses, teaching full-time, and caring for family and home; nevertheless, we held discussions and production sessions and hoped everyone could attend. Because of so many conflicts, I would individually contact participants personally to update them on material they missed.

Lack of Technology as Hindrance of Professional Development Progress

As previously described, lack of access to appropriate technology had a detrimental effect on several aspects of this study. Its impact was felt during our production activities, particularly when ripping video for film clips and editing video and audio for documentaries. Most group members were able to record and edit their voices on Garageband, but having sufficient access to Handbrake to rip video and iMovie to edit was more difficult. The version of iMovie I used to instruct the group was accidentally deleted from the computers; therefore, we spent considerable time trying to download and install the program again. Eventually, I abandoned the lesson for that session, rescheduled it for another meeting, and showed relevant clips of films for the rest of the meeting. On

other occasions, importing film took most of the time allotted so that no editing was done. This was one reason the amount of hours the group devoted to the study was expanded.

Lack of Member Commitment as Hindrance of Professional Development Progress

The level of commitment had two significant dimensions.

Lack of preparation. Often members came unprepared with pictures and videos required for several projects. Before we were scheduled to discuss podcasts, I distributed examples to them via email to listen to as homework but only one person completed the assignment. Coming unprepared meant limited time for instruction to make up what should have prepared beforehand, or participants had to share resources some had prepared, and therefore, limited effective learning. This also limited the ability to create products useful to them personally and in their practice. This lack of preparation might be caused by the teachers' unwillingness to spend the necessary time because of lack of interest in the product or because of competitive time constraints.

Irregular attendance. Poor attendance also proved to be a hindrance because at times participants could not make up what they missed and therefore, could not create a product. This was the case with Alice and Tammy. They did not attend the meeting when camcorders were passed out, so they had nothing videotaped to edit the next meeting. I compensated by making available some of my video to edit, so they did get some practice with editing in iMovie, but they did not complete the assignment. Several members were not available at the session when I taught them editing; as a result, I either had to meet with them personally or they missed the assignment. The smaller size of the group meant attendance was even more significant because when several members were missing, we had fewer to participate in discussions. At one meeting, only *one* member attended. Amelie comments, "I also thought it was sad that so many participants were flippant with attendance, no offense to them. But I think it would have been more beneficial for everyone if there were more

people sharing and discovering” (AmI). The smaller group size was a benefit, however, when all attended because all were able to have a voice in discussions.

Role of Facilitator as Advancement toward Professional Development Progress

As the facilitator, it was my responsibility to set objectives, schedule meetings, disseminate pertinent articles and instructions, provide technology for production, and generally keep the group on task and on schedule. The facilitator role included several other functions. One was acting as instructor since I was the only participant who had taught a class focusing on media literacy. This is not to diminish the experience of the other teachers who had taught various aspects of media literacy to their students because their experience was most helpful in collaboration. However, most of the media literacy content was new to the teachers (which actually was a reason for creating this group). Initially, my role as instructor was providing a hierarchy of skills needed to analyze and to produce media messages. I prepared readings and lessons to teach basic media literacy skills that most teachers could use in their instruction. I also had the most experience with media production, since only one other teacher, Lori, had created a podcast and three teachers, Lori, Tricia, and Amelie had used iMovie. My role as instructor also allowed me to observe them teaching in the group and in class and offer feedback. As the group progressed, I tried to move into a less authoritative role, but continued to give special assistance to individual group members unable to attend the group meetings.

The next important function I served as facilitator was role model. Because of my experience teaching media literacy in my English classes, I was able to show how one could use media to teach core concepts and to allow students to show their understanding of discipline-specific content. This was an important role for helping French and business teachers who found it more difficult seeing the connections of media literacy with their content. I was able to show Amelie how visual literacy could be useful in having her students look more critically at the French films, posters, and advertisements

she already uses in her instruction. Sydney was able to see how analyzing ads could be helpful in her classes. After presenting my lesson on advertising she said, “Well, I had a couple of ideas. In financial literacy, at the very beginning of the semester, we talked about advertising and trying to teach students what to be aware of. And also in marketing we talk about advertising all the time” (SD).

I was also a sounding board and cheerleader for group members, someone who could answer questions or help solve problems, give ideas for lessons they could teach, and keep them excited during the process. Sydney often expressed frustration at her lack of analysis experience. When she explained why she chose a certain picture to use in a PowerPoint presentation, she said, “I just picked this picture, because I’m not good at this” (SD). However, as we analyzed the picture together, I was able to show that she had good subconscious reasons for choosing the picture, and that now she could make those decisions more consciously. She gained confidence to teach her students how to analyze a magazine cover.

Personal Media Literacy as Advancement toward Professional Group Progress

As we moved through the lessons, it was obvious the participants were making connections between the basic concepts being taught and material with which they were familiar. When I taught the lesson on analyzing moving images, many participants connected the cinematic elements in clips shown in the session with scenes in movies they had seen. This growing awareness changed the way they thought about media messages. Sydney said:

You have to think while you’re watching movies, because I’ve been watching movies my whole life and I never caught onto most of this. You have to be conscious that this is what you’re doing. It has to be meta-cognitive. So I’m going to take this picture and I’m going to figure out how the meaning is conveyed (SD).

Although Amelie had previously created a film as a student, learning about cinematic element created a paradigm shift for her as well.

I mean, I made a movie and I had no idea what these things meant, but now I'm like, oh, I guess that could mean that. But I had no idea what I was doing when I did it when I was an undergrad. That movie sucked now that I look at it because we weren't taught anything. We just kind of guessed, and I think that it changes completely the way you look at film. Even the other day — what was I watching? And I thought, oh, this is such a good clip for showing the zoom in and the effect that it has. Anyway, I just thought that was so interesting, because now I realize why that was so important, that they were zooming in, that I just didn't think was that important the first time I saw it. I think it changes everything. And how do you create anything, if you want something that's affecting your audience? (AmD)

This clearly shows that participating in the professional development has helped her become more aware of what is happening in film. She also understands that when asking students to create media products she must teach them how.

