AN EXPLORATION OF AFFECTIVE INFLUENCES OF MEDIATION AND INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY STYLES IN THE U.S. ADULT MEDIA LITERACY LEARNING CONTEXT

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LEARNING CONTEXT

DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
College of Communication and Information at the University
of Kentucky

By

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

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This dissertation explores how varied delivery strategies may influence college student affective learning in a mediated setting. I employed a hybrid-grounded approach to the exploration of student-participant interviews wherein student-participants engaged with one of two online media literacy learning modules. The results of this study illustrate that students at varying points of their epistemological development (Perry, 1968) may face different affective hurdles depending on how media literacy curriculum is presented. We may anticipate that: (1) students who are less epistemologically developed (those featuring dualistic attitudes) may struggle to receive content, especially in the case where a teacher-centric delivery-style is employed; and (2) students who are more epistemologically developed (those featuring multiplistic or relativistic attitudes) may need help disentangling some of the primary tensions of a complex media environment, especially in a learning environment where learning is more student-centric.

KEYWORDS: media literacy education, college students, mediated learning, student epistemic development, affective learning, media literacy self-efficacy

C. Joseph Huber

July 5, 2024
Date

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Chapter 1: Introduction

As of my writing, the integration of media literacy curriculum into United States education systems is underway. The general goal of media literacy learning is to improve the students' abilities to consume and produce "media". Though scholars will vary somewhat on the finer details, details that will be discussed in Chapter 2, the main throughline of media literacy education is that media consumers and producers better learn to navigate complicated media landscapes to skillfully interpret and ethically produce media messages.

Internationally, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has been advocating for media literacy curriculum since the 1940s and most of the United States's contemporaries in education, countries such as Finland, Great Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand have instantiated significant national education policies concerning media literacy curriculum (Frau-Meigs & Jordi, 2009; Grizzle, Moore, Dezuanni, Asthana, Wilson, Banda, & Onumah, 2013). Yet, here in the U.S., implementation of media literacy curriculum varies by state. As of 2023, only 19 states have passed legislative action to implement media literacy curriculum standards in primary schools (McNeill, 2024).

This dissertation explores processes in media literacy education at the collegiate level and in a mediated, online setting. While child and adult media literacy curriculum standards and teaching best-practices are still being developed, this study collected phenomenal, qualitative data of college student experiences in a media literacy learning context to begin identifying some of the more nuanced affective learning processes that may help or inhibit media literacy learning for college students. Additionally, we see

adult education increasingly trend toward mediated learning environments. This is in part

because of a recent global pandemic that inhibited normal learning procedures, but this is

also because mediated, online, learning is frequently perceived as more flexible and

convenient, which are qualities that adults seek out when pursuing higher education

(Knowles, 1980; 1989; Rogers, 2000).

Through earlier decades, the terrain of media literacy education has been, and

continues to be, complicated. While there is widespread agreement that teachers should

be prepared to instruct in media literacy skill development, there is still a "disconnect

between their technology training and the rest of their teacher preparation program", so

we still see debate about how, exactly, media literacy learning should be conducted here

in the U.S. (Sutton, 2011, p. 43). Meanwhile, vetted scholarship from Stanford University

summarizes the *status quo* of U.S. adults' abilities to consume digital information as

bleak, estimating from over 1,000 participants that in the months leading up to the 2016

U.S. presidential elections that most adults consumed, and believed, 1-3 artifacts of

election-based fake news data. Media literacy learning has immense value to our society;

"It is both privately and socially valuable when people can infer the true state of the

world" (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017, p. 227).

Still, progress in media literacy curriculum implementation is complicated by

both practical concerns in media literacy learning in addition to ideological concerns.

Although most media literacy scholars and education practitioners in the U.S. do have

uniting goals, the approaches through which they seek to achieve those goals reveal key

differences between them. These differences have broad impact upon how media literacy

education looks in practice, and inevitably these differences will influence learning outcomes.

Some unresolved concerns in media literacy education regard: whether media literacy education should require student production activities as an aspect of their curriculum; whether media literacy curricula should prioritize popular culture texts or more broadly influential historical texts; and whether media literacy education initiatives should or should not be financially supported by media organizations (Hobbs, 1998).

My aims within this dissertation, then, are three-fold. This project explores how students interpret and internalize varied pedagogic approaches to media literacy instruction in digital, mediated learning contexts. This work is important to understanding how mediated instructional delivery practices in this context influence (1) student affect toward the learning content and (2) their media *literacy* self-efficacy and their media literacy *learning* self-efficacy. The activities of learning are heavily influenced by students' interests, motivations, and beliefs (Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1964). So, identifying how those factors appear in a mediated, college media literacy learning context is an important first step toward identifying what practices are most likely to promote productive affect and positive self-efficacy beliefs among students. Additionally, because media literacy learning scholarship considers primary school learners, and typically does so only in face-to-face contexts, this project looks to fill a knowledge gap in media literacy learning literature. That is, (3) I seek to understand the novel hurdles that *college learners* might face in the *mediated* media literacy context.

The reader will notice that the guiding inquiries that have shaped this study are particularly aimed at the exploration of affective learning (as opposed to cognitive

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learning or behavioral learning). There are a few reasons for this. First, it is well documented that student progress within the affective domain of learning is strongly indicative of initiative-taking, life-long learning in the content area of interest (Krathwohl, et al., 1964). I am interested in identifying whether students are internalizing media literacy learning content with positive affect, as this is a strong indicator that they will continue pursuing media literacy learning beyond the classroom.

Second, there are logistic and practical reasons for focusing on the affective domain of learning in this study. To appropriately assess a person's cognitive learning would require some form of standardized testing which has been confirmed to be a reliable indicator of a person's knowledge through statistical factor analyses. This is beyond the scope of the present project but is a "next step" in the overall effort to identify best practices in this context. Similarly, while the documentation of behavioral learning is a bit more straightforward, it is often prudent to *not* rely on self-reported data to find whether behavioral learning has happened. This is because self-reports are frequently incongruent with a person's actual behaviors for a wide variety of reasons (Herzog & Bowman, 2011). As such, a high-quality study of behavioral outcomes in this context would require considerably more direct observation of human behaviors than is practically reasonable for a single project already focused on students' affective learning. It may also (in some instances) violate the ordinary boundaries of the researcher-participant relationship because media literacy behaviors, like consuming and interpreting news and social media, are often practiced in privacy. Direct observation of such behaviors would therefore be difficult, and this is especially the case considering data

collection for this project occurred during a global pandemic when face-to-face, direct

behavioral observations were medically inadvisable.

Furthermore, some advantages of making an approach from the affective domain

of learning directly complement the disadvantages of approaching this inquiry from the

other domains of learning; *affective* learning can readily be self-reported (in contrast to

behavioral learning) as people are generally competent reporters of their own attitudes,

feelings, opinions, and perceptions (Armstrong & Fukami, 2010). Additionally, such data

can be collected through questionnaires and interviews with students without violating

any of their more private spaces, and it allows greater temporal flexibility at this starting

point within this arena of media literacy learning research.

Having so far previewed the key ideas shaping this project, the rest of this chapter

will attempt to further warrant the need for this investigation and identify the research

questions inciting this inquiry.

Media Literacy Pedagogy in a Postmodern World

Historic paradigms in media literacy education assumed that all or nearly all

media bore a single set of dominating, ideological beliefs. Today, this notion is less

prevalent than it was in the past, at least in the U.S. (Hobbs & Jensen, 2009). Although

there are still significant impediments that limit a variety of ideologies in mainstream

media landscapes, developments in modern communication technologies have resulted in

a more diverse presentation of ideas (Buckingham, 2013a).

Social media platforms, such as Facebook or TikTok, have increased individual

user efficacy to share information whether that information is true or not. Individual users

of these platforms with no relevant credentials can, and frequently do, reach more

viewers than do well-established news-information institutions like the *New York Times* (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). Given this post-modern media climate throughout the Western world, protective or defensive approaches that offer a single-dominant ideological approach to media education often fail to align with the experiences of media consumers (Buckingham, 2013a, b). Contemporary U.S. media consumers often experience an ideologically fragmented and value-diverse media environment through their interactions on social media and through access to a variety of credible and incredible news sources (Buckingham, 2013b). As such, protective or defensive pedagogies within media education may have the effect of placing educators in a position where the learning goals they present to a class and the students' own learning goals are misaligned. If instructors espouse a media literacy curriculum that does not capture their students' media experiences, then the instructor's goals may be overridden as the students discredit the instructor as outdated or incredible (Pytlak & Houser, 2014; Teven & Herring, 2005). Still more, information algorithms further confuse and nuance the complexities of our society's media ecosystem. These same educators must grapple with and educate their students about media industry processes that result in filter bubbles or echo chambers. The existence of echo chambers, a result of information-processing and social media algorithms, highlights (1) that it is possible to frequently consume untruthful messages without realizing that one is doing so while also (2) further evidencing that so-called 'alternative' evidence and narratives are socially-constructed in a complicated, post-modern media environment.

On the other hand, the above is not to say that prescriptive, perhaps even defensive, practices do not have a place in media literacy classrooms. After all, educators

are presumably experts in their fields of discourse, and part of media literacy learning is that students build the capacity to identify credible sources of information. This includes those instructors who *prescribe* "ideal" or "correct" ways to interpret media. So, it is sensible that, at least at some times and in some places, media literacy educators should rely on their expertise to coach, instruct, and *prescribe* strategies and practices that their students might employ.

Media literacy education, then, is hardly straightforward. Media literacy educators must navigate being credible and authoritative while teaching students to criticize and interpret incoming information all while helping students develop other related media literacy skills. These instructors must balance claims about information skepticism while keeping their own credibility with their students. So, some ideological differences in media literacy pedagogy remain relevant as we try to determine what practices will best facilitate productive affect for learning and positive self-efficacy beliefs about media literacy for students in this epistemologically complicated learning environment.

Social constructivist pedagogy holds considerable conceptual promise as a response to many of the above concerns. Much of what instructors do in learning spaces is socially constructed; they work with students to co-author learning and to make knowledge. The notion that teachers bank their knowledge into their students is a philosophy of education that fails to capture a key tenet of learning; students rarely receive information exactly as teachers intend. So, reasonable people conclude that the processes and outcomes of education and learning are inherently collaborative; learning outcomes are a result of both teacher and student attitudes, motivations, cognitions, and behaviors. Further, some argue that learning outcomes can, in-fact, be considered

"relational" in nature (e.g., Frisby, Vallade, Huber, Tristan, & Murphy, 2023; e.g., Nussbaum & Scott, 1980). The nuances of compatibility between media literacy teaching practices and pedagogic ideologies are explored further in the review of relevant literature, in the next chapter.

Even in digital contexts, where instructional interactions have a narrower 'bandwidth' for socially constructive practices, both students and teachers still often strive to increase social presence (Al Ghamdi, Samarji, & Watt 2016), reduce perceived communication distance (Kim, Song, & Lou, 2016), and maintain a personable and ethical atmosphere (Kaufmann, Sellnow, & Frisby, 2016). This, again, clearly illustrates that learning is a socially constructive, collaborative endeavor. More nuances of the relationship between mediation and media literacy learning are explored further in the following chapter.

The socially constructed nature of learning is apparent, yet in the media literacy learning environment students and teachers must do the work of negotiating what information and which sources count as "credible." To that end, the teacher's expertise and their pedagogy reasonably will influence the knowledge-making climate of the learning space.

Within this epistemologically finicky topic, what are those best practices that teachers might employ in their media literacy curriculum and teaching practices? Where are prescriptive, "banking" strategies most successfully employed? Where and when should instructional facilitators invite students to question credible sources? How do students respond to the practices that media literacy educators might employ, and which responses are most productive to meet the goals of the media literacy classroom? Of

course, these questions are quite broad. At best, this dissertation may be able to answer only some of those questions, and it may only do so in part as this project focuses on the impacts of teaching strategies related to student affective outcomes. Still, as earlier empirical learning research indicates, facilitation and support for students' affective learning has mediating effects for cognitive learning outcomes (Ellis, 2000; Russo & Benson, 2005), so this project grounds itself as an important initial step in a broader inquiry about media literacy learning.

Additionally, I would be remiss if I did not make a last point explicit about my own positionality within debates about the function or "ethos" of media literacy education. A pivotal ideologic (and therefore also pedagogic) tension within this discourse is whether the ends of media literacy education should be directed at improving individuals' competencies or improving a society. Aligning with critical media literacy education scholars, I identify improving collective, social circumstances as the primary outcome of media literacy education. Improving a society is the purpose of media literacy education. Nonetheless, pragmatically speaking, individual growth in critical thinking, media assessment, and media production are paramount in carrying out any collective goal. All groups of people, after all, are composed of individuals such that the collective efficacy of a group is reflective of everyone's specific competencies. So, I can agree with more prescriptive or "empowerment"-aligned media literacy educators and I concur that individual competency and skill-building are also goals very much worthy of attention from media literacy educators.

Areas for Growth in Media Literacy Learning Scholarship

In our endeavor to identify those practices most efficacious for helping students learn in the media literacy arena, I would like to briefly review for the reader where we might first look to seek answers. The general aim of the present project is to identify what practices might be most helpful in the media literacy educator's toolbox to employ in their teaching practices. The study of media literacy learning is not new *per se*. Rather, formal study of contemporary media literacy learning readily traces back to scholarship from all over Europe. Well-developed scholarship on how best we might go about educating people about media was handily available in the late 80's and early 90's (e.g., Buckingham, 1993; e.g., Fraser, 1992). However, there are some shortcomings within this (and more contemporary) media literacy education scholarship, especially in the American context where this scholarship is more nascent.

As such, the etic frameworks from communication and education literatures as they are described above contribute to this project as frameworks for sensemaking in the analysis of the qualitative data that I collected. My general goal is that by connecting concepts from communication and education disciplines, I may contribute to the growing discourse in media literacy education. Presently, media literacy learning scholarship does broadly define appropriate media literacy curriculum and the philosophic dispositions that educators and students might approach that curriculum though. However, media literacy scholarship presently broadly overlooks the assessment and evaluation of learning outcomes associated with media literacy curriculum. This project is situated at the threshold of connecting media literacy learning curriculum with affective, behavioral, and cognitive learning outcomes, starting in the affective domain.

More concretely, within media literacy scholarship in the U.S., there are three key opportunities for growth within this field of discourse that this study intends to address. First, among contemporary media landscapes and their complementary education spaces, prescriptive pedagogic practices may not match the post-modern interpretations of "knowledge-making" that many contemporary students arrive with to their classroom spaces (Buckingham, 2013b). What it is that teachers might do about this is still a developing area of discussion. While it may be ideal to align the learning objectives teachers bring to a classroom with their students' learning goals, the case may just as readily be made that instructors are experts and so it is the student's prerogative to learn what the teacher teaches regardless of whether the students can identify real-world applications or not.

Additionally, most media literacy education scholarship prioritizes children as subjects of study. There are sizeable gaps in evidence supporting or negating what sorts of media literacy pedagogy are most appropriate among adult audiences, and among adults, this study specifically targets college-aged adult students.

Finally, contemporary worldwide events (namely, the global COVID-19 pandemic) have quickened a transition that education institutions all over the world were already preparing for; that is, much of education is conducted in a mediated setting today. While there are firm grounding for best practices in online teaching and learning (the following offer examples; Al Ghamdi, Samarji, & Watt, 2016; Baker, 2010; Frisby, Limperos, Record, Downs, & Kercsmar, 2013), we still have not seen much scholarship about the mediation of media literacy learning.

Through this dissertation project, I have sought to investigate the collegiate learning of media literacy competencies and skills in a mediated learning context. To that end, I began this project with a few research questions in hand. How do varied teaching practices influence student affective learning in this context? How do varied teaching practices influence student media literacy self-efficacy in this context? In this collegiate mediated learning context, what novel issues might we be facing that are not necessarily present in face-to-face or child-learning environments? Summarily, what are the unique challenges or opportunities we might face in this context?