Another indication of the teachers' growing personal media literacy appeared when they produced a media message. The group learned how to use Garageband to record their voices, add sound effects and music, and edit it all to create a podcast. Lori commented:

One of the main points of media literacy is it is so different once we try to do it. Once we try to create media of any type, we look at someone else's media differently. Even the fact that you tried, and you know you're a pretty smart person, and yours came out and you thought, Good, but they won't put it on NPR, but the next time you listen to something you'll think, wow! It just helps you to understand it better even though you'll never get to their level. You'll just have a better appreciation for what went into it. (LD)

Tammy explained how producing a podcast helped her become more aware of their construction:

I don't listen to [podcasts] a lot, but it was hard for me to think of background sounds and music to put with it, or different things, and now when I hear it I think, wow, they have that background sound, or they did this. And I notice things, and that's true when you do anything. When you've done something and you see somebody else's and you go, oh, wow, look what they did. Anyway, I just noticed. (TaD)

Several group members commented on their increased ability to utilize media literacy in their personal lives. This contributed to the dynamic of the professional development group process. When

I asked Tricia how helpful the professional development was for her, she stated, “Extremely, especially on a personal level” (TrI). Tricia’s podcast was a story about being shot in the eye by her cousin when they were young. Her podcast was personally fulfilling because she now had a permanent record of the event in her own voice to share with her family. The group also benefited because this story helped us become better acquainted with her. Since all of the group members produced personal media messages, we got to know each other better, which created more unity in the group.

I developed production assignments aimed at having participants create personal media messages they could share with family and students. Although some may argue that they should have created media that could have been useful in their instruction, I wanted them to create something personal as a way of increasing engagement with and understanding of media. Lori supports this idea: “I wanted to tell something that’s important. It’s probably the only movie I’ll make in my whole life...so I wanted to tell an important story so I have one preserved (LD). Having students create something of value to them helps students to engage more fully in the assignments – in other words, care.

While there were some problems with commitment from the members of the group and frustrations with time and technology, teachers enjoyed the professional development and felt they learned valuable information for their personal and professional media literacy. Alice notes:

I loved that, for the first time ever, I received real training and academic readings to give me some foundation to start teaching media. It actually seems unbelievable to me that in all of my English education experience, I have never received any formal training in media literacy before this professional development, yet I have been told by the state core and recently by AP College Board that I needed to teach visual texts. So you can imagine how insecure and unprepared I have felt to take on this challenge. Even though I did not attend this professional development as much as I would have liked to, I felt so enriched by the experiences I did have. I have already returned to these readings and experiences to help me prepare new curriculum for the next school year. (All)

They learned not only to be more critical users of media, but to be critical producers as well. Through our weekly meetings, they felt empowered to experiment with media literacy in their instruction and in their personal lives. This positive experience will help participants to learn and implement media literacy analysis and production into the secondary curriculum that will make content more authentic, engaging, and useful to the students.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION

The need for media literacy education in American schools is clearly indicated by many educators (Buckingham, 2003; Hobbs, 2005b; Jenkins et al., 2006; New London Group, 2000; Semali, 2000; Silverblatt, 2007). As Jenkins states,

Educators must work together to ensure that every American young person has access to the skills and experiences needed to become a full participant, can articulate their understanding of how media shapes perceptions, and has been socialized into the emerging ethical standards that should shape their practices as media makers and participants in online communities. (p. 3)

The teachers in this study realized the need for media literacy in the high school classroom, particularly for students who live in a media-saturated world. Lori addressed the significant intents concealed in media when she stated, “You know, I think that’s one of the things that is most disturbing to me. This is a reality that’s being created by someone with very different values. But they’re creating this really strong alternate reality, and our kids are being conditioned” (LD). Amelie commented, “I also think after this class how important it is for our students to not become victims to media, but rather know how and what the media is doing to them and why” (AmD).

The rapid development of media technologies and the wide-spread use of media by teens calls for urgent implementation of media literacy skills in American education, partly to keep our students competitive with those in other countries with national media literacy mandates already in place. Professional development groups like this one can be part of the solution.

This chapter reviews the findings of the PAR, which includes how teachers were able to effectively apply media literacy into their practice and how collaboration was useful in developing engaging lessons.

Practical Application of Media Literacy in Content

All the participants found a place in their content-specific instruction for media literacy experiences even though four different content areas were represented. The teachers in this study changed their thinking about media literacy instruction in significant ways, even though many had already had some media literacy experience.

Teaching media literacy v. teaching with media

One major paradigm shift, especially for Amelie, was that teachers may use media to teach their content, but that does not automatically mean they are teaching media literacy. Teaching students to think critically about the media they use is an essential skill for today's world, and teachers must make explicit what those skills are. Integrating the knowledge related to media literacy with content-specific curricula allows development of more connections for students. Teaching students to be aware and critical of the media teachers already use in their instruction only deepens the student's critical eye toward the world around them and more specifically, the media they already consume. This was evident when several teachers noted how they became more aware of the construction and effects of podcasts and films after the analytical and production instruction in the professional development. Not only do students note the tools used to attract the audience's attention, but also the rhetorical purposes used to influence them.

Scheduling necessary time

Time is a major obstacle for teachers willing to have students produce media messages. It takes many hours for students to produce effective media they are proud to share, especially recording/filming and editing audio and video. Moreover, when teachers have to teach the technology used to create the message, it becomes an even greater problem. This can be solved when all students

are taught how to use production software in required courses such as Technology, Life, and Careers in 7th grade. Another solution to the amount of time students require to produce media messages is having hardware and software available to students in after-school labs with able assistants present. Having the equipment and time available would help alleviate students' frustration at not being able to construct a product of the quality they could achieve. As pointed out previously, our school had site licenses for excellent media software, but had failed to load it onto computers the students could access. Another factor was that some computers were too outdated to be able to operate the programs. It seems pointless to have the software but lack the hardware to create media messages. This applies to teachers in professional development as well. Teachers need the training to use the technology they expect their students to use, which is another burden many teachers may not be willing to bear.