In the chapters of this dissertation that remain, I will first detail what scholarship is already known about this topic in Chapter 2. My goal in reviewing relevant literature is primarily to connect concepts from the fields of education and pedagogy to ideas, constructs, and frameworks already present in discourse around media literacy learning. I expect that my audience is generally those who are interested in improving their own media literacy education practices; educators who may benefit from the epistemic infrastructure for talking about education practices offered by scholarship from the pedagogy communication and the education disciplines. Then, in Chapter 3, I will outline the specific methods by which I approached the collection and analysis of data for this inquiry. I do so in the hope that the reader may, by considering those methodological details, better understand the scope of the impacts that the results of this project suggest. I offer those results as the main topic of Chapter 4. Finally, I will interpret and discuss those results in Chapter 5. There, I will connect the findings of this project back to the bigger, "overarching" questions that have driven this project since its conception, and I

will further connect the results of my analysis to extant literature. In doing so, I hope to

fill out some of the areas for growth in this field of discourse that I previously identified.

Chapter 2: Review of Relevant Literature

Historically, some division among United States media literacy scholars existed between "protectionist" and "empowerment" ideologies of media literacy (Hobbs & Jensen, 2009). "Protectionists" held the general belief that students were media illiterate and therefore vulnerable to ideological influences from mass media and were therefore in need of "protection" by means of education. "Empowerment" ideologies of media literacy focused on increasing media literacy competencies as a means of improving individual agency, namely the individual's ability to control how media could or would affect them. Rather than prescribe to a student an ideal interpretation of media, those concerned with media literacy empowerment were and are more concerned with offering media literacy tools and skills that students may employ to arrive at their own conclusions about a given media text.

Today, contemporary scholars have a bit less concern over this division, mainly because the protectionist perspective has largely fallen out of practice. In the U.S. most contemporary media literacy scholarship is united under a common set of goals for media literacy education: the first goal is to integrate theory-driven and critical models from varied fields of discourse into media literacy education; and the second is to identify best instructional methods and pedagogy to employ in media literacy classrooms (Hobbs & Jensen, 2009).

Furthermore, according to Buckingham (1993), critical media literacy is simultaneously a body of knowledge, a set of interrelated skills, and a conceptual framework. Critical media literacy expands how we understand "literacy" to include all media texts (far beyond the conventional print, reading literacy; see Kellner & Share,

2019), and it seeks to increase the depth at which we interrogate media to include assessment of author motivations, audience reception, industry contexts and more. For these practitioners, media literacy education is inherently a politically laden, sociocultural practice that should be intentionally aimed at liberating consumers and reducing civic oppression.

Even more generally, a casual intuition about the goals of critical media literacy education would be that students learn to think critically about the media that they consume. While such an intuition is largely be correct, Potter (2019) successfully argues that varied media literacy scholarship will treat the construction of "critical thinking" skills in myriad ways. This is so much so the case that its meaning in the critical media literacy context can be amorphous. Instead, he advocates that media literacy scholars view the concept of "thinking critically" as an aggregate constructed of seven sub-skills.

To think "critically" in a media literacy context a person will, (1) analyze incoming information by breaking it into meaningful elements, (2) evaluate the value of each meaningful element by comparing a given message element with some standard, (3) group like elements so that they may compare and contrast element groups, (4) perform systematic induction to identify patterns across elements the end goal of which is to see general patterns across all relevant elements, (5) perform some deductive analysis using general principles (standards, rules, categories) to explain particular elements, (6) assemble message elements into new structures through synthesis, and finally, (7) abstract their conclusions into brief, clear, and accurate descriptions that "capture the essence of a message in a smaller number of words than the message itself" (Potter, 2019, p. 16).

Although most of the media literacy scholarship in the U.S. does have uniting goals, such as facilitating critical thought among students, some approaches through which they look to achieve those goals reveal epistemic differences between types of scholars and types of teachers. Some claim that the broad, disciplinary function of developing media literacy education to improve or "empower" individual agency, and so they identify individual epistemological development as the fundamental aim of media literacy education. Contemporary scholars Hobbs, Jensen, and Anderson are examples (to varying degrees) of this goal. Others identify that the function of developing media literacy education is to improve collective agency, and so name collective epistemological development as the fundamental aim of improving media literacy competencies for individuals. Contemporary scholars Livingstone, Kellner, and Buckingham are examples (to varying degrees) of this critical trajectory. The defining feature I would like to address between the contrasting empowerment and critical trajectories of media literacy learning is whether the purpose of media literacy education is to serve the *individual* or the *social collective*. Specifically, I will address how these contrasting features manifest in media literacy pedagogy.

Because the teacher and their pedagogical practices contribute to students' knowledge structures, the meta-structures that the teacher implies in their pedagogy will reasonably influence how students develop their own media literacy schema (Dewey, 1916, 1938). Within critical media literacy education, this presents a problem; it would be difficult to teach students to become critical, autonomous thinkers while prescribing to the students what it is that they should think and while dictating the processes by which they should arrive at those conclusions. More simply, to "prescribe" how it is that a

person should be, or should become, "media literate" would be something of a contradiction. Students of media must co-construct their knowledge about media so that they remain or become engaged, critical thinkers about the knowledge infrastructures that they are building for themselves. To prescribe such an infrastructure is, by definition, oppressive to the students as they would be asked to give up their agency in co-developing their own knowledge. An entirely prescriptive teaching approach contradicts a fundamental principle of media literacy learning: the skill to think critically for oneself (Buckingham, 2019; Kellner & Share, 2019; Postmen & Weingartner, 1969).

Yet, media literacy educators are authorities in the knowledge and processes that they are attempting to convey to their students. It seems that at least some prescriptive practices may be appropriate, at least to the extent that the teacher is a learning facilitator in the education space. After all, the teacher is functionally and realistically competent to help students identify ideal and best practices for assessing media texts within specific contexts. Therefore, media literacy educators face something of a paradox: how does one instruct their students as to the best practices of being a media literate person without contradicting the intellectual-agency-building ethos of media literacy education?

Media Literacy Pedagogic Approaches

Proponents of inoculation approaches, the media arts education (MAE) approach, and the media literacy movement (MLM) approaches each generally lean toward helping students develop individual media literacy competencies; they lean toward an empowerment *telos* of media literacy learning. From these perspectives, the activities of media literacy education are aimed at improving students' lives by helping them gain control and agency over how media messages will affect them.

Critical media literacy educators present an added goal for media literacy education that is about developing critical media awareness (Kellner & Share, 2019). For these educators, media literacy education is inherently political. It views media texts as productions of real-world struggles for power and champions media literacy education as a vehicle for social justice (Kellner, 1995). From this critical perspective, educators encourage students to consider representations in media discourse while simultaneously emphasizing the importance of using media for self-expression and activism (Kellner & Share, 2007). These ideological differences between empowerment and critical motivations yield distinct instructional practices in classroom spaces.

Empowerment Approaches to Developing ML Skills and Competencies

Media literacy instructional practices aimed at developing individual media literacy competencies generally fall into one of three camps in the U.S.: (1) an inoculation approach; (2) approaches aligned with Media Literacy Arts Education (MAE), and (3) approaches aligned with the Media Literacy Movement (MLM). To varying degrees, these approaches involve more or fewer conventionally prescriptive approaches to instruction. More concretely, higher education in the U.S. today conventionally follows media literacy practices such as those that follow (Buckingham, 2013b).

The first camp, the inoculation approach in media literacy learning, is something of a relic of the protectionism paradigm. Today, an entirely inoculative approach to media literacy learning is uncommon in classrooms, but for the purposes of differentiating ideological and practical differences in media literacy education, it is useful to identify its core tenets anyway. From this approach, students are perceived and

treated as vulnerable to manipulation and coercion from media messages, and it is the duty of the teacher and media literacy curriculum to inoculate the student by way of education to inhibit the effects of that manipulation and coercion by asserting a correct or idealized value schema for assessing media (Anderson, 1983; Giroux, 1995; Hobbs, 2004a; Piette & Giroux, 2018). Inoculation pedagogy is therefore inherently prescriptive. From this perspective, there are ideal interpretations of media, and students succeed in becoming media literate when they understand and exercise that ideal interpretation to control how media messages will influence them within the parameters of those prescribed values (Potter, 2019).

Today, inoculation approaches to media literacy education are waning because of a contradiction inherent to the protectionist approach: to prescribe a single epistemic infrastructure, a belief system about what media counts as "good" media, is intellectually contradictory to most media literacy learning goals. To prescribe a single monologic correct way to interpret media is contradictory to a critical awareness of media influences, as a critical awareness requires that one acknowledge real-world power struggles that influence what media are available for consumption and how we assess that media in the context of our complex social-power systems and the multiple, coexisting ideologies such systems imply.

Most contemporary media literacy educators who are interested in developing individual student competencies appeal to MAE and MLM education approaches. MAE and MLM perspectives feature curriculum frameworks similar to one another. MAE-aligned teachers often adopt Hobbs' (2006) framework of three bifurcated topics aimed at addressing media literacy from both the perspectives of consumers and producers. The

framework positions media literacy around authors and audiences, messages and meanings, and representations and realities and it is applied to a variety of media. MLM proponents share a similar framework, but view media literacy as an extension of print, 'reading' literacy (Anderson, 1981).

Though their curriculum frameworks are similar, the praxis of their curricula vary somewhat. While MAE practitioners are often far more production focused, MLM practitioners focus more on textual analysis and argumentative criticism. A rudimentary summation of their differences would show that while MAE teachers emphasize encoding as a means of learning media literacy competencies, MLM teachers emphasize decoding (Hobbs, 1994; 1998). Overall, though, the two perspectives share the predominant theme that media literacy education is 'for' the individual.

From the perspective of both MLM and MAE educators, there are necessary components of curriculum that are inherently participatory. Students must do some message production to understand the value of their own work and subsequently the value of other media they consume. Students must do the work of collection, analysis, and critique to evaluate applications of the information they seek out rather than be told the merits or demerits of the information (Hobbs, 2004b). From a MAE or MLM framework, although some prescriptive pedagogy may have a place in the curriculum, it cannot be entirely prescriptive as some participatory learning is necessary to achieve the goals of these media literacy learning frameworks.

Instructors who land on the "empowerment" end of the media literacy learning paradigmatic spectrum tend to make one of two claims in favor of their position. Some view audiences of mass media as vulnerable to media's ideological influences; therefore,

students need "protection" through education. Pedagogically, they aim to inoculate media literacy students against harmful effects of media addiction and manipulation by cultivating a preference for high-culture and values of truth and beauty (Frost & Postman, 1993). MAE and MLM educators follow a similar argument; there is an aesthetic ideal toward which media literacy education should aim students' attentions. However, rather than viewing media as inherently problematic and therefore wanting to "protect" the masses from harmful influences, they see media literacy as an activity meant to improve the lives of students, usually by giving them more control over how media messages will affect them (Hobbs, 1998) and therefore increase their agency (Hobbs & Jensen, 2009) regardless of whether the students arrive at a conclusion about media "ideals" that differs from the instructor's ideals. Pedagogically, then, as these teachers instruct students to appreciate the aesthetic qualities of media, they instruct students to use various media technologies as instruments of self-expression and creation.

Critical Approaches to Developing ML Skills, Competencies, and Critical Awareness

Critical media literacy (CML) frameworks readily follow from critical theories such as feminist standpoint theory (Harding, 1991), muted group theory (Kramarae, 1980), and humanistic cultural studies (Hall, 1977). The pedagogy of critical media literacy has evolved from the constructivist principles articulated in works largely from Freire (1970/2002) and Dewey (1916, 1938). Funk, Kellner, and Share (2016) articulate the conceptual framework of critical media literacy around six ideas driving CML and associated questions that consumer-students must ask as components of a critical analysis.

In analyzing a media text, we must ask six questions to understand it as it exists in a socially constructed media landscape with multiple ideologies competing for social prestige (Funk, Kellner, & Share, 2016). First, who decided to write the text, and who made decisions in the development of the text? This question shows the *social construction* of media texts, which is to say that all information is co-constructed by many people who make choices within real-world contexts. Second, how was the text constructed and how was it presented? What messages does the medium *itself* carry? Following McLuhan (1994), we note that every medium 'speaks' its own language with unique grammar and semantics. Each medium has its own *language* and *semiotics* that influence how a media text is produced and therefore how it might be consumed. Third, how might different audiences varyingly understand the text? We note from this question that the connotations and assumptions that *audiences* bring to a text are just as important to understanding it as are the denotations intended for the text by its authors. In other words, identifying a response to this question illuminates the multiple, competing, value-orientations through which a media text might be interpreted. Fourth, what ideological points-of-view and what values are represented in the text? Which are missing? Hierarchies of power in media creation and in knowledge-making create a complex landscape through which media messages navigate on their way to a receiver. Here we note the *politics of representation* as a relevant point in any assessment of a media text. Fifth, for what reasons was the media text created or shared? In asking this, we simultaneously acknowledge both processes of *production* as well as the *institutions* that shape and mold those production processes. All texts have an intended purpose and were authored by individuals or groups *for* that purpose. To ignore this as a point of analysis

would be to exclude a great deal of the intended *telos* and *ethos* of the text, and doing so would ignore how those factors may influence one's evaluation. Finally, sixth, who does the media text advantage? Whom does it disadvantage? With these final questions, we acknowledge that there are no "neutral" messages. Messages exist within complex social environments. Because all messages are always value-laden, we must consider *social and environmental justice* (Funk, Kellner, & Share, 2016).

These questions, and the associated concepts they illuminate, set the framework for critical media literacy education. Curricula designed for CML should systematically address each question and its associated concepts. CML is a map guiding scholars and educators to consider key components in everyday knowledge-making through the consumption and analysis of media.

If Funk and colleagues (2016) offer us a map for critical media literacy curriculum, the landscape that they are mapping is composed of four general perspectives through which we might view critical media literacy education (Kellner & Share, 2007). They are: media literacy as it proceeds from a standpoint epistemology, media literacy as it proceeds from cultural and media studies, media literacy as transformative pedagogy and multiculturalism, and media literacy as radical democracy. Regardless of the perspective, practitioners from all four perspectives agree that knowledge is co-constructed and that the purpose of media literacy learning is to liberate and empower media consumers for the purposes of increased civic agency. However, they may define "civic duty" in diverse ways.

Feminist and standpoint theories claim that, in a given media ecosystem, a limited few people (dominant groups of people) tend to perform the bulk of representation. Even

if all subordinating groups are quantitatively represented, there are generally issues with the quality or characterization of those subordinate group representations. As these representations are perpetuated within a given society and eventually become mundane, people often do not question the construction of those messages. However, from a standpoint-epistemology, people from subordinate groups have the most 'objective' or definite understanding of media constructions because they simultaneously can compare how they are (mis)represented in that media with their lived experiences, experiences which can also vary broadly between individuals within a group. People in dominant groups do not have to perform the latter aspect of media text assessment because their ideologies are already represented accurately in media text; they have less information to work with and are therefore less 'objective' in their assessments. It is, then, the media literacy education teacher's prerogative and responsibility to illuminate the structures of power that influenced a given media text, so that those structures may be interrogated, questioned, and learned from (Luke, 1994).

From a culture and media studies perspective, media literacy education is a composite of various intellectual traditions. Among them are: "semiotics, feminism, multiculturalism, and postmodernism, a dialectical understanding of political economy, textual analysis, and audience theory" (Kellner & Share, 2007, p. 11). The composite of these intellectual traditions allows for complex analysis of media discourse, and such a complex analysis equips students with strategies to reduce the oppression and hegemony inherent to mass-media representation (Kellner, 1995). This perspective positions media literacy learning as a catalyst for cultural and civic change; the means or ideology is less

important than the ends, which is the reduction of oppression across a given culture or society.

Transformative pedagogy and multiculturalism readily follow the constructivist learning principles of Dewey and Freire. Dewey was a pragmatist, and he saw education as a form of participation in a culture. He championed education as a form of, and a contribution to, a thriving democracy (1916). Freire claimed that ordinary U.S. education models, where the teacher is an absolute intellectual authority in the classroom, tend to abstract the issues that education has the power to resolve. It is this abstraction that makes "banking" models of education oppressive: they separate the subject from the oppression of the lived experience to 'bank' information that does not reconcile with the experience of oppression, thereby reifying the student's preexisting experience of oppression (Freire, 1970/2020). Therefore, Freire advocated for a problem-posing pedagogy wherein concrete issues are presented. Through dialogue, students and teachers generate solutions and so learning happens through problem-solving, rather than it being prescribed or 'banked' (Freire, 1970/2002). From this perspective, developing critical media literacy skills is a transformative experience wherein the voices of mis- and under-represented minority individuals emerge and become more fully a part of the democratic process through the learning process.