Placement of media literacy pedagogy in current instruction

Implementing media literacy in current instruction may be entertaining for the teacher and students, but if it does not accomplish educational goals then it has no place in the curriculum. English teachers have little problem with augmenting their instructional texts with media texts to fulfill core standards. Traditionally, media literacy has been placed in the language arts classroom where teachers have been assisting students to critically analyze texts for centuries. Media messages are simply other texts. The fear is that placing media literacy in the language arts classroom alone will compartmentalize it as reading and writing has been. Pat Kinney, past president of the National Middle School Association said:

We live in a world where all our learning is connected. As adults we don't think 'Now I am doing reading,' or 'It's time to use reading skills.' We just do it. Students need to see that everything is connected and reading and writing are not just for English class; they must be practiced across the board. Then the skills become part of their daily life. I strongly believe that reading and writing have to be infused into everything we do and teach in schools" (qtd in Paterson, 2007, para. 5).

Certainly, today our students are “reading” and “writing” media, and these skills ought to be integrated across the curriculum just as other literacies have been.

All teachers in my study found state curricular goals for media literacy already in place in their core, and many other contents have them as well. The language arts curriculum has state and national standards for media literacy instruction. French teacher Amelie found language fluency and culture awareness were areas of her core where media literacy could fit well. Business teacher Sydney found film and website analysis in her core requirements, and media specialist Tricia had “finding, evaluating and using information” requirements in hers. In my state, other content areas besides language arts with specific core requirements tied to media literacy include health education, social studies, visual art, world languages, financial literacy, and family and consumer science. Baker’s 2000 survey of U.S. state core requirements¹ found that all states have media literacy threads in language arts and most have them in social studies and health/prevention. With the exception of French teacher Amelie, the teachers who participated came away feeling confident in their ability to successfully incorporate and teach media literacy in their content.

Teachers in the study discussed how production of media could easily be implemented into any field of study. Podcasts seemed to be the most versatile modality for use across several fields of instruction. iTunes has free podcast downloads in many areas that teachers could access or have students access. Creating podcasts require technology that is available at my school and a little editing time. A single student or groups of students could create them. Podcasts could explain procedures or tell a story to other students. It would be an engaging way of assessing knowledge all teachers could use. Additionally, teachers in all content areas frequently use pictures and film in their

¹ See Baker, 2000 for an updated list of media literacy threads in state cores.

practice. Teaching visual literacy would thus bring students' attention to the constructed nature of images and would broaden any classroom discussion.

Student Engagement

One of the most compelling reasons to incorporate media literacy into instruction is the inherent nature of students' existing engagement with technology and popular culture. Again, with the exception of Amelie, all teachers reported their students were actively engaged with the media literacy lessons. One reason students become engaged is their relationship to the popular culture so often displayed in the media. Tammy's lesson on logos, ethos, and pathos was so appealing to the students because she showed political ads students had watched on television and YouTube at home. Janet's lesson on visual literacy grabbed the students' attention because the movie posters she analyzed were of extremely popular films the students had just watched during the summer. Most teens are engaged when teachers use new technologies, especially ones with which students are familiar. Amelie tried to engage her students in language fluency by creating a French newspaper. She called the activity "lame" because "only 3-5 students seemed excited to create our own newspaper and the rest didn't want to do it at all... [P]erhaps it's because they don't really read the newspaper; however, if we had made a blog -- that might be a hit to their generation and been more appealing" (AmI). Amelie thinks that choosing a medium that students know and use would have made her lesson more appealing to her students. However engaging media technologies may be, teachers should keep in mind that the goal is not engagement – the goal is learning. Borsheim, Merritt and Reed (2008) state:

It is our contention that teachers who use a variety of media and technologies in their teaching do more than familiarize student with specific technologies or motivate them with the latest cool tool: They prepare students with multiliteracies for the twenty-first century" (p. 88).

Helping students understand and effectively use the multimodalities of today, help them become more successful scholars and citizens tomorrow.

Effective Collaboration for Media Literacy Pedagogy

Collaboration is essential for fostering lasting school improvement (SEDL, 1997), which was one of the goals of this study. Teachers are more effective when they work together on common goals for their departments, schools, or districts. In fact, Little (1982) found that the most successful schools were ones with high levels of experimentation and collaboration among all members of the faculty and administration. The participants in this diverse study group were interested in having media literacy as part of their curriculum, and as they progressed through the study, felt that other teachers, and especially students, would benefit from continuing the study next year.

Collaboration developed quickly among the members of the study. Our group began with me being the disseminator of information as I led the teachers through the steps of analysis, but as their knowledge and confidence grew, the locus of control shifted to the group as a whole. As the teachers realized that all of the group, even the facilitator/researcher, was struggling with various aspects of media literacy, they were more willing to share ideas for classroom use of media, give personal examples of concepts discussed, and encourage each other in their presentation of lessons they created. As teachers practiced their literacy skills, they were able to share their insights with each other while I could stand back and observe. By the time we began sharing lessons, each participant was well versed in the analytical strategies and could give valuable feedback to the presenter. The positive effects of collaboration during lesson presentations went both directions. The presenter gave the group ideas to use in their own practice while the group shared insights to help the presenter prepare a more effective lesson for her students. However, it was noted that lesson planning would have been more effective if more teachers from the same department collaborated. Theoretical and

pedagogical readings could be focused on the specific discipline to help teachers see how media literacy could be implemented in their field, and teachers could divide content to meet core standards and share lessons with others.