Finally, following from the previous approach, radical democracy recognizes that modern communication technologies have the potential to both transform democratic processes as well as turn those democratic processes into spectacles for mere consumption (Kellner & Share, 2007). At this juxtaposition, critical media literacy practitioners desire to illuminate both the former (positive change in democratic process)

and the latter (the consumption-driven spectacle that media sometimes makes of democratic processes) while engaging the student in discussions on the basic principles of hermeneutics and criticism. The purpose of this instruction is to facilitate students' better navigation of the complicated social systems and media environments within which the students find themselves.

Any of the above approaches to critical media literacy are useful. This is so much the case that they are often used in conjunction and, in practice, can be difficult to tickle apart. Regardless of one's approach, there is a core set of experiences that all students need to develop media literacy competencies.

Media Literacy Teaching Practices

To develop a comprehensive media literacy, students need to engage with a variety of media texts that capture the diversity (or lack thereof) of representations within media to observe how structures of power play out in the social construction of media. They need to engage with a variety of media texts through a diversity of mediums that represent the lived experiences of the many ways that humans engage with media. In addition to these types of exposure students must investigate and interrogate the performances of power and social struggle inherent in media. Ideally, they will do so within the context of student-student and student-teacher dialogue to generate themes from which they will conceptualize and propose actionable solutions for themselves. One such action could be production of "alternative" media texts (Buckingham, 2013b).

Media Literacy Instructional Practices

More concretely, these experiences play out in several practical teaching strategies across approaches to media literacy teaching. Among those strategies are

textual analysis, contextual analysis, study of specific cases, translations, simulations, and production of alternative texts. Textual analysis refers to describing a text, identifying meanings in a text, and forming judgments about the text (Masterman, 1980). Textual analysis is a base skill that undergirds the other pedagogic exercises. Still, by itself, it is useful for the purposes of identifying what is a "text", the language and semiotics of the text, and for considering the social construction of a given text.

With textual analysis, we often remove a text from its environment; we abstract it. While this can be pedagogically useful, it is also artificial. Contextual analysis places the text back in its environment. Analyzing the contexts in which a text manifests and in which it is consumed is useful for three purposes: (1) observing relationships between media and audiences (the social construction of the text), (2) identifying the connotations that audiences bring to a text, and (3) recognizing politics of representation.

Case studies are essentially an expanded form of contextual analysis wherein students review a selected topic or issue across multiple texts and their associated contexts, or they review the treatment of a single text across multiple contexts. Case studies can also reveal more about the production of text as well as institution-level influences. This helps students identify salient institutional and social influences on media production, and therefore helps students grasp the contexts within which messages are produced to improve nuance student interpretations of media messages upon consumption of those messages.

Translations identify a single source text or a given issue across its presentation to multiple audiences or across varied media platforms. Exercises in translation help

students further identify the "language" of a medium, or the meanings and semiotics that a medium itself brings to a message carried within that medium.

Simulation, or role-play, artificially places a student as an important stakeholder in the production of a text (usually, as the producer) so that they may consider the types of decisions that go into constructing a text and recognize the complex social environments that influence those decisions.

Finally, production takes artificiality out of simulation and makes students producers of actual media messages. Media text production facilitates students enacting partial solutions to social and environmental injustices and is also useful for developing technical media production skills.

While the application of each of these media literacy teaching techniques will vary from class-space to class-space, those strategies that employ interpretation and analysis of existing messages are somewhat more common in the U.S. than are those that employ actual production of messages. The variance in frequency is largely accounted for by the practical concerns involved in facilitating media production-learning, namely the costs (Hobbs 1994; 2004a).

Media Literacy Assessment Practices

Learning assessments in media literacy spaces are also often context-dependent and co-constructed between instructors and learners (Funk, Kellner, Share, 2016; Kellner & Share 2019; see also Rogers & Freiberg, 1994). Following from the constructivist learning principles of Freire (1970/2002) and Dewey (1916), and the teaching strategies outlined above, assessment of media literacy learning is dialogic, negotiated, and constructed between the teacher-student and students-teachers. As such, students can play

a pivotal role in both the construction of the assignments they carry out and the evaluation of those assignments (Rogers & Freiberg, 1994). This serves two functions. First, it is instructive. In determining the evaluative criteria of an assignment, students identify (and co-determine) what "counts" as a good argument or solution to a problem within a given context. Second, it is liberating. Students are offered and opportunity to look to their own experiences to identify a media literacy-related problem, then they identify solutions to solve that problem, and then they co-negotiate the evaluative criteria of their own solution. The role then of the instructor is often less evaluative and more facilitative – and assessment strategies follow from this principle. This is, of course, also an abstracted articulation of Freire's (1970/2002) problem-posing pedagogy. Concrete, actual applications may vary based on contextual (institutional or otherwise) opportunities or constraints.

Each of the above perspectives regarding the content of media literacy education is warranted by their respective proponents. From the inoculation approach, media literacy is a necessary requisite to avoid being "programmed" or manipulated by media texts (Potter, 2019). It is therefore the ethical responsibility of the teacher to "protect" the student from such manipulation. From the MAE and MLM perspectives, the goal of media literacy is to empower the individual. In developing media literacy competencies, students gain the ability to control how media will or will not influence them (Hobbs, 1994). Finally, from the critical media literacy perspective, media literacy education is warranted by a liberative *telos* for the media consumers in the society within which the education is taking place. To a critical media scholar, media is the "stuff" of culture. What we colloquially call 'media' is that through which 'culture' is articulated. To ignore

it or to misrepresent the full magnitude with which it influences society yields sometimes dire, real-world consequences. It is a matter of developing both "empowerment" and "critical awareness" that media scholars warrant the need for media literacy education (Kellner, 1995; Kellner & Share, 2019).

Having overviewed the paradigmatic approaches to media literacy instruction and illustrated some media literacy instructional practices, what remains to be understood is the application of those approaches and practices within the specific context of interest. What are the ideal media literacy learning practices that we might employ within the contexts of (1) working with college-aged learners and (2) facilitating learning through mediated, asynchronous online means? My strategy for answering these questions required that I first collect attitudinal data from a sample of college students who participated in online media literacy learning. That process will be discussed in detail in the following methodology chapter.

Presently, it is relevant for the reader to understand, at least conceptually, what etic analytic frameworks that I brought to my analysis of that student data. What follows are brief overviews of the concepts, frameworks, and theories that I imposed upon the data that I collected to analyze it.

Etic Analytic Frameworks

The present study is exploratory in nature. However, I did not take a strictly "grounded" approach to the student data I collected (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Rather, my goal was to employ disciplinary knowledge from the fields of education and communication pedagogy to bridge a few gaps for media literacy scholars. So, while this study is largely inductive in its approach, I also analyzed the data I collected with the

following concepts and theories as deductive analytic frameworks to connect this exploration to existing fields of discourse.

The etic analytic frameworks that I brought to my analysis were five-fold. Clearly, it was relevant to review and bring to the analysis discourses on both (1) online learning and (2) college-student pedagogy. Perry's (1968) work on the (3) epistemic and ethical development of college students helped me understand what sorts of knowledge frameworks the participating students might have brought to the study and informed my assessments of the participating students' ethical and epistemic development. Krathwohl and colleagues' (1964) identification of distinct domains of learning, particularly the (4) affective domain, informs my analysis of the participating students affect toward the learning content. Finally, Bandura's (1986) and subsequent scholars' (i.e., Usher & Pajares, 2008a, b) conceptions of (5) self-efficacy in learning contexts informed the analysis of the students' perceived media *literacy* self-efficacy and their perceived media literacy *learning* self-efficacy.

Mediated Instruction

Mediated instruction has been, and will continue to be, increasingly prevalent in U.S. education. As of 2015, 5.8 million students in the U.S. reported having taken at least one online course (Online Learning Consortium, 2015). By 2019, that number had increased to 7.3 million with 3.4 million students enrolled in exclusively distance education coursework (U.S. Department of Education, 2021). And, while more recent national statistics are not yet available, it is reasonable to estimate that because of the recent global pandemic those numbers have only increased.

Recent scholarship in communication pedagogy regarding mediated learning identifies four areas of concern for online learning facilitators and their students which became etic-analytic frames within this study: (1) the negotiation of interpersonal messages and the relationships they constitute in the mediated setting (Al Ghamdi, Samarji, & Watt, 2016), (2) overcoming issues of perceived communication 'distance' and enhancing social presence in the online learning space (Kim, Song, & Lou, 2016); (3) establishment and maintenance of an ethical and productive classroom environment in the mediated space (Kaufmann, Sellnow, & Frisby, 2016), and, (4) the identification and employment of best teaching and learning practices in the mediated space (Sellnow & Kauffman, 2018; Wombacher, Harris, Buckner, Frisby, & Limperos, 2017). While this investigation is primarily occupied with the latter of those concerns, scholarship from all four areas of inquiry were relevant for analysis.

Negotiating Interpersonal Interactions Online. Al Ghamdi, Samarji, and Watt (2016) coined the term "e-immediacy" to capture the idea that, even in online learning contexts, students and teachers still carry relational goals alongside the learning objectives they have for the course. When students in mediated environments get positive immediacy cues from their instructors, such as appropriate self-disclosures from the instructor, effective use of humor by the instructor, the instructor responding to asynchronous messages in a timely matter, and the instructor being available to meet (O'Sullivan, Hunt, & Lippert, 2004), those students tend also to experience greater positive affect for the course content and they perceive that they have learned more from their class interactions (Arbaugh, 2001).

Overcoming Perceived Communication Distance. Perceived social presence is the extent to which a student or teacher believes they are interconnected with significant others in the mediated classroom space (Kim, Song, & Lou, 2016). As Sung and Mayer (2012) offer, there are five dimensions of building positive online social presence: (1) experiencing social respect such as speaking in a relational-professional tone in asynchronous messaging, (2) performing social sharing such as offering one's opinion or expressing a preference, (3) maintaining an open mind to opinions and arguments running counter to one's own beliefs, (4) having and maintaining a social identity such as being called by one's preferred pronouns in the education space, and (5) relational intimacy built through the sharing of personal experiences. Research drawn from this social presence framework indicates that experiencing positive social presence in the mediated classroom space will improve student learning satisfaction and student satisfaction with the course itself (Shea, Li, & Pickett, 2006).

Mediated Classroom Climate. Yet, the maintenance of positive classroom space is not solely a phenomenon between the teacher and students. When students engage in mediated learning contexts, they have a general sense of whether the communication environment is safe for them to conduct their learning. This perception is called classroom "climate" and it has also been linked to positive outcomes for instructor satisfaction with their job, student engagement, and student learning. Kaufmann, Sellnow, and Frisby (2016) illustrate that there are four aspects of classroom climate to which mediated instructors should attend: (1) the instructor's behaviors, (2) the extent to which students perceive themselves to be connected to others in the course, their perceived social presence, (3) the clarity of the course (which can be afforded by careful

and considered organization of course learning management systems and verbal clarity with instructions, etc.), and (4) the course structure (which can be afforded by careful and considered organization of the syllabus and course topics and course projects).

Mediated Curriculum Design and Presentation. Finally, research in online classrooms indicates that material delivery such as whether PowerPoint slides are offered, whether audio and visual forms of communication are present to enhance perceived presence (and the quality of those recordings) does influence student perceptions of instructor rapport and student perceptions of the instructor's competence (Sellnow & Kauffman, 2018). Students in college courses with increased social presence (namely, courses that featured audio and video communication, in addition to written communication) did score better on cognitive learning measures in addition to scoring better on relevant affective learning measures (Frisby, Limperos, Record, Downs, & Kercsmar, 2013).

Furthermore, instructional design and delivery in mediated spaces should also take a student-centric approach to the issue of computer-mediated communication anxiety as this type of communication anxiety is positively correlated with student's perceptions of teacher credibility and student learning outcomes (Wombacher, Harris, Buckner, Frisby, and Limperos, 2017). To execute a student-centric approach to computer-mediated communication anxiety, instructors should survey their students to identify potential communication-anxiety-related pitfalls, and then offer appropriate resources so that the students may effectively employ technologies used in the course.

Andragogy

Most codified knowledge about media literacy education prioritizes children as the subjects of research (evidence concerning adult learners that does exist is summarized in Livingstone, Van Couvering, & Thumim, 2005). Yet, most will acknowledge, and educators who work predominantly with adults will point out, that andragogy (practices for teaching adults) should be distinct from pedagogy directed at teaching children. A most basic treatment of differences between child and adult learning indicates that while children are somewhat dependent on the teacher for guidance in their acquisition of knowledge, adults are more independent in their learning and benefit from problem-solving and gaining tangible, practical experiences (Brookfield, 1995).

Most literature within the disciplines of education and communication pedagogy will specify college students as a subset of adult learners for research purposes; this study follows that conceptualization. Though "adult" and "college students" may be used somewhat interchangeably throughout this manuscript, it should be noted that this study concerns and addresses, specifically, college students within the larger category of adult learners.

So, instructors of college learners in mediated contexts may anticipate that they will need to promote independent learning, offer practical experiences, and problem-pose with college learners. Distinctions between child and adult learning, again, point toward the probable conclusion that collegiate media literacy education would benefit from emphasizing college learners' self-efficacy, while employing critical or constructivist learning principles. Prescriptive teaching techniques may fail to offer college students tangible practical experiences or opportunities to problem-solve.

College Student Epistemic and Ethical Development

Among adult learners, college students have been well-studied over the previous several decades. Considering the college student population is the most proximate population to many education researchers, it makes sense that there is a wealth of information concerning the developmental and learning processes of college students. Among the most salient frameworks that might be employed in assessment of the data I collected for this inquiry is Perry's (1968) framework for college student epistemological and ethical development. This framework specifically attempts to describe distinct stages of epistemic development that college-aged adults may progress through during their time in college. In their original conception, Perry (1968) treats these "stages" as fixed qualities of students, or 'traits' of the students. However, I employed this framework aligning with more recent scholarship that indicates the epistemic and ethical "stages" are more akin to *states* of student understanding rather than as *traits* of students themselves. More recent empirical evidence indicates that students can fluidly communicate through varied "stages" depending on the topic of concern and the context (Knefelkamp, 1999; see, Hofer, 2001).

Perry (1968) claims that students move through nine stages of epistemological development. The earliest two positions are characterized by "dualistic" thinking, where the individual depends on authorities, such as instructors and textbooks, as knowledge-holders. In these positions, claims are either true or false and the truth-value of a claim remains the same regardless of the context. A student who considers information from these positions would likely neither suspect that sometimes written materials err, nor

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might they consider that textbook content that claims to be objective in nature may be questioned (Perry, 1968, 1981).

The middle two positions are characterized by "multiplistic" thinking, where the individual depends on rules and societal or cultural norms to guide their claims to knowledge. The truth-value of a claim, then, becomes context dependent. From these positions, the student believes that all claims are equally relevant despite their truth-value, because the claims are dependent on context. A student who considers information from these positions might disagree with information from an instructor or textbook. However, they would not consider their interpretation and the authority's interpretation as contradictory because the student can entertain multiple contradicting claims at the same time, so they may fail to see that a claim from an instructor or a textbook likely carries more credibility than might the opinion of a peer (Perry, 1968, 1981).

The next two positions are characterized by "relativistic" thinking, where the individual depends on themselves to make assessments about claims to knowledge that they encounter. Although the student can recognize that multiple contradicting claims to knowledge may exist, they also recognize that all claims are not equally weighted. Instead, the individual weights claims by their assessment of supporting evidence, and their independent assesses the truth-value of those claims accordingly (Perry, 1968; 1981). Students begin the work of committing to the knowledge that they have *relative* to specific contexts.

Finally, students may reach the last three positions that are characterized by their evolving commitments (Perry, 1981; King, 1978). Here, a student does the work of integrating relativistic knowledge learned from varied sources with their own firsthand

experiences and reflections. A person may make commitments among varied contexts, such as within their vocation or a set of moral beliefs. The important aspect of these final stages is less about the content of the commitments and rather is more about the agency of having made the commitment to a type or domain of information. In other words, both a student exhibiting dualism and another student establishing commitments may agree about a piece of information. However, the student expressing dualism will make a claim based on what they have been told to believe by an authority. The student establishing commitments may agree, but they do so having evaluated the credibility of authoritative knowledge involved and having weighed that evaluation against their experiences within the context. Relativistic ambiguity becomes tolerable, and rather than protest uncertainties they accept that the relationship between what exists and what can be known is complicated as that relationship is neither dualistic nor is it entirely relativistic.