Teachers' lack of preparation and irregular attendance became serious impediments to the ability to collaborate and my biggest frustration. As a peer to the members of the group, I had no authority over them; therefore, they were less inclined or willing to complete assignments. If the facilitator were an outside district expert, he/she would have exerted more pressure to perform. The teachers who attended more regularly (no members attended all the sessions) were frustrated as well with this difficulty and felt that the discussions were less effective. I noticed that more days were needed when teachers did not attend or were not prepared. When articles to be discussed were not read, I had to acquaint them with the material in the reading. The articles did create some discussion, but not at the depth I desired. This also decreased the collaboration that I intended to foster. It indicated to me the lack of interest of the members in research-based theory, which leads to best practices, and I wondered how seriously the members were taking the course. As this was a voluntary group, I could understand that many distractions and competing demands may prevent members from full participation aside from a lack of interest. Scheduling the professional development during the summer may have solved this problem, but there are intrinsic drawbacks to summer inservices as well. Collaborating with a local university to provide college credit for the group may be the best solution.

Efficacy of Professional Development

Considine (2002) suggests that the best way to bring media literacy to all teachers in the high school is through professional development. "Pre-service and in-service workshops and training are necessary if teachers are to embrace media literacy in their subject areas" (p. 28). To achieve this goal

I designed this group in accordance with the principles of effective professional development groups set out by Crowther (2002), Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) Garet et al., (2001) and SEDL (1997). These principles are duration, collaboration, content-specific instruction, active learning, and connection to school-wide change. Teacher participants were pleased with the experiences they had during the project and requested further study next year. They realized that they must become media literate to be able to assist their students in navigating the media jungle. They discovered that production is an essential element to media literacy. It was in the production phase when most awareness of the constructed nature of media occurred, which showed that essential understandings are absent when teachers forgo media production.

The professional development group empowered teachers to begin experimenting in their classes immediately to try out their new literacies. Although not all the experiments were successful, they were encouraged and supported to make necessary changes and to try again. Moreover, the less successful experiences offered helpful feedback on what may work, as well as what did not. Many stated that now that they understood the principles, beginning the school year with media literacy lessons would lead to more successful outcomes.

Several problems emerged that were directly related to time issues. This type of professional development must be given the duration necessary for teachers to have the time required to produce media at desired levels of ability. Unfortunately, several issues impeded our ability to spend the necessary time. Questions of access to technology are a problem that may never be completely solved. Extending the length of the study to cover an additional month could provide the group the extra time necessary. Also members reported that the length and number of readings were beyond their capacity to accomplish at the time. Eliminating theoretical readings and focusing on more practical, narrowly focused readings directly related to their content would make the readings more

immediately applicable and enjoyable. Even though research shows the best learning occurs over time, offering shorter, media technology-specific classes might be more practical for many reasons. For instance, offering a class on using podcasts in instruction would provide a smaller focus, allow more time to explore available options already produced for classroom use², hands on time for their personal production, and opportunities to invite other teachers unwilling to participate for longer periods of time.

The participants' understanding of how media constructs and conveys messages greatly increased throughout the process. For example, Sydney began the study with trepidation about her lack of knowledge of media analysis. Although she began the group with no experience with film analysis, her lesson plan showed her significant progress through the study. After participating in our lessons on cinematic elements and her practical experience shooting and editing film, her analysis of the film clips she used was excellent. All the participants concurred that more professional development opportunities of this kind should be offered. Alice commented:

I absolutely think we all should be implementing media literacy as much as possible, and I think more of us would implement it more and better if we felt like we had the training and background to do so effectively. That is why I really would love more opportunities for media literacy training. (AI)

Conclusions

The results of the study show that this form of professional development is well suited for teaching secondary educators new knowledge and skills for implementing media literacy into their discipline specific curriculum. The participating teachers in the study felt the instruction and collaboration within the framework of the professional development group supported them and allowed them to try out new ideas and practices as they were learning them. They were able to see

² See Appendix A for a list of resources in many media technologies useful for teachers.

how using media literacy enhanced their curriculum, helped teach required core elements, and created greater engagement for students in the learning process. They realized that they needed to become media literate as well, if their instruction was to be authentic, and they struggled with similar challenges that their students will face in media analysis and production. Finally, and most importantly, they realized the need for students to acquire multiliteracies and for teachers to teach them.

Changes I would make in future professional development courses would include:

- Homogenous groups of teachers for collaboration. Although participants found it interesting to work with members from other departments, it would prove more effective to work in groups with similar goals for lesson development.
- Narrow focus of the group. I tried to expose the group to too many media experiences, which took too much time for many teachers. Begin with simple tasks such as analyzing still and moving images and then have the group do some production element, such as creating a poster or a short film.
- Always include production. Most learning took place in the production side of media literacy. Begin with analysis, but always have participants create a media message. Technology must be available for teaching and practicing.
- Allow duration. Learning takes time to “experiment and experience” (TrD). Most participants want to do a good job, and that takes time. Allow lab time for participants to work on projects.
- Use media models with which your participants are familiar. Speak their language with examples they know. If demonstrating advertising, use ads for products they would use or ads they have seen. Use ads that have stirred up controversy or ads from the Super Bowl.

Future Research

I recommend three areas for further research. Although the teachers emerged from the study excited about the potential for implementing media literacy into their content, it would be interesting to follow these same participants through the next year to see if and how the study changed their pedagogy. Would they be willing to use some of the new modalities explored in the study? Also, would they support continuing professional development groups of this kind as either participant or facilitator to promote school-wide adoption of media literacy? Next, this study focused on cross-curricular development of media literacy. It would be useful to study department-specific media literacy training. Would collaboration be more effective with members sharing common content? Finally, how would a wider range of content areas affect the results of the study? My study was limited to five areas, two of which were closely linked. How would the result change if teachers from areas such as fine art and science participated? How would that change the ability to collaborate? How would those contents find additional applications for media literacy?