Perhaps the most relevant features of Perry's (1968; 1981) stages and most student epistemic development models (e.g., Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; King & Kitchener, 1994; Baxter Magolda, 1992, 2004) is that they claim students typically progress from a 'black and white' style of thinking early in their collegiate careers to a style of thinking that situates the student as the subject who performs the behavior of knowing things for themselves. Early college students usually start out from a position where they believe intellectual authorities have knowledge and they (students) are passive receivers of that knowledge; then, as they progress in their education, those students transition to seeing themselves as the coauthors of the knowledge that they are creating for themselves.

This agency-defining feature of these models has been criticized as "Western." Moore (1994; 2002) says that it is possible that these models, specifically Perry's (1968) model, merely measure a student's ability to adapt to a Western model of education rather than measure the student's epistemic growth or development. While this criticism should be considered as a limitation toward whatever "generalizability" the results herein may have it should still be noted that Perry's successors were attuned to this. Perry's theory was informed by data drawn from majority (i.e., wealthy, White, male students from well-regarded academic institutions in the U.S.) populations such that practitioners have applied Perry's theory with caution to minority groups. Furthermore, Perry developed his theory over half a century ago, so some caution is warranted in its application (as it articulated several decades ago) to today's students (Knefelkamp, 1999).

However, more recent scholars (e.g., Baxter Magolda, 1992; 2004; Belenky et al., 1986) have extended Perry's work to account for the epistemological development of women, who were largely omitted in Perry's original populations. They found that the epistemic development of women, among other salient populations, were like that of Perry's germinal samples, at least in the Western contexts (e.g., Durham, Hays, & Martinez, 1994). It is these more recent developments to Perry's theory that warrant my treatment of Perry's "stages" more as "states" of understanding within my analysis for this study - in accordance with this more recent empirical work.

The epistemic progression of students, according to Perry, ends with the student as the agent or owner of their own knowledge. This aligns neatly with individualistic and liberal values, which corresponds with Western education systems. However, even

Moore (1994) concedes to a more generous reading of Perry's (1986) scheme when he says,

> [I]f [Perry's] model represents a socialization process rather than a development process within individual students, is it any less helpful in understanding college-student learning processes in the context of a fairly widespread notion of what the end goals of higher education should be? (p. 57)

Furthermore, Perry's (1981) theory of intellectual and ethical development sets the groundwork for nearly all models of student epistemological development that presently exist, so Moore's criticism generally does extend to more recent developments in student epistemological and intellectual development research as well. However, from a critical standpoint, what is important to me is that the later stages or positions or states of these collected theories, and the empirical evidence that has informed them, uniformly indicate that students develop toward an epistemological position where they see themselves as the authors of their own knowledge.

Perry's (1968) theory of ethical and intellectual development and subsequent theories regarding student epistemological development reflect a progression from intellectual suppression under knowledge authorities to intellectual liberation as the student becomes the subject who performs *knowing*, rather than *receiving*, knowledge. Most saliently, a student's present stage or state of processing incoming information will have some influence on learning outcomes in a media literacy learning setting (Grove & Bretz, 2010; Wang & Rogers, 2006).

Affective Learning

Bloom (1956) offers educators a taxonomy for categorizing distinct types of learning that can be measured: affective learning, cognitive learning, and behavioral learning. While cognitive and behavioral learning is often measured in classrooms for the purposes of assigning scores to students' work through exams and practicals, affect sometimes goes unmeasured, at least, formally. This is because, to measure affect, one must generally ask students how they are feeling and their opinions about the course and its content; a point of assessment that is not necessarily built into every classroom environment in the same way that cognitive and sometimes behavioral measures conventionally are. Bloom, and scholars following Bloom's taxonomy, define "learning" as a "change in individuals, due to the interaction of the individuals and their environment" (Burton, 1958, p. 248). As such, appropriately observing a student's learning over time requires established prior- and post-measurements around the learning intervention or environment. In addition, a *change* in beliefs, attitudes, cognitions, or behaviors must be detected to determine that learning has happened. Further, more contemporary scholarship in this area suggests that the construction of learning affect is multidimensional. To accurately capture a student's overall feelings about a course or its content, it is prudent also to gauge their impressions of the instructor and ask them about their future intentions (relevant to the learning content). Doing so captures the most holistic picture of a given student's affective learning (Frymier, Shulman, & Houser, 1996; McCroskey, 1994).

Affective learning is of paramount for the present investigation in part because of this study's exploratory design, but also because high positive regard (affect) toward an

area of content also is positively correlated with how intrinsically motivated a student is, or may become, to continue pursuing learning in that content area (Usher & Pajares, 2008a). Similarly, student affect moderates the relationship between perceived immediacy and cognitive learning outcomes (Rodriguez, Plax, & Kearney, 1996).

We can observe progressive tiers of affective learning by asking students to self-report their opinion about course content, and we can observe affective learning through student behaviors. At the lowest or most nascent type of affective learning is the activity of *receiving* new information; this concerns being aware that new information is present, the person's willingness to receive that information, and their efficacy in controlling their attention or selecting to attend to the incoming information (Krathwohl, et al., 1964).

The second tier of affective learning is that students will *respond* to the incoming information. They may do so by silently agreeing or disagreeing with that information; they might also choose to respond verbally or non-verbally to express their thoughts, and their attitudes may shift depending on how satisfied they are with their own response. Students at this tier of affective learning may develop an appreciation or a distaste for the learning content. Importantly, their own satisfaction with their response, that will inevitably be partially a product of how others respond to them in turn, is a factor in determining whether students will sweeten or sour their attitudes toward the learning content (Krathwohl et al., 1964). So, media literacy educators might anticipate that the careful moderation of class discussions may be of great importance to their students' developing learning affect.

The third tier of affective learning is that students will assess their value commitments toward the incoming information. They may accept a new evaluation or

maintain preferences for a former evaluation with respect to the incoming content. For example, if a student formerly believed that cable news was an absolute authority in worldly information and they are told as much is *not* the case, then they must compare their presently held belief and choose to accept, reject, or make room for the incoming evaluation (Krathwohl, et al., 1964). Assuming the student is in favor of committing to the evaluation implied by the incoming information, they move into organizing that information and the values it implies into their cognitive schema.

At the *organization* tier of affective learning, a student has now committed to the notion that the incoming information and the values that information implies are accurate or true or right; so they begin the process of organizing that incoming information into their existing schema. In other words, cognitive learning is happening for the student by this point of affective learning development. If the incoming information offeres values that are contradictory to the students existing value schema, then they may need to do considerably more cognitive labor to commit that information into their schema, if they do so at all, than might a student whose value schema more readily aligns with the incoming information.

Finally, the affective stage that most instructors aim to move their students toward is *characterization*. At this tier of affective learning the student does the work of rearranging schema. They also may consider their future behaviors in response to the new information and their new value infrastructure (Krathwohl et al., 1964). They seek or create a consistent underlying philosophy that helps them make sense of the new information, and they reconsider how they might now move through the material world as a response to that new information.

Additionally, a warranted precaution for those exploring any area of online learning outcomes comes from Wombacher, Harris, Buckner, Frisby, and Limperos (2017). It is important that mediated-learning scholars keep in mind that students' self-perceived learning and students' affect for a course's content does not necessarily mean that the students are experiencing much cognitive or behavioral learning. Therefore, empirical research should attempt, in addition to measuring affective indicators of learning, to rigorously measure cognitive and behavioral outcomes as well.

A college-student population in a mediated media literacy learning environment has yet to be rigorously studied. The present study host the position that affective learning outcomes are (1) associated with, but not necessarily correlated to, cognitive and behavioral mediated learning outcomes (to avoid dis-clarity of resultant claims) and that study of affective outcomes should (2) set groundwork for future study where cognitive and behavioral outcomes are measured. The assessment here of student affect and self-efficacy is useful as far as it helps the scholarly community identify what salient issues may be unique to a college student population in a mediated media literacy learning space. In other words, the results of this study assist in the development of later cognitive and behavioral measures. However, the results herein should not be confused with cognitive learning outcomes or behavioral learning outcomes.

Media Literacy Self-efficacy and Media Literacy Learning Self-efficacy

An adjacent concept of interest is *student self-efficacy* for media literacy learning. From the frameworks I have discussed so far, it would be appropriate to say that affective organization and characterization of incoming information is heavily and positively correlated with (1) a student's perceived self-efficacy to continue learning on the topic

and (2) their self-efficacy for implementing media literacy skills into their lived experiences (Usher & Pajares, 2008a, b).

Analyzing media texts and their associated environments can present itself as a daunting task. Empirical research employing Bandura's (1998) self-efficacy construct has shown that higher levels of self-efficacy tend to improve students' learning outcomes across many fields of education. It has been associated with outcomes in the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of learning (Usher & Pajares, 2008b). Essentially, self-efficacy beliefs moderate the relationship between what students believe they can achieve and their actual behaviors aimed at accomplishing a given objective (Bandura, 1998).

For clarity, there is no such thing as 'general' self-efficacy, such a construct might more appropriately be called "confidence" or "self-esteem." Instead, self-efficacy is always bound to a specific attitude or belief. For example, while a student may have high self-efficacy in social-media literacy, they may have low self-efficacy in news literacy. So, conceptually, a person always and only has self-efficacy *about* some knowledge that they may have and some subsequent behavior that they may or may not be able to perform (Usher & Pajares, 2008a). Note also that a student's high self-efficacy about, for example, "identifying poor information resources" does not necessarily mean that the student has the aptitude to identify appropriate information resources; but they would believe that they have such competencies.

With media literacy learning, one should carefully consider prescriptive instruction regarding "how to be literate." To offer such instruction may undermine the very premises of critical, autonomous thinking that media literacy education seeks to

promote as the students would be encouraged to depend on the instructor as the 'owner' of correct knowledge (so reinforcing the notion that there is a monologic, "correct" way to assess media and a dualistic modality of thinking). However, educators can help students create conditions upon which they are more likely to succeed in their learning and so enhance their media *literacy* and media literacy *learning* self-efficacies.

Sources of self-efficacy include having mastery experiences, observing appropriate social modeling, and social persuasion (Bandura, 1998). Therefore, there are three things media literacy educators might do to improve student self-efficacy for a given topic: (1) they can provide students with opportunities to master the adjacent and integral skills involved in media literacy learning, (2) they can model media literacy themselves for their students, and (3) they can increase chances of student success by both offering positive appraisals and by avoiding presenting students with situations or tasks for which the students are not yet prepared. Of primary concern here is the student's motivation (Usher & Pajares, 2008a) and the impacts positive self-efficacy beliefs have on media literacy learning outcomes for students (Graham & Weiner, 1996; Multon, Brown, & Lent, 1991). Because adult learners frequently prefer problem-posing and "practical" experiences (Brookfield, 1995; Pytlak & Houser, 2014; Teven & Herring, 2005), one might reasonably anticipate that practices boosting self-efficacy with specific media literacy tools or skills would also serve to increase student satisfaction in various dimensions of the learning content, and so boost overall positive affect as well.

Research Questions

Previously, I've offered generic interpretations of the research questions driving the present inquiry. I have offered a brief history of media literacy education in the U.S.

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and identified why media literacy learning is of particular concern for this investigation. Then I discussed the etic frameworks through which I evaluated the data I collected from the students participating in this study. Before moving to discuss more thoroughly the methods with which I procured that data and the methods with which I analyzed that data, I would like to first concretize the specific research questions with which I approached this investigation. The impetus for each item is warranted with the above review of relevant literature:

RQ 1: How do varied instructional delivery strategies influence college student self-efficacy beliefs related to media literacy learning in an online, asynchronous instructional setting?

RQ 2: How do varied instructional delivery strategies influence college student affect regarding media literacy learning an online, asynchronous instructional setting?

RQ 3: What novel hurdles to media literacy learning are present:

a.) in the online, asynchronous context?

b.) for college-aged learners?

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this study is to identify how varied instructional delivery practices may influence college-aged learners in a mediated media literacy learning environment. This study seeks to also identify any novel hurdles that may be impacting students in this context.

I'll briefly overview my methods here as a preview to the more-thorough reviews of my methodology offered below. To answer my research questions, I collected data from semi-structured, open-ended interviews (Tracy, 2020) with students participating in Communication courses at a large U.S. midwestern university. I corroborated my analysis of interview data with my analysis of the pre-study-intervention questionnaire responses. Doing so helped me understand the baseline experiences that the students were having related to media literacy learning prior to engaging with this study's learning modules.

Once I had collected students' baseline interpretations of what media literacy learning meant to them, I exposed the participating students to one of two media literacy learning modules conducted through the university's learning management system, "Canvas." I structured and conceptualized the study learning-modules around components of media literacy learning using a critical media literacy framework (Funk, Kellner, & Share, 2016). Namely, the modules discussed important basic institutional media influences on media production in the U.S. and some baseline tools for interpreting and assessing media sources. However, the method of delivery of those modules featured opposing delivery strategies; one module was teacher-focused and offered a prescriptive delivery strategy (i.e., video lectures) while the other student-focused module prioritized

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a critical and a constructive delivery strategies; students read through the learning content themselves and completed associated activities, such as assessing case studies.

Upon completion of the modules, I solicited the participating students to complete semi-structured interviews over online video conference software. In the interviews, I asked them about: (1) their affect for the module materials and online learning generally, (2) their self-efficacy with respect to the intended media literacy outcomes for the module, and (3) their experiences with those modules in the mediated context.

I then subjected my jottings from interviews, transcriptions of those student-interview recordings, and the students' associated pre-module questionnaire responses to an etic analysis and a thematic analysis. I interpreted answers to the research questions from the data. I employed a hybrid form of grounded theory analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1999). Tracy (2020) calls this "hybrid" form of grounded analysis a "phrenetic iterative analysis" (p.209). I organized emergent, emic (grounded) themes from the data in an iterative compare-and-contrast process with existing etic knowledge regarding student self-efficacy and collegiate media literacy learning. Doing so helped me identify connections between the emergent themes with existing knowledge.

In what follows, I will elaborate on my methodological practices and strategies so that the reader may appropriately interpret the results and discussions of those results in subsequent chapters of this manuscript.

Participant Recruitment

Upon obtaining institutional review board approval, I recruited student participants from courses that met specific criteria; doing so aided in the avoidance of additional conceptual limitations with this study. Namely, it would have been

conceptually incoherent to recruit from courses irrelevant to media literacy learning, such as biology or mathematics courses. It would be unclear if those students would have had relevant media literacy learning experiences outside of the intervention modules. Participant recruitment took place during the Fall semester of 2020 and the Spring semester of 2021.

I identified relevant courses from which to recruit participants through a mixture of theoretical construct sampling, typical instance, and snowball sampling (Tracy, 2020). I first identified teachers who would be conducting coursework in topic areas related to media literacy in undergraduate Communication courses. Recruiting in this manner ensured that (1) the exposure modules would be relevant and meaningful to the participating students' coursework, (2) that the pre-module questionnaires might saliently serve as a thematic corroboration (Saldaña, 2018) with relevant corroborating evidence for interview data, and (3) that recruited students from these classrooms would have relevant previous educational experiences related to media literacy in addition to the experiences offered in the media literacy learning modules. Upon identifying relevant courses for this investigation, I solicited instructors allow me to conduct the Canvas modules within their courses, and so also I establish access to potential student interviewees.

With instructor permission, the media literacy learning modules were integrated into the courses. The pre-module questionnaire was offered at the module-start through Qualtrics, so the module linked the students out to the questionnaire. Students were then instructed to return to the module upon completion of the questionnaire. I designed the modules to complement topics generally discussed in communication coursework as

communication courses of varied levels. Specifically, the modules presented information about media industries which was framed as contextual knowledge for better assessment of source quality. This way, the modules could be presented alongside ongoing discussions about resource credibility that often happens around summative project assignments involving research in communication courses.

At the end of their module participation, students were asked to become interview participants within the module, through a Canvas announcement within their course, as well as an accompanying email. The participant recruitment solicitations outlined the purpose of the interviews, set expectations for the interview procedures, set expectations for the types of questions I would ask, and established confidentiality protocols. These messages included links (to a Qualtrics questionnaire) through which the students scheduled Zoom interviews with me.

After students from the classes had completed the pre-module questionnaires and learning modules, I recruited 18 students for semi-structured interviews (Tracy, 2020). These interviews were scheduled throughout the recruiting period. I collected a total of 18 cases of paired interview and questionnaire data; although, I discarded two cases as it was apparent that those participants had not actually engaged with the learning module at all (the participants admitted so explicitly). This brought the total number of participating cases for analysis to 16 cases. The interviews ceased producing novel content to analyze around the 12th interview, but I continued data collection as the analysis was ongoing and I had continued to schedule additional interviews to ensure theoretical saturation (Babbie, 2013). Extra credit points awarded for study participation were offered at the instructor's discretion.

Participants

In accordance with making appropriate observations on affective learning, measurements must be taken before and after the learning intervention of interest so that changes might be observed. This is because to identify whether affective learning has happened at all, changes over time must be observed (Burton, 1958).

Participating students varied in their age (Range: 18 – 47), and in the number of college credits they had collected. There were twelve under-class students (Eight first-year and four sophomore) and four upper-class students (three juniors and one senior). Eleven identified as women, five identified as men. A comprehensive list of non-identifying participant demographics and the types of classes from which they were recruited is available in Appendix A. All names offered in the remainder of this report (including in Appendix A) are pseudonyms assigned by the author or chosen by the participants. In a similar effort, to abide by participant confidentiality, some quotations offered in the results sections have been revised to omit information that might be used to identify the participants.

Overall, the modules discussed above were administered within six communication courses ranging in number of students from 16 – 121; A total of 195 students were offered the modules, and 87 students completed the modules. Among those who completed the modules, 37 had been offered the student-centric module and 50 had been offered the teacher-centric module. Of these 87 students, 24 registered for follow-up interviews, of which 18 interviews were completed. These included 10 interviews with students from the teacher-centric module and 8 interviews with students form the student-centric module. Two cases of data (specifically, of participants from the teacher-centric

module) were thrown out as those participants had not meaningfully engaged with the learning modules. This resulted in a final case-count of 16 participants whose data was used in the analysis of this study.

Procedures and Data Collection Instruments

The procedures for this investigation span two data collection strategies: (1) qualitative questionnaire analysis coupled with (2) in-depth semi-structured interviews. The data sets were assessed as cases so that each participating student responded to a complete set of questionnaire and interview instruments. The pre-module questionnaire gauged the students' prior impressions of "media literacy" and their attitudes toward media literacy learning. Then the participants engaged in a media literacy learning module as described below. Finally, I interviewed the participants to both observe how their general media literacy learning affect may have changed and to assess their media literacy-related self-efficacies and attitudes.

Media Literacy Modules

I developed two Canvas media literacy learning modules framed around Funk, Kellner, and Share's (2016) critical media literacy (CML) framework. For the purposes of this investigation, the modules focused on the production of media texts and the industry stakeholders who produce them. Among components of the CML framework I may have presented, message production and industry context were selected for two reasons. First, these topics have widespread relevance across many courses and disciplines. Conversations of source credibility are common in most classrooms where students produce written work, and these conversations align well with the CML framework's emphasis on message production. When we investigate a text's production,

we simultaneously acknowledge both the processes of production as well as the institutions that shape and mold those production processes as all texts have an intended purpose. Second, message production and industry context were also selected as topics for the modules for internal fidelity to this inquiry. An initial and basic component of all media literacy frameworks is that to "be" media literate one must acknowledge the production processes and institutional influences that went into producing a text to understand that source's credibility (Hobbs & Jensen, 2009). Even heuristically, when lay audiences conceptualize what it means to be "media literate", among the first concepts they identify have to do with production and source credibility.

The media literacy modules were produced using two strategies. One module employed prescriptive delivery and assessment strategies (as defined in Freire, 1970/2002; Hobbs, 2006) wherein an instructor offered students a series of mini-video lectures (5 in total, ranging from about 4 – 7 minutes in length each; a total of 35 minutes of lecture-video viewing time). The instructor was offered a script for each lecture and encouraged to revise statements as needed to fit their speaking idiosyncrasies (see script, Appendix B). I ensured the content in the video lectures was conceptually identical to the scripts. Students engaging with this module were assessed using an 8-item multiple-choice quiz at the end of the module that assessed their content knowledge of the lectures. The quiz returned in-line quantitative feedback (correct/incorrect, a score) each question in accordance with ordinary prescriptive assessment strategies (i.e., exams; Freire 1970/2002). This will be called the "teacher-centric" module for the remainder of this manuscript.

The other students experienced a module with critical and socially constructed delivery and assessment strategies (as defined in Dewey, 1916; Funk, Kellner & Share, 2016; Buckingham 2013b). The video scripts from the teacher-centric module were revised for a reading audience (though, the lesson content remained identical to the teacher-centric module) and offered a series of mini-lessons as interactive worksheets. The students were asked to engage with case studies related to each topic or presented with a real-world problem or application. Some activities solicited students to follow links to relevant other websites to review empirical data from non-fiction cases. At the end of the module, the students were presented with an example text and asked to assess the quality and production context of the source to arrive at an overall judgment of the source's credibility. Students produced a one-paragraph (roughly 250 words) argument proposing their assessment of the source. There is not one globally "right" or "wrong" assessment of the sources offered in the module. Rather than offer a quantitative "score", I instead offered these students qualitative feedback on their work in accordance with ordinary critical and socially constructed assessment strategies (Dewey, 1916). This will be called the "student-centric" module for the remainder of the report. Both modules are available for review in Appendix B.

Participants were assigned non-randomly to modules based on which courses their participation in this study was solicited from – all students from a given course received the same instructional module, though which module was used for a class was designated randomly.

Student Questionnaires

Within the modules, before students engaged with the module learning content, students were linked out to a Qualtrics 9-item questionnaire that gauged their pre-module affect and self-efficacy for media literacy learning in addition to collecting relevant demographic information. The questionnaire included close-ended demographic questions; two Likert-scale response questions, and open-ended affect and self-efficacy questions.

I derived the open-ended questions from validated quantitative measures for each concept (e.g., McCroskey, 1994; e.g., Usher & Pajares, 2008a). For example I asked, "Is "media literacy" something you should be learning about in college? Please briefly elaborate on your response."

In the pre-module questionnaire, I also asked two Likert-scale items so that I might approximate numerically the student's perceived media literacy self-efficacy. These items were as follows. The first was, "Please rate the extent to which you agree with the following statement: 'I think I am a media literate person.'" The second was, "Please rate the extent to which you agree with the following statement: 'I think I am more media literate than most people like me.'" The response set for both items included 5 response-points from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly Agree" with a neutral middle option.

The pre-module questionnaire also solicited the following demographic information: the participants name, the course from which they were being recruited, and their age. All other demographic information was collected at the point of the post-module interview. I estimated that the questionnaires could be completed in 10 or fewer

minutes. Qualtrics records indicated that, among the included 16 cases, the participants

spent an average of about 8 minutes completing the questionnaire. All included

questionnaire responses were 100% complete except for one (who had omitted

responding to all open-ended affect and self-efficacy items). The full questionnaire is

available in Appendix C.

Student Interviews

The primary data collection instrument for this investigation was the semi-

structured interview guide for student interviews (Tracy, 2020). There are a few reasons

that a semi-structured approach to the interview guide and subsequent interviews were

most appropriate. First, the values of interview data for exploratory work are well

documented. While it was important for me to approach each participant with identical

questions (so that responses might appropriately be compared), as Lindlof and Taylor

note interviewing participants affords the space to go 'off-track' (2011). In doing so, the

participants often offer accounts of their behaviors and opinions. To conduct this

investigation, I needed to solicit student's attitudes, motivations, and perceptions about

media literacy learning, so collecting their narrative accounts for their own attitudes and

behaviors through interviews was appropriate.

Second, semi-structured interviews afford both the researcher and the participant

time and space to identify salient and relevant responses to the questions driving a given

study. Especially when an investigation is exploratory in nature, it is important to offer

participants time and space so that they may discuss background and context for their

responses as desired or needed; it is from these accounts that the researcher interprets

how communicative processes are occurring from the participant's perspective. Such

accounts are difficult to gauge through other data collections strategies as they often limit

or specify the type of response that a participant may offer (Tracy, 2020).

Third, because I am ultimately and necessarily interpreting evidence from the

responses, it was relevant to corroborate my interpretations with the participants'

experiences through "member reflections" while analysis was on-going. Member

reflections ensure that the researcher is interpreting the data that they are collecting in a

way that truthful with and accurate to the participant's experiences (Tracy, 2020). Near

the end of my interviews with the participants, I summarized what I had learned so far

and inquired if my findings fit their perceptions. I prepared these summaries on a bi-

weekly basis as the interviews continued while conducting preliminary analyses of earlier

interviews. Member reflections are a qualitative data collection practice wherein the

researcher reviews their interpretations of any data collected so far with present

participants. In doing so, present participants can "correct" the researcher and so play a

more active role in helping determine the results of a study than they would without

member reflections. Tracy (2020) argues that "member reflections" that are conducted

while analysis is ongoing is a superior form of participant corroboration to "member

checks" that might be conducted *after* the point of analysis. She argues that there is little

to no evidence to support the contributions of member checks for validating qualitative

research. Rather, member reflections, conducted while analysis is ongoing, affords

participants the ability to "correct" the researcher's interpretations while analysis is

ongoing; so, participants have a legitimate influence on the resultant findings. Member

reflections contribute to the overall validity of research findings by allowing the

researcher to appreciate whether their findings resonate with their participants and are

understandable to them, and so member reflections help researchers better crystalize results (Richardson, 2000; Tracy, 2020).

My approach to interviewing with participants for this study was to position myself as deliberately naïve and conduct some components of the interview in collaboration with the participants (Tracy, 2020). Approaching participants as deliberately naïve requires the interviewer to drop any assumptions they may have about the responses they will get, and it facilitates an attitude of openness to unexpected and novel responses for the researcher (Kvale, 1996). At points in the interviews, it was particularly important that I encouraged the participants to elaborate as they saw fit to capture what was important in their experiences (Ellis & Berger, 2003). At the introduction of each interview, I informed each participant that they should feel free to direct this interview to whatever they felt was interesting or important because discussing and collecting the phenomena that the participants found important was a primary goal of the present data collection strategy.

I conducted the interviews over Zoom, video conference software. I estimated the interviews would take about 45 minutes. Interview lengths ranged in 16 minutes to 55 minutes. The average interview length was 37 minutes. The interviews yielded a total of 591 minutes of recorded audio and 201 pages of single-spaced transcriptions for analysis.

The interview guides contained 7 sections: (1) a brief introduction, (2) demographic items, (3) items concerning general media literacy knowledge and attitudes, (4) items targeting student affect for media literacy learning, (5) items targeting student media literacy self-efficacy, (6) items regarding mediated learning, and (7) a member reflection. The interview guide for this project is available in full in Appendix D.

Subsequently, these data generated 173 first level codes (descriptive of emergent phenomena; like "broadcast media", "Education-discussed", and "college student – expectation"), 21 second-level, axial codes (that were descriptive of conceptual grouping processes, like "What are media literacy skills" and "Questioning/Seeking Information", and "Learning and Technology"), and finally a number of patterns and themes that I confirmed among member reflections that have become the key points of discussion in the "results" and "discussion" sections below.

Data Analysis

I combined sets of interviews and questionnaires into individual cases for analysis. I employed a hybrid form of grounded theory analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1999). I organized emergent themes from the data around etic frameworks. In the initial phases of data collection, I jotted notes and memos on emerging patterns as well as my reflections. These memos and annotations guided subsequent data collection and coding (Tracy, 2020). Similarly, I summarized my jottings and memos about every other interview so that those summaries might be offered as a starting point for member reflections.

I call this process of analysis a "hybrid" form of grounded theory because I find it relevant to rely on theory and framework-driven coding categories to make sense of the data I collect. Namely, within the present project, there are etic categories of analysis and concepts driven from media literacy frameworks and theory concepts from the adjacent disciplines of communication and education. I toggled between this coding strategy and traditional (grounded) coding strategies like open, axial, and thematic coding as described by Corbin and Strauss (2008). Tracking between emic and etic data reveals its discursive

nature: that discourse creates and transforms meanings, meanings which go on to have consequences for how people interact with their environment and others around them (Geertz, 2008).

This method of analysis takes a semi-grounded approach to data and incorporates iterative and reflexive processes (Tracy, 2020; Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009). This method of analysis was appropriate for two reasons. First, the merits of a socially constructive approach to discursive studies are thoroughly documented. This method accepts the principle that discourse creates, shapes, and transforms social realities (Bowers, 1987; Wiggins & Potter, 2017). Second, although I am interested in the emerging themes from the data, I am also applying theory-driven categories to this data as they become relevant to reveal insights between the emic and etic data. In summary, the iterative nature of this analysis helped me make sense of the themes that emerge from emic data with the patterns of sensemaking tied to etic data. A codebook of the codes that became relevant to the results discussed in this manuscript is offered in Appendix E.

My first level of analysis followed conventional grounded theory methods (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). That is, I initially coded the data for emerging ideas and those concepts most salient to the participants. I employed AtlasTi qualitative analysis software to reveal different insights within this process than I may have recognized alone. Still, because researcher familiarity with their data is paramount to qualitative research (Tracy, 2020), I also performed this level of analysis without computer assistance before and after employing the qualitative analysis software. I offered reflective summaries from this point of the analysis process to most of my participants so that they might comment on the salient, emerging codes. This process generated about 170 codes that described

emergent phenomena from the data, like "learning management systems", and "helpful information".

My second level of coding analysis then fell broadly into two categories. First were those etic codes that were driven from communication and education literature. Some examples include: "student engagement-affective-positive" or "indication of epistemic development-dualistic; basic duality." Second where those codes that were otherwise superimposed for exploration, such as "student gender - man" or "module intervention – teacher centric." Corbin and Strauss (2008) call this sort of coding "axial" coding.

Among these second-level codes, I performed coding to identify participant statements that signaled epistemic positionality. Using literature about epistemic development (i.e., Perry, 1968; 1981), I performed a round of data coding analysis wherein I reviewed the participants' interview and questionnaire responses for indications of a prominent epistemic disposition with respect to the topics discussed (see Appendix E, Codebook). I documented statements that indicated one or more epistemic disposition, then performed a numeric analysis of those codes for each participant case. As expected, no participant indicated exclusive membership withing a single stage of epistemic development. Rather, participants demonstrated a variety of statements that indicated they varied in their epistemic positionality even within a single point of conversation. As such, this aspect of my analysis was designed to identify what is essentially an artificial and perhaps reductive coding category. Yet categorizing participants in the quasi-artificial way proved useful in the broader thematic analysis, so these categories still proved meaningful. I ultimately determined a single dominant epistemic code for each of

the participants; while individual participants each demonstrated varied epistemic development, there were patterns within the participants questionnaire and interview data that suggested one category over others. Specifically, I settled on labeling a participant as belonging to an epistemic-development-category only after a full analysis of the participant's provided data, and only once a clear pattern had emerged. Within a given student-case, it was common for me to have assigned 1 – 30 codes regarding a given epistemic category. So, where the codes indicated one epistemic position was more prevalent than others (circumstantially, by a margin of no fewer than six coding instances in all cases) I determined that the student belonged within that coding category for the purposes of later analysis.

With the first and second-level codes, I performed my third level of analysis which was a series of co-occurrence analyses targeting the research questions at hand. For example, by searching through the data for instances where students mentioned "remote learning" I was able to isolate and review those quotations to realize emergent themes. This analysis yielded third-level or thematic or selective codes (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). At this point in the analysis, Tracy (2020) recommends that a few reflective and insightful participants be integrated more prominently into the analysis to ensure appropriate crystallization (Richardson, 2000), multivocality in the results (Ellis, 2007), and generally to improve "resonance" of the findings (Flyvbjerg, 2011), so I began conducting member reflections as soon as I had reached this point of my analysis and so continued until data collection was complete.

Once I had identified a corpus of themes (results) that I felt appropriately responded to the research questions one and two - after the first week of interviews

concluded, four interviews in - I began incorporating member reflections into the interviews. As anticipated, these member reflections "threw fresh light on the investigation" and offered new frames of reference for further analysis of the data (Bloor, 2001, p. 395). For example, one participant pointed out that a theme seemed more indicative of some types of students than others. As a result, I reviewed associated codes and themes; doing so helped me identify that there were, indeed, unique ways that student epistemological development was influencing affective "reception" of incoming information. So, these new insights became additional fodder for the fourth level analysis as well as impetus for ongoing revisions to the third level of analysis. It is largely from this third level of analysis that I derive the results articulated below for Research Questions 1 and 2.