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APPENDIX A

RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS WANTING TO IMPLEMENT MEDIA LITERACY INTO THEIR INSTRUCTION

This appendix is organized by subject area.

General Information about Media Literacy for any Content

Articles

- Hobbs, R. (2001). Seven great debates in the media literacy movement -- circa 2001. *Center for Media Literacy*. Retrieved September 9, 2008 from (http://www.medialit.org/reading_room/article2.html)
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Websites

- Action Coalition for Media Education (ACME) -- <http://www.acmecoalition.org/home>
- Action for Media Education -- <http://action4mediaeducation.org/>
- Brigham Young University Media Education Database -- <http://medb.byu.edu/>
- Cable in the Classroom -- <http://www.ciconline.org/media-smart>
- Center for Media Literacy – medialit.org
- Common Sense Media -- <http://www.common Sense Media.org/>
- iCue.com
- Making Curriculum Pop -- <http://mcpopmb.ning.com/>
- Media Awareness Network -- <http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/index.cfm>
- Media Education Foundation -- <http://www.mediaed.org/cgi-bin/commerce.cgi?display=home>
- Media Literacy Clearinghouse -- <http://www.frankwbaker.com/>
- Multimedia Seeds -- <http://eduscapes.com/seeds/use/literacy.html>
- National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE) -- <http://www.namle.net/>
- National Institute for Media and the Family -- <http://www.mediafamily.org/>
- New Mexico Media Literacy Project -- <http://www.nmmlp.org/>

Health

Articles

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APPENDIX B

National Association for Media Literacy Education CORE PRINCIPLES

1. Media Literacy Education requires active inquiry and critical thinking about the messages we receive and create.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

- 1.1 The process of effective media analysis is based on the following concepts:
 - 1.1a *All media messages are “constructed.”*
 - 1.1b *Each medium has different characteristics, strengths, and a unique “language” of construction.*
 - 1.1c *Media messages are produced for particular purposes.*
 - 1.1d *All media messages contain embedded values and points of view.*
 - 1.1e *People use their individual skills, beliefs, and experiences to construct their own meanings from media messages.*
 - 1.1f *Media and media messages can influence beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviors, and the democratic process.*
 - 1.2 MLE teaches students to ask the specific types of questions that will allow them to gain a deeper or more sophisticated understanding of media messages. The accompanying appendix -- “Key Questions to Ask When Analyzing Media Messages” -- provides a model of such questions. Because instructional practices must be modified appropriately for learners of different ages and in different settings, the process of critical questioning and the specific wording of questions may vary. Some questions may not apply to every media message, and questions will often have more than one answer. As with all critical questioning processes, the end goal is to enable students to regularly ask the questions themselves.
 - 1.3 MLE emphasizes strong sense critical thinking, i.e., asking questions about *all* media messages, not just those with which we may disagree.
 - 1.4 MLE trains students to use document-based evidence and well-reasoned arguments to support their conclusions.
 - 1.5 MLE is not about replacing students’ perspectives with someone else’s (your own, a teacher’s, a media critic’s, an expert’s, etc.). Sharing a critique of media without also sharing the skills that students need to critically analyze media for themselves is not sound MLE practice. This includes presenting media literacy videos, films, books, or other curriculum materials as a substitute for teaching critical inquiry skills.
 - 1.6 MLE teachers do not train students to ask IF there is a bias in a particular message (since all media messages are biased), but rather, WHAT the substance, source, and significance of a bias might be.
 - 1.7 For MLE teachers, fostering critical thinking is routine. MLE calls for institutional structures to support their efforts by actively encouraging critical thinking in all classrooms.
 - 1.8 Simply using media in the classroom does not constitute MLE.
- 2. Media Literacy Education expands the concept of literacy (i.e., reading and writing) to include all forms of media.**

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

- 2.1 Like print literacy, which requires both reading and writing, MLE encompasses both analysis and expression.
 - 2.2 MLE enables students to express their own ideas through multiple forms of media (e.g., traditional print, electronic, digital, user-generated, and wireless) and helps students make connections between comprehension and inference-making in print, visual, and audio media.
 - 2.3 MLE takes place in a variety of settings, including, but not limited to: schools, after school programs, online, universities & colleges, religious institutions, and the home.
 - 2.4 MLE should be taught across the pre-K-12 curriculum. It can be integrated into nearly any subject area.
 - 2.5 MLE welcomes the use of a broad range of media “texts,” including popular media.
 - 2.6 MLE recognizes that evolving media forms, societal changes, and institutional structures require ever new instructional approaches and practices.
 - 2.7 Effective MLE requires classrooms to be equipped with the tools to both analyze and produce media.
 - 2.8 MLE intersects with other literacies, i.e., is distinct from but shares many goals and techniques with print, visual, technology, information, and other literacies.
 - 2.9 As a literacy, MLE may have political consequences, but it is not a political movement; it is an educational discipline.
 - 2.10 While MLE may result in students wanting to change or reform media, MLE itself is not focused on changing *media*, but rather on changing *educational practice* and increasing students’ knowledge and skills.
- 3. Media Literacy Education builds and reinforces skills for learners of all ages. Like print literacy, those skills necessitate integrated, interactive, and repeated practice.**

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

- 3.1 Media literacy is not a “have it or not” competency, but rather an ever evolving continuum of skills, knowledge, attitudes, and actions.
 - 3.2 The requirements of MLE cannot be addressed by a single event, class, day, or even week-long intervention. Rather, MLE teachers seek to provide students with numerous and diverse opportunities to practice and develop skills of analysis and expression.
 - 3.3 MLE engages students with varied learning styles.
 - 3.4 MLE is most effective when used with co-learning pedagogies, in which teachers learn from students and students learn from teachers and from classmates.
 - 3.5 MLE builds skills that encourage healthy lifestyles and decision-making; it is not about inoculating people against presumed or actual harmful media effects.
 - 3.6 MLE teaches media management in a way that helps students learn to make informed decisions about time spent using media and which media they choose to use.
 - 3.7 Making decisions for other people about media access or content is not MLE.
- 4. Media Literacy Education develops informed, reflective, and engaged participants essential for a democratic society.**

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

- 4.1 MLE promotes student interest in news and current events as a dimension of citizenship, and can enhance student understanding of First Amendment rights and responsibilities.
 - 4.2 MLE is designed to create citizens who are skeptical, not cynical.
 - 4.3 MLE gives students the skills they need to take responsibility for their own media use.
 - 4.4 MLE invites and respects diverse points of view.
 - 4.5 MLE explores representations, misrepresentations, and lack of representation of cultures and countries in the global community.
 - 4.6 MLE values independently produced media.
 - 4.7 MLE trains students to examine how media structures (e.g., ownership, distribution, etc.) influence the ways that people make meaning of media messages.
 - 4.8 MLE recognizes that *HOW* we teach matters as much as *WHAT* we teach. Classrooms should be places where student input is respected, valued, and acted upon.
 - 4.9 MLE is not partisan.
 - 4.10 MLE is not a substitute for government regulation of media, nor is government regulation a substitute for MLE.
 - 4.11 Censorship or other efforts aimed at keeping selected media beyond the access of selected audiences do not achieve the skill-building goals of MLE.
 - 4.12 MLE is not a substitute for media meeting their responsibility to serve the public interest. At the same time it is not about media bashing, i.e., simplistic, rhetorical, or over-generalized attacks on some types of media or media industries as a whole.
- 5. Media Literacy Education recognizes that media are a part of culture and function as agents of socialization.**

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

- 5.1 MLE integrates media texts that present diverse voices, perspectives, and communities.
 - 5.2 MLE includes opportunities to examine alternative media and international perspectives.
 - 5.3 MLE addresses topics like violence, gender, sexuality, racism, stereotyping, and other issues of representation.
 - 5.4 MLE shares with media owners, producers, and members of the creative community responsibility for facilitating mutual understanding of the effects of media on individuals and on society.
 - 5.5 MLE does not start from a premise that media are inconsequential nor that media are a problem.
 - 5.6 MLE does not excuse media makers from their responsibility as members of the community to make a positive contribution and avoid doing harm.
- 6. Media Literacy Education affirms that people use their individual skills, beliefs, and experiences to construct their own meanings from media messages.**

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE:

- 6.1 MLE is not about teaching students what to think; it is about teaching them how they can arrive at informed choices that are most consistent with their own values.
- 6.2 MLE helps students become aware of and reflect on the meaning that they make of media messages, including how the meaning they make relates to their own values.
- 6.3 MLE is not about revealing to students the “true” or “correct” or “hidden” meaning of media

messages, nor is it about identifying which media messages are “good” and which ones are “bad.” In MLE, media analysis is an exploration of riches, rather than “right” readings.

- 6.4 MLE recognizes that students’ interpretations of media texts may differ from the teacher’s interpretation without being wrong.
- 6.5 MLE recognizes and welcomes the different media experiences of individuals of varying ages.
- 6.6 MLE uses group discussion and analysis of media messages to help students understand and appreciate different perspectives and points of view.
- 6.7 MLE facilitates growth, understanding, and appreciation through an examination of tastes, choices, and preferences.

KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN ANALYZING MEDIA MESSAGES

AUDIENCE & AUTHORSHIP

AUTHORSHIP

Who made this message?

PURPOSE

Why was this made?

Who is the target audience (and how do you know)?

ECONOMICS

Who paid for this?

IMPACT

Who might benefit from this message?

Who might be harmed by it?

Why might this message matter to me?

RESPONSE

What kinds of actions might I take in response to this message?

MESSAGES & MEANINGS

CONTENT

What is this about (and what makes you think that)?

What ideas, values, information, and/or points of view are overt? Implied?

What is left out of this message that might be important to know?

TECHNIQUES

What techniques are used?

Why were those techniques used?

How do they communicate the message?

INTERPRETATIONS

How might different people understand this message differently?

What is my interpretation of this and what do I learn about myself from my reaction or interpretation?

REPRESENTATIONS & REALITY

CONTEXT

When was this made?

Where or how was it shared with the public?

CREDIBILITY

Is this fact, opinion, or something else?

How credible is this (and what makes you think that)?

What are the sources of the information, ideas, or assertions?

National Association for Media Literacy Education (formerly AMLA).
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APPENDIX C

Consent to be a Research Subject

Introduction

This research study is being conducted by Jeana Terry Rock, graduate student and Amy P. Jensen, PhD. at Brigham Young University to explore how teachers from various content areas collaborate to create media literacy experiences in their own practice. You were selected to participate because you are high school teachers.

Procedures

You have chosen to participate in this professional development group, which is an action research project for a master's thesis. You will be meeting twice a month for an hour from October to February to discuss assigned readings and make presentations about the theory and methodology of media education. Seven hours of contact time is required for district lane change. You will be expected to create and teach two lessons in media literacy in your content area to your students that the researcher will observe. The discussions and lessons will be audio taped and transcribed, field notes will be taken, and you will participate in an interview about your lesson presentation and a debriefing questionnaire about your experience in the study. The total time commitment will be approximately twelve hours not including your outside preparation for the discussions and lesson presentation.

Risks/Discomforts

There are minimal risks for participation in this study. You may feel some anxiety about your conversation being taped and the researcher watching you teach your media literacy lesson. You may ask that the information you give not be used in the research.

Benefits

You will benefit from this project by learning critical media literacy skills and by working with a group of professionals to create meaningful lessons in your area of instruction to help students become critical consumers and producers of media.

Confidentiality

All information provided will remain confidential. Volunteers will be given a pseudonym if their background, interview and questionnaire information, and writing excerpts are directly quoted in the research report. All data, including questionnaires, field notes, tapes/transcriptions from the professional development group, and lesson plans, will be kept in a storage cabinet in a locked office or on a password protected computer, and only those directly involved with the research will have access to them. After the research is completed, the questionnaires and tapes will be destroyed.