In the final level of analysis, I synthesized information from across all codes and themes to determine a response to research question three: What are the novel implications of collegiate media literacy learning, specifically in online settings that may not be present in child-learning or face-to-face contexts? Here, I was interested in describing phenomena that extended beyond extant literature. I therefore began by reviewing all coding categories, and quotations therein, associated with existing literature. From that review, I identified both typical and extreme instances of participant attitudes and perceptions (Tracy, 2020). Then I looked specifically for phenomena that I could not fully account for with the etic coding categories that I had employed at the second level of analysis. I then reviewed the resultant pool of quotations and codes to identify potential themes in response to the third research question.

Chapter 4: Results

This investigation began with three specific questions concerning mediated collage media literacy learning. First, "how does instructional delivery influence college student self-efficacy beliefs related to media literacy learning in a mediated setting?" Second, "how does instructional delivery influence college student affect toward media literacy learning in a mediated setting?" And third, "what novel self-efficacy and affective hurdles to media literacy learning are presented in (a) mediated contexts and (b) among college-aged students?" In what follows, I will present the results I have derived from the participants' responses. In Chapter 5 I will connect these findings to extant literature and discuss the implications of these results.

Eight of the participating students were presented with a media literacy learning module wherein the learning content was delivered through video lecture and content assessment was conducted through a multiple-choice quiz. This module was "teacher-centric" because the delivery practices employed "banking" strategies where in the teacher is the authority delivering knowledge to (presumably) unknowledgeable students, and the assessment of that knowledge assumed "correct" and "incorrect" responses (Freire, 1970/2002).

The other eight participant-students were presented with a media literacy learning module wherein the learning content was delivered through guided readings and small activities, and content assessment was conducted through qualitative assessment of a written response to a prompt. This module was "student-centric" as the delivery strategies largely omitted the instructor from the module. Instead, the students were informed that an instructor would evaluate their work with written (qualitative) feedback; they were

otherwise not informed that the same instructor had authored the module's contents. So, delivery of content in the student-centric module depended on students engaging with the module and the presented activities, rather than watching an instructor lecture. Assessment of these student's work did not assume a "correct" or "incorrect" response, as would a quiz assessment. Rather, the student's work was assessed with qualitative feedback. This module is "student-centric" because it positions students as co-creators of the knowledge they developed (as they read and as they participated in small activities elucidating the module contents) and assessment of their participation was dialogic, rather than penal, or score-based (Dewey, 1916; Kellner & Share, 2007).

Research Question 1

The first research question motivating this investigation concerns the relationship between distinct mediated teaching delivery practices and students' self-efficacy beliefs concerning media literacy and media literacy learning. Both delivery stratagies featured in the opposing learning modules had varied implications for the students' self-efficacy beliefs. However, the self-efficacy outcomes seem also to depend upon the apparent epistemic state of the student in coordination with those instructional delivery strategies. Analysis results reveal that students may vary in their self-efficacy beliefs depending on the delivery strategies they experienced and the "state" of epistemic development they occupied related to media literacy and media literacy learning.

Dualism, Delivery, and Self-Efficacy

"Dualistic" students, students who occupy a position of dualism in their epistemic schema with respect to a given phenomenon (see Figure 4.1), have the tendency to rely on 'black-and-white' or 'either-or' thinking. In the mediated media literacy context, this

had interesting implications for how those students perceived their self-efficacy about their media literacy learning and their media literacy capabilities.

For these students, the teacher-centric delivery strategy appeared to offer a boost to their media literacy *learning* efficacy; Brody (a dualistic-indicating student who received the student-centric module) makes this point clear during his member reflection, "I feel like I would have learned it better if it were a teacher telling me this stuff, instead of reading it myself." Their inclination to default to an authority as a source of learning is a strong indication that these students were taking a dualistic approach to their knowledge-making. For them, knowledge is absolute rather than co-constructed between people. Another indication of dualistic epistemic modalities influencing these students' self-efficacy outcomes comes from the frequently present sentiment that media literacy content might not belong in the college classroom at all. Like Natalie, these students "feel like we already learned all this stuff as kids or in high school, or we should have, anyway." While these students' confidence in their own knowledge reservoirs is impressive, this attitude also indicated that they believe they can be "done" with learning on a given topic, which is a dualistic attitude.

	Delivery: **Teacher-Centric**	Delivery: **Student-Centric**
Student Epistemology: **Dualistic**	• Katy – 19, W, Junior • Mel – 18, M, Freshman • Natalie – 20, W, Junior • Kelsey – 18, W, Freshman	• Brody – 18, M, Sophomore • Michelle – 20, W, Sophomore • Fey – 19, W, Sophomore • Maria – 20, W, Freshman
Student Epistemology: **Multiplistic/ Relativistic**	• Rosa – 18, W, Freshman • Art – 18, W, Freshman • Lonnie – 47, M, Senior • Blair – 19, W, Freshman	• Ellie – 19, W, Freshman • Jimmy – 21, M, Sophomore • Virginia – 20, W, Junior • Nick – 26, M, Sophomore

Figure 4.1 – Analysis Results of Participant Epistemic Development

I also asked the participants to reflect on their own media literacy self-efficacy in both the pre-module questionnaire and in the interviews. Neither of the modules seemed to uniformly influence the students' self-efficacy toward their own media literacy competencies or skills. So, while these results discussed in the above paragraph regard the students' media literacy *learning* self-efficacy, there was not much indication that the modules had much effect on these students' *media literacy* self-efficacy, at least for the students who exhibited dualistic epistemology for this context.

In other words, I found that the delivery style may have, for dualistic students, influenced their media literacy *learning* self-efficacy as they felt like they were learning effectively when they were being delivered a lecture, but delivery style had no apparent influence on their self-perception of how well they could perform media literacy skills in application; these students offered little evidence that their self-efficacy to perform media literacy skills had changed at all between the pre-module questionnaires and the point of interview. For this group of students, their *media literacy* self-efficacy was high at both the points of the pre-module questionnaire and at the point of the interview. So, they could identify that they *felt* like they were learning, but when asked to compare their skills and abilities to like-others, there were no evident changes between the pre-module questionnaire and the after-module interview.

Three of these students additionally admitted that they either *had not* actually watched all the lecture videos or did so while distracted by other activities, such as watching television. This result will be reviewed again in the "student affect" outcomes section.

Multiplicity, Relativism, Delivery, and Self-Efficacy

Students indicating a multiple or relativist epistemic disposition toward media literacy content (see Figure 4.1) became more readily confused where media literacy learning is concerned. Virginia characterizes this confusion when she says, "I'm just not sure that I've gotten all the content. Like, when I was doing some of the activities, I wasn't sure if I was 'getting' what the instructor wanted me to." Virginia's insistence that there is a "correct" way to conduct herself through the module indicates a reliance on – or a preoccupation with - the teacher as a knowledge authority. Generally, this would imply a dualistic modality of processing. However, she goes on to mention in the same turn that "there are just so many different media, and I feel like the rules are different for each one, so I just feel like there's always another way to look at things, you know?" This latter statement reveals that if she has not already reached a multiplistic epistemic state concerning media literacy, she is quite close.

This and similar statements of confusion were present more frequently and saliently among students who had engaged with the student-centric module than those who had engaged with teacher-centric module. This appears to have been the case because, in the absence of a teacher delivering the content in a lecture, the students second-guessed if their interpretations of the content were "correct." This "multiplistic" uncertainty did influence these students' self-efficacy beliefs and appeared to vary depending on which module the students had engaged with. These students perceived that media literacy learning was complex enough that they might be missing concepts or ideas that were relevant. In the absence of a teacher, they felt unsure that they were attending to the most relevant aspects of the content they were presented.

Additionally, when asked how they would compare their perceived competence in media literacy skills to other people like them, this sub-group of students consistently placed themselves at an average level of competency, while students who did not exhibit this type of confusion said they were more competent (than average) among comparable learners. Upon member reflection, while discussing the preliminary results from student interviews across both module-inductions, Jimmy pointed out that, "[I]t would make sense that students who got to watch lecture videos [were given with the teacher-centric module] would feel more confident in what they'd learned. They're not getting any feedback that they're missing things."

These students experienced a decrease in their media literacy *learning* self-efficacy when they considered that *their* ways of processing the incoming information may not count as "right" or "correct" ways of knowing; Ellie notes this dip for herself when she says, "I get it that people are going to read media differently, but then that makes me wonder if I'm reading it right." Similar statements were offered across male-identifying participants as well.

Relativist- or multiplist-indicating students who had participated in the teacher-centric module echoed the converse of this notion when they indicated that they felt like they were learning more from a teacher offering lectures than if they had explored that same content themselves during member reflections. Multiplist students from both modules regularly considered the instructor as more "correct" or more expert than themselves, and so even without the explicit presence of an instructor (among those exposed to the student-centric intervention) they sometimes appealed to an assumed instructor's knowledge-authority. Although students who presented multiplistic or

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relativist epistemologies with respect to knowledge authorities were present in both modules, sentiments of confusion such as those above were more salient and most frequently apparent among those who had engaged with the student-centric module.

"How does instructional delivery influence college students' self-efficacy beliefs related to an online, asynchronous setting?" In summary, the combination of instructional delivery practices along with the students' indicated epistemology for media literacy learning seems to influence self-efficacy outcomes. Dualistic students may have experienced an increase in their media literacy self-efficacy in the sense that they perceived they were already knowledgeable in this area when presented with a lecture-video delivery in the teacher-centric module, and they collected insufficient feedback or experience from the module to indicate to them otherwise. However, the students who more prevalently exhibited multiplistic or relativistic thinking saw more varied results depending on the module to which they were exposed; while these students saw similar self-efficacy results for media literacy as the dualistic students in the teacher-centric module (that is, they remained unchanged between the pre- questionnaire and the post-module interview) the student-centric module may have lowered their *learning* self-efficacy on account of their becoming confused about the multiplicity of media literacy evaluations that an audience might make.

Research Question 2

The second research question motivating this inquiry focused on the relationship between instructional delivery practices and student affective learning outcomes: "How does instructional delivery influence college student affect toward media literacy learning in an online, asynchronous learning setting?" Students had clear and distinct affective

outcomes that were dependent upon which of the modules the students were offered. Also, again, a student's indicated epistemic development state seemed also to play a role in affective outcomes in relation with the instructional delivery style to which they were exposed.

General Affective Valence

Participants who engaged with the student-centric module generally expressed greater enthusiasm for media literacy and media literacy learning than did students who engaged in the teacher-centric module. Because module participations were distributed across communication courses of varied levels and types, and because the contents of both modules were identical, I concluded that this enthusiasm (or lack thereof) is likely related to the delivery strategies presented in the modules. Students from the student-centric module expressed that they would, if the opportunity arose and it was not too much trouble, take coursework on the topic of media literacy. Comments like, "yea, if there were a 300-level class, like one of the elective courses offered in COM, and I had space in my schedule I'd take a course on this" were more indicative of students who had experienced the student-centric module than those who had been offered the teaching-centric module. Among the other group of students, those who had received the teacher-centric module, comments like, "I don't think it needs to be a full class; a week within other courses or like a unit would be okay" and comments like, "I just don't really see it being necessary in college. We all know this stuff from growing up; maybe for older people it's different" were more typical.

More broadly, when asked about explicit application of media literacy concepts to a real-world context, participants from the teaching-centric module (with one exception)

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struggled to identify applications they may have made. This is likely explained, at least partially, by the fact that three of the four dualistic students who had participated in the teacher-centric module explicitly indicated that they had not engaged with the module fully (having skipped some lecture videos or otherwise viewed the videos while multitasking). Contrastingly, students who had engaged with the student-centric module routinely offered applications of concepts from the module throughout their interview responses, often without prompting. Responses like, "I see it in my grandparents a lot; Like, they're on social media […] and they don't get it that people can post literally anything there they want" and responses like, "[o]h, yes. Ever since I read that there's only, what is it 5 or 6 companies that control most of what we see in [mainstream] media, I think about it all the time" were more indicative of the student-centric-module group of students.

Attitudes Toward Content and Delivery Practices

Students who had engaged in the teacher-centric module also had a lot more to say about how they would conduct the module differently. I asked, "How would you have constructed the module differently if you had the opportunity?" Many participants expressed a preference for face-to-face learning in this context (regardless of which module they took). However, the students who had participated in the teacher-centric module launched several more criticisms of the module than did those who were offered the student-centric module. Most of the criticisms had to do with the overall length of time the module had taken them (both modules were designed so that students could complete them within an hour); while the students from the student-centric module said nothing about the length of the module or the amount of content, the students who had

taken the teacher-centric module frequently cited that it was "too much" or "too many videos; I'd make it fewer videos."

Conversely, among the more frequently cited content areas that these students would like to see integrated into the modules were: "more information about social media and navigating that," more information about media industry contexts as "the industry stuff was really interesting; I had no idea; I think there should be more of that," and some inclusion about censorship tensions within mass media because "I don't think people have a good understanding of what the real laws and stuff are, like people argue about censorship all the time but they have no [expletive] idea."

Students from the teacher-centric module also called for greater interaction with the learning content. A few of these students recommended that the modules include discussion boards because they, "[…] like to see what others in the class are thinking." They also recommended that the modules include examples relevant to contexts that were important to them, "like, social media was hardly in the module at all, if I remember correctly; that seems important to have."

These calls for increased interactivity and "real-life" applications were less frequently discussed among those students who had participated in the student-centric module. Their most salient insights, when asked how they might revise the modules, aligned with Brody's response: "I don't know; I thought it was all right." However, students who had engaged with the student-centric module did contribute to the above comments regarding what areas of content they would like to see included.

Epistemic Development, Delivery, and Student Affect

There is some indication that, like the above-mentioned self-efficacy outcomes, so also might outcomes related to affect be co-influenced by both the style of delivery of the media literacy learning content and the students' epistemic development. As mentioned under the results for the first research question, a student's epistemic framework seems to influence that student's resultant outcomes in a media literacy context. Namely, dualistic students appear to get stuck at the "reception" stage of affective learning when exposed to prescriptive instructor delivery strategies (Krathwohl, et al., 1964). In contrast, relativist epistemology students may struggle more with "organization" and "characterization" when confronted with student-centric delivery practices in media literacy learning due to a mistrust of their own knowledge-making capacities (Krathwohl, et al., 1964).

Dualism, Delivery, and Affective Learning. Three of the eight students who had engaged with the teacher-centric module had pejorative affective attitudes regarding the value of media literacy learning at the collegiate level. They indicated that they felt formal media literacy learning may well be valuable, but they felt also that it belonged elsewhere in U.S. education systems. Namely, they cited that media literacy learning content seemed as though it should be taught prior to a student coming to college. The idea that they did or should "already kn[o]w all this stuff" was pervasive among the sample of students who had engaged with teacher-centric learning module. Students in the student-centric intervention hosted more neutral attitudes. No students who had engaged with the student-centric module expressed pejorative attitudes about the value or placement of media literacy curriculum; instead, this latter group tended more frequently to say that media literacy curriculum does belong at the collegiate level because, "you

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have to know this stuff so that you don't get tricked," and because, "we should have

[more] lessons like this, especially in comm[unication] because so much of our work has

to do with things like credibility and knowing which sources you can and can't use."

Dualistic students confronted with "banking" lecture-based delivery may not be

getting beyond the initial step of affective learning, "reception", in a media literacy

context. Their accounts for this indicated that they simply saw no value in re-learning

something they perceived they "already knew". While the present study does not claim to

have collected data on *cognitive* learning outcomes, it was highly evident that these same

three (dualistic-indicating students who had received the teacher-centric module) students

struggled in their interviews to recall the module's content, and they could not offer

evidence that they had applied any of the module's contents to their own lives. Instead,

when asked about real-world application they may have made, three of the four admitted

they "really didn't watch that closely."

These three students were also the only participants to cite having forgotten

aspects of the modules on account of having "completed the modules several weeks ago"

(in two of the three cases was false) even though all three of the students had below

average temporal distance between the point of module completion and their interviews.