Compensation

Participants who complete all the hours necessary for the project will earn one semester hour of lane change credit with Provo School District.

Participation

Participation in this research study is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at anytime or refuse to participate entirely. Withdrawal or refusal to participate will not affect your employment or standing at Timpview High School.

Questions about the Research

If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Jeana Terry Rock at 801-380-6161, jeanar@provo.edu or Amy P. Jensen at 801-422-1321, amy_p_jensen@byu.edu

Questions about your Rights as Research Participants

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you may contact Christopher Dromey, PhD, IRB Chair, 422-6461, 133 TLRB, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602, Christopher_Dromey@byu.edu

I have read, understood, and received a copy of the above consent and desire of my own free will to participate in this study.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX D

Post Instruction Interview Questions

1. How do you feel about the lesson the lesson you presented?
2. Did your lesson fulfill a state or national standard for your content?
3. How easily did you fit this lesson into your instruction?
4. How receptive were the students to the new information you gave?
5. What changes would you need to make the next time you teach this lesson?
6. How willing are you to continue to use this lesson again?
7. What other ways can you incorporate media literacy into your content?
8. How helpful was the professional development?
9. What were some areas of the PD that didn't support you?
10. Would you encourage other teachers to implement media literacy into their curriculum?
11. What other questions or comments do you have that would be useful to my research?

APPENDIX E

Readings for Professional Development Group

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APPENDIX F

Visual Literacy – Analyzing a Still Image

Subject Matter

- What is the main subject of this photograph? What is going on in this photograph?
- What do you see that makes you say that?
- What do you think interested the photographer about this subject?

Time

- When do you think this picture was taken?
- What do you think happened just after the photograph was taken?
- What happened right before the photograph was taken?

Visual Elements

- *Light*
Does the light seem to be natural or artificial?
Harsh or soft?
From what direction is the light coming?
- *Focus*
What parts of the image are clearly in focus?
Are some parts out of focus?
Note: The range between the nearest and farthest things that appear in focus define the photograph's depth of field.

Color

- What colors do you see, if any?

Texture

- Do you see visual textures within the photograph?

Composition of the Photograph: How Things Are Arranged

Framing

- How would the picture change if you moved the camera to the right or left, or up or down?
- What has the photographer left out of the picture?

Vantage point

- Where do you think the photographer was standing when he/she took this picture?
- How far was the photographer from what you see in the picture?
- How could you change the vantage point to make the picture look different?

Dominance

- Close your eyes. When you open them and look at the photograph what is the first thing you notice?
- Why is your attention drawn there?
- Are there other centers of interest?
- How are the centers of interest created?

Contrast

- Is there strong visual contrast -- lights and darks, varying textures, etc.?

Balance

- Is the visual weight on one side of the photograph about the same as the other?
- How about from top to bottom? Diagonally?

Historical and Cultural Context

- Where do you think it was made?
- Who do you think the people in the picture are?
- What does it look like they are doing?
- Does this tell you anything about when, where, and what was going on when the photograph was made?
- What was happening in history during the time this photograph was taken?

Original Purpose

- How was the photograph first seen or used?
- How is the photograph seen today?

Photographer's Intention

- What biographical information do you know about the photographer?
- Does this information tell you anything about why the photographer may have created the photograph?
- What do you think the photographer was trying to express through the image?
- What do you see that makes you say that?

Vocabulary

Subject -- The main thing depicted in a photograph. The subject may be people, objects, shapes, places, events, etc.

Framing-- What the photographer has placed within the boundaries of the photograph.

Vantage Point -- Where the photographer positioned the camera to take the picture.

Dominance -- What is most influential or important in the image. In a work of art, the dominant point is where your eye is drawn first.

Contrast -- Opposition or juxtaposition of different forms, lines, or colors in a work of art to intensify each other's properties and produce a more dynamic expression.

Balance -- To arrange or adjust parts in a symmetrical way.

Questions written by Tomoko Maruyama, Curator of Education, Museum of Photographic Arts, San Diego, and Cass Fey, Curator of Education, Center for Creative Photography, The University of Arizona.

Picture This: visual literacies activities <http://www.museumca.org/picturethis/look.html>

APPENDIX G

READING A MOVIE

More students watch movies than read books. This is sad, but as a teacher of language arts, I recognize this art form as being an important one to study in my classes. Not because it is so popular with students, but because movies can be “read” like a book. A movie has all the elements of a story — plot, character, setting, etc. However, the fun of film is that it adds other dimensions to the narrative – sound, lighting, color, framing, motion, transitions, camera angles, and special effects. These also help the “author,” in this case, the director, tell a story. Once students learn these elements, they can become good readers of movies. They will be able to see and judge a movie for its artistry. For them watching a movie will never be the same!

Lighting – The language of lighting has its own vocabulary and you probably understand it more than you think. In a low-light scene, you can bet that someone will be killed or kissed. That is the universal language of lighting.

Here are some terms you need to understand: You can see everything.

Low-key: The scene is dark with sharp contrasts. It creates a romantic or eerie feeling.

Front: This softens the face, giving it a look of innocence.

Bottom: Faces become sinister by creating sharp contrasts (*Bride of Frankenstein*).

Back: The figures are silhouettes, losing their identity (*Gone With the Wind*).

Shadows: Shadows conceal identity or make a symbolic statement (*Strangers on a Train*).

Diffused: Lighting that is altered by fog, smoke, or filter to create a mood. To obscure an aspect of the shot.

Spot: Intense pool of light that isolates a small field of the shot, usually focused in on a face, a key element of the subject of the shot.