My inference from this is that the teacher-centric, lecture-based module did not engage

these students in such a way that they may have recognized there might be contents to

learn that they did not already know – they did not indicate that they had received the

incoming information. They presumably, then, would not have recognized whether or if

the modules may have offered information of value to them. On the assumption that the

modules did not have information of value to them, they felt it was appropriate to

multitask while viewing or outright skip some of the content in a way that no students from the student-centric module appeared (or admitted) to having done.

Multiplism, Delivery, and Affective Learning. Students who indicated multiplistic or relativistic modalities of knowledge-making seemed to arrive at varied affective outcomes depending on which of the two modules they had received. Four students who had taken the student-oriented module indicated a frequent capacity for multiplistic or relativistic epistemic positionality during their interviews. Among these four students, a theme specific to this sub-group emerged. Jimmy illustrates this theme when he said during his interview that,

> I think media literacy is really important to be teaching in college; you must know this stuff so that you don't get tricked. But every news source will tell you different things. So, I get that we need to figure out who's 'right.' But I guess I'm still confused; how do we do that if everyone is telling you something different? So, I get what you're saying, but, like [long pause] I guess I don't really know what media literacy is then. How is there just the one 'media literacy'? I guess we should be saying 'media literacies' then?

Jimmy has identified a point that media literacy educators would be happy to learn their students had recognized. Jimmy has identified that varied audiences will interpret media text in varied ways and that authors will vary in their credibility, which to someone with a multiplistic or relativistic epistemology may beg the question, "who's right?" While the goals of critical media literacy learning defy the notion that there is a single, monologic, or 'correct' way to interpret media, Jimmy's skepticism and question are well called for as he becomes a more astute media consumer. Statements expressing

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Jimmy's nuanced take on the multiplicity of media authors and audiences were nearly exclusive to the four multiplistic/relativist students who had received the student-centric module. It was notable that these sorts of comments were unique to students who had received the student-centric module because there were also multiplistic- and relativistic-indicating students among the teacher-centric module induction as well who made no such comments. It appears that their interactions with the student-centric module itself may have been what prompted this level of interrogation of audiences and authors among media ecosystems for these multiplistic- or relativistic-indicating students.

Additionally, unique to these students was that they conveyed they did not think they were more "media literate" than the average college student. This was despite the facts that these students had been able to recall more content from the modules than the average participant, and despite that they each had made "real-world" applications with little-to-no hesitation in recalling those applications in the interviews. In comparison, students outside this subgroup uniformly rated themselves as "more media literate" (that is, above average) than other students like them while being less able to recall module content or applications they had made. Some students were struggling at the "organizing" or "characterizing" stages of affective learning as they seem to struggle with either resolving conflicts between value dispositions ("organizing") or struggling with developing their own value system that can account for multiplistic, but varyingly credible, viewpoints ("characterization"; Krathwohl, et al., 1964).

In summary, "How does instructional delivery influence college student affect toward media literacy learning in an online, asynchronous environment?" I saw two general affective outcomes: (1) students who had received the student-centric module

overall felt more positively about the value of media literacy learning than students who had received the teacher-centric module; similarly (2) students from the student-centric module were overall more apparently able to apply module contents their own experiences in the interview, which indicates affective learning at least beyond "reception" (as they could "respond"; Krathwohl, et al. 1964).

Regarding the module content and the module delivery styles, the teacher-centric-group offered more criticism for the module, simultaneously citing that there was too much content, and citing that there were not enough "examples" (concrete applications of module contents) or not enough *relevant* examples. Interestingly, this same group of students requested greater module interaction, but also were the only group of students to overtly admit they hadn't engaged thoroughly with the modules. Students who had received the student-centric module did offer some criticisms, but these were predominantly about additions to the module *content* that they would have liked to see, rather than criticisms of the delivery of the module. Regardless of sub-grouping, students from across the participant sample cited strong preferences for face-to-face learning interactions as opposed to mediated, online interactions.

Regarding the relationship between student epistemology and instructional delivery, dualist-indicating students who had received the teacher-centric module featured prominent affective disregard of media literacy content which appears to be highly related with them getting stuck at the "reception" stage of affective learning (Krathwohl, et al., 1964). This was in some contrast to students in the student-centric module, some of whom indicated they may have been struggling to "organize" or "characterize" the content the module sought to teach them (Krathwohl, et al., 1964).

Research Question 3

Finally, research question three asked about novel hurdles to media literacy learning unique to a college-aged population in an online, asynchronous context. I considered this question as an opportunity to identify novel insights from the data that otherwise might not readily or obviously be tied to delivery practices in this context. I will first discuss results for mediated learning in this context, and then I will discuss results relevant to college-aged learners.

ML Learning in Mediated Contexts

Prior research in mediated instruction offers several salient areas of concern for online media literacy learning. These areas of concern include the processes by which instructors and students navigate interpersonal aspects of their relationships (Al Ghamdi, Sammarji & Watt, 2016), processes that contribute to perceived social distance in a mediated "classroom" space (Shea, Li, & Pickett, 2006; Sung & Mayer, 2012), the development of an ethical and safe "climate" of the online class-space (Kaufmann, Sellnow, & Frisby, 2016) and the employment of best practices in instructional facilitation (Frisby, Limperos, Record, Downs, & Karcsmar, 2013; Wombacher, Harris, Buckner, Frisby, & Limperos, 2017). Results from this study indicate that, in the online media literacy class-space, concerns about perceived social distance and the identification of best-facilitation practices (namely feedback practices) were of particular importance.

The participating students identified that there are frequent technical barriers that inhibit their learning. The students noted that organization of online content was particularly salient to them. Several students noted that disorganized learning management sites were a frequent reason that they ceased or reduced their engagement.

Blair expressed this disposition when she said, "I wouldn't have continued the module if it wasn't well organized. It bothers me so much when teachers just dump content on Canvas, and I have to sift through it." Blair identified one among many barriers to affective reception of course delivery that students expressed.

In similar stride, students who had participated in the teacher-centric module consistently noted their preference for the "shorter" videos to have been offered in the module. As an example, Mel mentioned that "I'm glad the videos were short. When lectures are really long, I watch them at two-times speed if I can, and I usually don't pay that much attention." Students who had participated in the teacher-centric module also noted the absence of discussion boards in the module (neither module offered student-student interactions, such as discussion boards).

Furthermore, among the five participants who did mention student-student interactions, there were mixed opinions. While three of the five students who mentioned student-to-student interactions expressed a preference for discussion boards noting that discussion board help "break up" the learning content and create opportunities for them to see how other students are processing the content. The other two participants expressed dislike for discussion boards. Referring to previous online learning experiences, Natalie mentioned that "whenever people talk online, there's always someone who's trying to stir [things] up."

Regardless of like or dislike for discussion boards specifically, students and both modules identified assessment and feedback within online learning as crucially important. Rosa gestures toward informal and peer-feedback processes when she said that she appreciates discussion boards on account that they allow her to "see what others in

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the class are thinking." Virginia indicated her desire for more instructor feedback on her learning processes when she said that she felt insecure about her reception of the content, "I'm just not sure that I've gotten all the content; like, when I was doing some of the activities, I wasn't sure if I was 'getting' what the instructor wanted me to."

ML Learning for College Students

The most consistent finding of empirical adult learning research is that college students prefer relevant application of learning content to real-world processes and activities that concern them (Brookfield, 1995). Results here affirm this finding. Additionally, students are particularly aware of their perceived 'learning style' and frequently cited their "learning style" as a source of their preferences.

Students who interacted with either module requested that the modules include more or different "real-life" applications. While these requests were less frequent among those students who had been offered the student-centric module (probably because the student-centric module already included activities wherein the students were solicited to apply the lesson content to a case study for the associated assessment activity) this theme nonetheless spanned student feedback from both modules. For some, the purpose of integrating such examples and application opportunities had more to do with capturing and keeping their attention; they cited also that activities or peer-to-peer interactions would help "break up" the content. Others pointed out that such points of content application helped them understand the content itself; Art explains this point,

> I think stuff like examples from the teacher's life or seeing what other students are
> saying in groups, or if there are places where I can take the lesson and 'see it' [in
> context] are really useful to me. [Those things] help me figure out if I'm learning

what I'm supposed to be learning because I get the bigger picture of where the lesson fits in my life or job or whatever.

Students who had experienced either module also cited their "learning styles" as a source for several of their preferences in learning in online contexts. For example, Nick said, "I'm a visual learner, so I liked that the [teaching-centric] module included several small videos." Conversely, Brody, who'd received the student-centric module said, "I prefer to just read things for myself. Like, I sometimes think that I don't even need to go to class because all the teacher is going to do is repeat the stuff I already read. I don't need that, so I'm glad that in this module that I was able to just read the stuff. It's also good that the readings were short."

In summary of the third research question, I asked "What novel self-efficacy and affective hurdles to media literacy learning are presented in mediated contexts among college students?" In the *mediated context*, students most often gestured toward mediated instructional issues concerning the reduction of online social distance or perceived proximity, "e-immediacy" (Al Ghamdi, Samarji, & Watt, 2016), which can be improved with instructional facilitations like discussion groups. However, the participants featured mixed opinions regarding the effectiveness of discussion board and related online peer-peer interactions. Yet, students from across the sample requested more (and more relevant to them) feedback from the instructor. This coordinates with contemporary research that indicates a student-centric approach to feedback (especially those that employ "rich" media like audio or video feedback) in mediated spaces is of particular importance to positive affective learning outcomes (Frisby, Limperos, Record, Downs, & Kercsmar, 2013). As for the *collegiate* learning context, results here affirmed prior

research that these students are seeking practical application of learning materials; they want and seek real-world relevancy for the content they are meant to learn (Brookfield, 1995). A surprising number of these students also framed their preferences around their perceived, preferred "learning styles." I infer these students are referring to outdated learning-design concepts that empirically have materialized few, if any, of their anticipated effects on students' learning outcomes (see, Pasher, Mc Daniel, Rohrer, & Bjork, 2008). Still, as Pasher and colleagues (2008) reason, where a student's affective valuing of learning content is concerned, we might appeal to these student preferences regardless if doing so might raise their self-efficacy.

In this chapter, I have presented a summary of the qualitative responses that were offered by participating students through questionnaire and interview data. They identified and discussed their perceptions of contrasting delivery strategies for media literacy learning in an online setting. Overall, these results indicated that the perceptions students were having in this context were nuanced; neither of the presented modules consistently 'outperformed' the other in terms of student self-efficacy for media literacy outcomes, and both self-efficacy and affect outcomes appeared to be related to the students' epistemic framework in conjunction with the style of delivery presented in either module.

To further elaborate on these results and assess their theoretical and practical implications, the following chapter will connect these students' responses back to relevant literature from the communication and education disciplines. Finally, I'll address limitations of the present study that offer opportunities for future directions for this line of research.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Limitations, and Future Directions

The results of this study presented in the previous chapter largely aligned with education and communication literature concerning college learning in mediated contexts. However, they also direct our attention to a twin set of processes that may be unique to college media literacy learners in online, mediated contexts. Some students who featured high levels of self-efficacy in media literacy learning may struggle to get past the "reception" stage of affective learning. Conversely, students featuring a multiplistic or relativistic epistemology toward media literacy concepts may deal with confusion in the absence of a recognizable knowledge-authority in the class.

Together, these features of media literacy learning present online ML instructors with unique issues. First, high self-efficacy within any topic of interest is generically ideal as having high-self efficacy is a strong, positive predictor of several learning outcomes, but this may inhibit affective learning in the mediated ML classroom in some cases. Namely, when a student is dualistic in their epistemic development and they experience a teacher-centric delivery of media literacy content. Second, arrival at a multiple, relative, or committed view of media literacy is also an ideal outcome for media literacy students because media ecosystems are rarely dualistic or dichotomous. To understand them, one must acknowledge and recognize multiple audiences and multiple authorship positionalities. Yet, according to the results of this study, some student-centric instructional practices that conventionally are thought to encourage such epistemic development may cause confusion, at least in an asynchronous mediated setting.

In this chapter, I will first review the theoretical implications of this project's results for media literacy educators. I'll connect those implications back to existing

communication, education, and media literacy learning literature so that I may discuss both the theoretical and the practical implications of this work. Finally, I will address the limitations of this work that point to future directions for this line of research.

Theory Implications

Student epistemological development, in coordination with how media literacy instructors facilitate student learning, appears to yield distinct affective outcomes in the asynchronous online media literacy classroom. From the above results, we can extrapolate four groups of students: dualist students presented with teacher-centric practices, dualist students presented with student-centric practices, multiplistic/relativistic students presented with teacher-centric practices, and multiplistic/relativistic students presented with student-centric instructional practices. Of these four sub-groups within this study sample, it appears that media literacy instructors may want to be particularly considerate of the first and last groups: dualist students presented with teacher-centric practices and multiplistic/relativistic students presented with student-centric practices. In both cases, the results of this study indicated that these students may experience hurdles in their affective media literacy learning, albeit by very different processes.

Reception Exception

Some students who had experienced the teacher-centric learning module had the unique experience of believing themselves to be highly "media literate" people while simultaneously appearing to get stuck at the point of "reception" in affective learning regarding media-literacy content (Krathwohl et al., 1964).

This group of students cited that media literary learning probably didn't belong at the collegiate level, or as Katy felt, "I think media literacy stuff should be what you learn

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in a community college or high school," relegating media literacy to what she felt was a remedial or pre-requisite part of collegiate education. This presents an affective limitation for these students. In Bloom's taxonomy, "reception" is only the first step of affective learning (Krathwohl, et al., 1964). Reception concerns the students' willingness to receive new information. Based on my interviews with these students, their willingness to receive new information in this context is low. It is unlikely that these students might meaningfully engage in any of the further stages of affective learning, such as responding, evaluating, or organizing incoming media literacy-related information if they rejected the reception of that material. Additionally, among the students, only those who had taken the teacher-centric module saw any observable increases to their self-reported media literacy *learning* self-efficacy. These patterns in the students' interviews and across their pre-module questionnaire point toward the possibility that because these students perceive themselves to already be media literate people (that is, they have high media literacy self-efficacy) they fail to see much relevancy in learning more about something they already know. Yet, based on these students' consistent failures to offer any applications the module's content when asked to do so in interviews and considering their consistent failure to recall – or even guess at – the module's contents, it does at least appear that they may not have the knowledge they believe themselves to have. So, in turn, they reify their own (seemingly unwarranted, but high) media literacy self-efficacy by failing to receive information that may demonstrate they are less knowledgeable than they believe themselves to be. Participants here offered no indication that they received the information at all. This phenomenon is not overtly "new" to this context; the ubiquity of media in a society serves as a catalyst for third-person effects within the context of

media learning; people have a well-documented tendency to believe that they are more literate (less influenced by media) than are other (third) parties (Davidson, 1983; e.g. Liu & Lo, 2014). This process indicates that in some circumstances it may be useful to intentionally *lower* a student's media literacy self-efficacy by creating circumstances where they must confront their own knowledge shortcomings.

Upon identifying this pattern among the data, I discussed it with subsequent interviewees. Jimmy conjectures at his understanding of this phenomenon, and I think he describes what is happening well when he says, "[I]t would make sense that students who got to watch lecture videos [were given the teacher-centric module] would feel more confident in what they'd learned, they're not getting any feedback that they're missing things." Of course, students from the teacher-centric module *did* get some feedback, but only by way of a quiz at the end of the module that scored their answers as correct/incorrect and gave them pre-configured feedback about why their incorrect answers were incorrect. This is in comparison to the students from the student-centric module, who appear to have gotten the feedback they needed as they engaged in the module activities; reading and engaging with the module activities appears to have been enough for the student-centric students to get informal feedback from the activities about their own knowledge. These students from the student-centric module also received literal qualitative feedback on their module assessment (a paragraph response prompt, rather than a quiz) before interviewing for this study. I suspect it was these aspects of the student-centric module that account for these students having had less of an issue with their reception of the module contents. This type of engagement helped them receive the content and move toward later stages of affective learning.

Overcoming Growing Pains in Epistemic Development

Students presented with the student-centric module also saw regular patterns in their efficacy and affect outcomes. These students expressed generally positive affective trends toward the presented content, on this note Blair says, "I think it's kind beneficial overall to just have that experience and knowledge [with media literacy], because overall it helps learn more information, especially in college concerning, you know, […] different types of media through classes."