Color – You already understand the symbolic meaning of colors from your study of literature. These same symbols transfer to film. When watching an old Western you can tell the good guy from the bad guy by the color of his hat. The director deliberately chooses color for its effect in the scene (Red dress in *Gone with the Wind*, Dick Tracy, red coat in *Schindler's List*).

Framing – The four edges of a movie screen form the window in which we see the story. Placement of characters and objects within this window shows relationships and importance. Film is voyeuristic. Through the frame of the screen, we peep into the private lives of the characters (*Citizen Kane* scene where they are describing what is to become of the child Kane, *12 Angry Men*).

Motion and Speed – Motion in film is not limited to characters moving around the scene. It can be as big as a camera sweeping across a scene to small movements like gestures and facial expressions. Each type of movement adds to the story being told.

Pan: The camera swivels (in the same base position) to follow a moving subject. A space is left in front of the subject: the pan 'leads' rather than 'trails'. A pan usually begins and ends with a few seconds of still picture to give greater impact. The speed of a pan across a subject creates a particular mood as well as establishing the viewer's relationship with the subject.

Tilt: Pivot the camera vertically (Beginning of *12 Angry Men*).

Tracking or dolly shot: Tracking involves the camera itself being moved smoothly towards or

away from the subject (contrast with zooming). Tracking in (like zooming) draws the viewer into a closer, more intense relationship with the subject; moving away tends to create emotional distance.

Boom or crane shot: The camera moves vertically on a boom or crane (death scenes in *Far and Away*).

Zoom: In zooming in the camera does not move; the lens is focused down from a long-shot to a close-up while the picture is still being shown. The subject is magnified, and attention is concentrated on details previously invisible as the shot tightens (contrast tracking). It may be used to surprise the viewer. Zooming out reveals more of the scene (perhaps where a character is, or to whom he or she is speaking) as the shot widens.

Crab: The camera moves (crabs) right or left.

Hand-held camera: A hand-held camera can produce a jerky, bouncy, unsteady image, which may create a sense of immediacy or chaos. Its use is a form of subjective treatment (*Blair Witch Project, Bourne Supremacy*).

Slow-Motion: The camera speed is slowed (*King Kong* Jackson version).

Transition – Transitions are the punctuation marks of film. As periods, commas, question marks, and exclamation points tell us how to end a sentence, transitions show us how to end a scene.

Cut: Like a period, it abruptly ends the shot. Two pieces of film are spliced together. This is the most common transition. Cutting may:

- change the scene;
- compress time;
- vary the point of view; or
- build up an image or idea.

Fade: The scene fades out until it is black (or white).

Dissolve: One scene melts out into another melting in. Usually shows a shift in time or place (*Hope Floats*).

Iris in or out: The iris of the camera closes or opens the scene (*Young Frankenstein*).

Wipe: The scene changes in a line moving across the screen (*Young Frankenstein*).

Sound: Sounds moves the viewer from one scene to another. A gunshot in one scene becomes a car backfire in another.

Superimpositions: Two or more images placed directly over each other (e.g. and eye and a camera lens to create a visual metaphor).

Split screen: The division of the screen into parts, which can show the viewer several images at the same time (sometimes the same action from slightly different perspectives, sometimes similar actions at different times). This can convey the excitement and frenzy of certain activities, but it can also overload the viewer.

Montage: Several small scenes connect bigger ones. It may shorten time.

Jump cut: a technique that joins two shots together but that doesn't express a continuity between the shots.

Camera Angle – The angle at which the shot is taken can have symbolic meaning.

Crane shot: A shot taken from a crane or other very tall device.

Bird's-eye view or aerial: extreme high angle shot that takes in the view of the location, and dwarfs and distorts figures in the shot.

Close-up: A shot of the subject's face (*Psycho*).

Detail shot: A shot even closer, say of an eye or a hand (*Psycho*).

Medium shot: Shows the subject's body from the knees up.

Long shot: Shows entire figure.

Low-angle shot: A shot taken from below the subject's waist (*The Birds*).

High-angle shot: Taken from above the subject's waist.

Point of view shot: A shot taken from the point of view of the subject. We see through the subject's eyes (*The Birds*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*).

Establishing shot: a long shot that reveals the time and place of the action

Sound – There are four kinds of sound in movies.

Dialogue: Characters talking to each other in synch with the picture.

Sound effects: Sounds that occur in synch with the picture that have been dubbed in later on.

Music: Adds to the emotional feeling of the scene.

Voice-over: A narrator speaking to the audience from some distant future, but not appearing on screen (*To Kill a Mockingbird*, *A River Runs Through It*).

Silence: The lack of any sound can have a profound effect on the viewers (*The Birds*).

Special Effects – Special effects are techniques used by the director to create an illusion.

Stop-motion photography: shooting is interrupted at intervals while the scenery or props are rearranged. Simple to do with a video camera (*King Kong*).

Animation: A drawing or clay object is changed slightly every time the camera stops. When film is projected at regular speed the object seems to move (*Wallace and Grommit*, Disney movies).

Miniature or model shots: A small-scale model is filmed to look full-sized. The camera must run at faster speed to slow down the action of the model to make it look like it is moving at regular speed (*Star Wars*).

Glass shots: Uses scenery painted on transparent glass. The camera photographs the action through the glass so that the painted portions look like they are part of the scene (*Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*).

Rear projection: Action is filmed in front of a screen while another action is projected on the screen from behind (*Singin' in the Rain*).

Matte shots: Uses an opaque screen or matte to obscure certain portions of the frames. The film is shot twice, once with the first matte, then with a second that obscures the area covered by the first. When projected, the two separate shots appear to be one (*Forrest Gump*).

Computer-generated images (CGI): Certain portions of the film to whole movies are created on the computer (Pixar films).

Motifs - A recurrent thematic element in an artistic or literary work.

- Rosebud and the sled in *Citizen Kane*.
- The jagged line in *Joe vs. the Volcano*.
- The violin music in *Young Frankenstein*.
- The MacGuffins in any Hitchcock movie.

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