However, whether they saw increases in their media literacy *learning* self-efficacy seemed to vary based on the student's apparent epistemology, their meta-understanding, of media literacy. Among these students, four frequently made dualistic claims, like "I do online [learning] 'cause I don't have time to go to school or anything like that. It's just all the same to me, just read it, remember it, regurgitate it. You probably only pull about 10% of this and actually use it" and "getting a degree in marketing, has helped me dissect things a lot. And, I kinda just view everything as an add" also indicated increases to their media literacy learning self-efficacy ratings.

On the other hand, the three of the four students who frequently made multiplistic or relativistic claims, like

> The dictionary is giving us the standard definition, but that's not
> accommod[ating] about what we're facing today. We have to [adapt] to that…
> there's [more to focus on] because our society is dynamic" and "I think that being
> able to realize when someone is sharing their own opinion it is part of media
> literacy…. [Part of being media literate] is being able to analyze that and realize it

saw *decreases* to their media literacy learning self-efficacy ratings. While the pre-questionnaire and interview self-efficacy ratings from these students are revealing, these ratings do not explain the process or processes by which these outcomes were produced. For an explanation, the students' interviews indicate that this may have to do with some confusion about knowledge-making. These students mention such a phenomenon explicitly: "But, me reading it, I don't know. I feel like I just didn't really ingest it as well as maybe [if] a teacher could have taught me" and "[In the module I would wonder, d]id I answer any question inconsistent to what [the instructor] wanted? Did I answer any question [with an answer] that was incomplete to [the instructor], in a sense?"

It appears that the self-directed delivery of the student-centric module may have played a role in reducing media literacy *learning* self-efficacy in an unhelpful way for some students. Students who are multiplistic or relativistic in their epistemology about media literacy may sometimes stumble when confronted with the notion that they, themselves, contribute to the making of their knowledge. This explanation asserts that the reason this sub-group of students may have seen declines in their self-efficacy is because they are wrestling with the primary dialectic of the multiplistic epistemic position: if more than one authority can be "right" at the same time (as no expert is omniscient), then how does one determine what is 'most' right? Perry (1981) suggests that it is this tension that goes on to spur individuals into the "relativistic" stages of epistemic development, as students realize the fallacy of the notion that experts could be "perfectly" correct. It is also at this point that Perry's scheme of epistemic development claims that an individual begins to gain meta-cognition; that is, the student begins thinking about their own thinking. Being in the process of developing sufficient meta-cognition to be aware of

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their own role in socially constructed knowledge-making, it seems plausible that these students might question their own ability to learn (their media literacy *learning* self-efficacy) when they are faced with the tension that epistemic development creates. This developmental tension creates a confusion that may inhibit the students from trusting in their own ability that they can learn.

Practical Implications

In summary of the previous section, this inquiry has generated two salient findings for media literacy and education theory. Given a teacher-centric approach, students in this context who are less epistemologically developed may struggle to see the values of media literacy unless some key content delivery strategies are in place as they believe they already "kn[o]w this stuff already". The teacher-centric modules did little to help these students receive information they believed they already had. On the other hand, given a student-centric context, students who are a bit more epistemically developed may struggle to see themselves as participating in their own knowledge-making. As such, hypothetical strategies to overcome these two challenges are offered here.

Nuance to Mitigate the Reception Exception

In practice, it appears that the first of these learning-process barriers may be ameliorated in a few ways. The dualist students in the teacher-centric module encountered some barriers to reception. It is possible that these students may need to first be shown that they might *not* "kn[o]w all this stuff already". It may be useful to attempt to *lower* their media literacy self-efficacy by presenting them with information that may help them identify a gap in their knowledge. For example, the dualist-indicating students

from the teacher-centric module may have benefited from the sorts of immediate feedback experiences that students in the student-centric module apparently had received. In an online, asynchronous context, teachers employing lecture videos might consider employing plug-ins to their learning management software to enable videos to pause and offer viewers a comprehension question, or those teachers could begin lessons or assignments with a few-minute long video or narrative that features a case study presenting the students with nuances in a media ecosystem These strategies may push dualistic students to confront gaps in their own knowledge to break away from a black-and-white understanding of the course content. In this situation, they would at least have improved changes of affectively receiving the information to come and perhaps better attend to the remainder of the lesson as they move toward a multiplistic understanding, and so on. Within a given topic the instructor may offer a case study and ask students to identify all relevant stakeholders within the case to make sense of some media-related phenomenon to concretize the many, varied, value positions of the multiple stakeholders, so moving students toward a multiplistic- or relatively-inclined epistemic way of thinking about the case.

It is important to distinguish here between *media literacy* self-efficacy and a student's self-efficacy for media literacy *learning*. The former can be summarized as a student's belief that they have the concepts and skills to be a "media literate" person. The latter can be summarized as a student's belief that they can *learn* media literacy concepts and skills. It is the former type of self-efficacy (the student's belief that they already have all they need to "perform" media literacy) that practitioners may need to strategically

lower. Conversely, learning practitioners would likely want to implement practices that maintain or improve the latter type of self-efficacy, media literacy *learning* self-efficacy.

This can be accomplished somewhat readily in the hypothetical learning space. Students need not be told overtly that they do not have knowledge that teachers may perceive the students do not have. Rather, when presented with a problem that a student's epistemology cannot entertain, they will usually recognize a gap in their understanding and seek to fill that gap (Litman, Hutchins, & Russon, 2005). This is what it means to affectively "receive" new information: by at least entertaining the notion that the knowledge may be new to them, space is made among the students existing epistemology to accommodate or incorporate incoming information. At the point of affective "responding", the student actively participates and engages in the transfer of knowledge (Krathwohl, et al., 1964).

Instructors should seek opportunities to present students with nuanced cases about course content that feature moral or legal grey area, to prompt and encourage dualistic students to receive and respond, so helping them beyond the *reception exception* featured earlier in this discussion.

Pose-problems to Encourage Ethical Commitments

The second of the learning processes barriers this study revealed may also be ameliorated with intentional delivery strategies. Among the multiplistic- or relativistic-indicating students, those who engaged with the student-centric module presented evidence that they did experience increases in relevant affective learning outcomes. "Yeah, definitely, I think that everyone can learn about media literacy and media texts, not just [Communication] majors. [People like] healthcare majors, business majors,

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education majors [could all benefit]. And, I think it would be a useful module or class or

project for anybody to learn about [media literacy], and how to produce it, and what all is

behind it."

However, these students also mentioned some confusion about the endeavor of

being or becoming a "media literate" person. If authorities disagree on solutions to a

problem, then how does one choose between contrasting solutions or how does one

weave contrasting solutions together in one's mind? Kelsey illustrates what this struggle

looks like for these students when she reflected on her experience in another course: "I

hate[ed] that class, I couldn't believe she said that [at the start of the semester]. [I had

trouble with that class] all because of the professor, but the material itself was interesting.

[Whenever] I would read [the book] – and not for her – I would find it to be

interesting…[But,] I immediately fe[lt] like [she's] biased even though it's the same

information as the book."

According to Perry and colleagues (1964), these students were experiencing the

setbacks of multiplicity and relativism that promote a student to begin developing toward

the final stage of epistemic development: making commitments. Rather than seeking the

'correct' authority (as would a dualist), these students have begun to develop the

metacognitive skills to inform themselves that even authorities struggle to understand

phenomena in a similar way that they experience struggles in the moments of their own

learning. From the position of a multiplistic or relativistic student, it is still unclear how

to overcome this tension. Perry (1981) suggests that students will move into

"commitment" when they begin to integrate their subjective experiences with knowledge

learned from others; they begin to see the necessity of intellectual commitments as there

is no ultimate authority who will offer solutions to problems in an absolute and resolute way. Rather, in the final stage of epistemic development, individuals commit to values, vocations, a person, or some other ideals that help them settle the ambiguities inherent to knowledge-making after having assessed factual evidence and plausible preferred solutions; they weigh incoming claims to knowledge against these value-commitments to manage ambiguity of what may be factually known, and they accept some uncertainty.

Generically speaking, media literacy instructors want their students to progress in their epistemic development (Hobbs, 2006; Hobbs, & Jensen, 2009), and such epistemic progression is readily described by Perry's theory for ethical and epistemic development; media literacy instructors should be intentional about encouraging students to make intellectual commitments. To accomplish this, hypothetically students must (1) accept the fallibility of knowledge authorities thereby acknowledging that effective solutions are tied to specific, context-providing, real-world issues, (2) weigh more than one solution to problems on the basis of available factual evidence, and (3) weigh those solutions against their intellectual commitments to arrive at a conclusion, a decision that guides their behaviors (Perry, 1981). Scholars of affective learning may also note that this process is similar to (if not, identical with) the "organizing" and "characterizing" components of affective learning wherein a student integrates and compares varied value positions and resolves conflicts between competing values by ascribing them to a priority hierarchy ("organizing") and where in a student generates their own value-system that guides and directs their own behaviors in such a way that it becomes a characteristic of their self; a result of having "learned" ("characterization"; Krathwohl et al., 1964).

As nuanced an instructional task as encouraging commitments (Perry, 1968) or characterizations (Krathwohl et al., 1964) among students may be for a teacher to accomplish, one can conceptually increase the odds of such commitments and characterizations occurring in online learning settings and for college learners. Adult learners seek real-world applications for the knowledge that they learn (Brookfield, 1995), and this does present instructors with an opportunity that may be leveraged in this context (Pytlak & Houser, 2014; Teven & Herring, 2005). Media literacy curriculum frequently employs pedagogic delivery strategies that can be employed in online contexts to help students progress through multiplistic- or relativistic epistemic hurdles toward epistemological "commitment" and affective "characterization." For example, production of messages intended to be consumed by audiences outside the class space may encourage students to reflect on the positionality of varied stakeholders of the media message that the students are producing (Masterman, 1980). When confronted with problem-solving for issues in the world beyond the class-space, students must design messages that work in the nuanced media ecosystem, or their message will fail both literally in the out-of-class context and figuratively in their score on the associated assignment (though individual instructors may apply varied approaches to scoring student-work in this hypothetical case). The role of the instructor in this example is to facilitate students, employing the teacher's own media literacy expertise, toward a solution that will work outside of a class space; by doing so, the instructor thereby encourages students toward commitments and characterizations that will, presumably, be efficacious among other real-world and related problems.

Yet, as noted in the earlier review of relevant literature, designing instructional circumstances where students can produce media for an out-of-class audience comes with considerable logistic and practical barriers. Namely, the expectation that a school acquire all the production hard- and soft-ware required for contemporary media productions may impose a considerable financial burden on the school, or otherwise the student. It may be useful to explore an alternate solution to outright production to encourage media literacy students toward a committed epistemic position or a characterized affective response to media literacy curriculum. An additional, less costly, hypothetical solution is offered in what follows.

An instructor may facilitate an activity wherein groups or pairs of students offer others in the class a prompt or assignment "brief" that replicates – at least some of the – nuances involved in creating a successful, entertaining, persuasive, informative, or demonstrative media message for the brief at hand (Masterman, 1980). This exercise is flexible, it can be employed to illustrate the nuances of many different scenarios that may likely happen in industry contexts. The case studies that groups or pairs of students offer one another could even be based on real-world case studies relevant to the learning content for the course or unit or lesson. Instructors could ask their students to generate prompts for other pairs/groups if they want to involve their students in some role-play to further place the students in the nuanced situations indicative of actual media institutions, or instructors could generate or collect the prompts based on their expertise and knowledge-resources and offer them to students as a menu of choices. The point of such an exercise is that instructors with college students may employ online, asynchronous learning environments to conduct simulations that create opportunities for students to

work toward epistemic commitments or affective characterization. An exercise such as the one articulated here could, technically, be carried out largely over an inexpensive text-based platform, such as a discussion board, if necessary.

Limitations

This research is not without limitations. The results of this study have described nuanced processes by which some students arrive at the affective learning and learning self-efficacy outcomes that they do in this context. The qualitative approach to this research has offered rich detail about the affective learning process that students in this context may experience. However, the small sample size indicative of qualitative work is not conducive to generalizability, so results and discussion should be taken in context to describe and explain the communication processes of interest to this work (Harry & Lipskey, 2014; Thomson, 2011).

Additionally, I have attempted to provide evidence of validity through member reflections and self-reflexivity. Tracy (2020) recommends that some participants be integrated more thoroughly in the analysis to ensure appropriate crystallization (Richardson, 2000). Member reflections helped me connect with participants and understand their experiences with media literacy learning. However, this "phrenetic" approach to analysis has knowledge-making limitations (Tracy, 2020). That my experiences inform at least part of the analysis implies that I may have noticed processes or patterns that another researcher may not have noticed, or *vice versa*. Only I could have conducted this investigation as I did, and regardless of whether the reader interprets as much as a research strength or a research limitation of this study, it should be

acknowledged that it is a foundational expectation that interpretive research be interpreted by the researcher conducting that research (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

There are also salient limitations concerning participant self-report, especially among college students. That participation in this study were awarded with extra credit in the students' coursework may mean that some of the results I have discussed in this manuscript are influenced by self-selection bias. That is, because the sample of participants studied is obviously non-random, we might also infer that there are factors across those participants who *did* participate that then influence the results of this study. Self-selection bias is a common limitation for education and social-scientific research (Winship & Mare, 1992). It should therefore be acknowledged that the processes described in the above results and discussion could be associated with this self-selection bias. For example, if a college student is regularly staying up late at parties, it would make sense that their attention may wain during the school-day and therefore warrant a need for extra-credit to improve their score in a course. If a considerable number of such hypothetical students participated in this study, then we might anticipate how that may skew the findings of the analysis performed in this study; selective pressure on recruitment may have influenced results. While empirical findings on the influence of extra credit as an incentive for research participation are largely innocuous, there remains the issue that undue influences of research incentivization can become an issue of corrupting participant judgments or responses (Grant & Sugarman, 2010).

Furthermore, this study is neither purely inductive nor deductive in nature. Generous portions of the analysis employ communication education and education theory concepts. I approach this inquiry with several etic concepts from the disciplines of

education and communication education. Interpretive scholars might suggest that I may have stifled authentic representation of the subjects involved in this inquiry if those etic concepts were superimposed too strictly. As much is reasonably probable. Yet, without applying these etic frameworks, such a results section and such a discussion section as the ones offered above would not describe or illustrate the learning phenomenon described above as they do. The strategy of employing member reflections as an ongoing process among data collection and data analysis attempts to ameliorate this very limitation (Tracy, 2020). As such, it will be to the reader's sense of fidelity with the material world, the "validity" of the qualitative findings herein, that the quality of this investigation is assessed – at least partially.

A practical limitation to this study's design imposes some limitation on the results also. The intervention experience that participants were asked to engage with was a module that most participants completed within an hour. The reader may grasp that it would have been more ideal to design an intervention that more closely replicates a learning experience of a longer duration (say, over the course of a semester). Given the ordinary time constraints of a dissertation-length project (in the department and at the institution where the author is affiliated) this was impractical. However, it should be noted that the design of this study focused on affective processes (such as the development of affective learning outcomes and self-efficacy development) as students experience them. So, while a warranted criticism may be that this study does not track those affective processes over time, this study did collect efficacy and attitudinal data before and after the point of intervention. Therefore, results here can make claims about what these developmental processes may look like for students at the point of first contact

with media literacy curriculum. This is important because in learning, first affective impressions can have a major impact on long-term learning outcomes (Bloom, 1977).

Other limitations to this study include the gender, and the race and ethnicity, distributions of participants. The participant sample was not representative of college students in the U.S. more generally. Participant racial and ethnic demographics were consistent with regional (Midwest, U.S.) racial and ethnic demographics, which is dominantly White and Caucasian. Affective learning processes described in this study may vary among more diverse populations and the varied learning expectations of demographically diverse populations should be taken seriously among instructional designers (Anderson & Adams, 1992). The U.S. context of this study likely also has had a broad influence on results; I would not anticipate that the phenomena described in this project readily apply in many Eastern-world contexts.

Future Directions

The limitations above gesture toward several directions for future researchers wishing to pursue the same or similar research endeavors. Future research may include instructors' perceptions and responses to get a more dyadic understanding of how learning is coordinated across students and teachers in this context. Also, future research should include the collection of cognitive and behavioral learning outcomes in this context to identify learning efficacy in addition to learning self-efficacy and attitudes toward that learning.

Future research may include instructor perceptions and responses to get a more dyadic understanding of how learning is coordinated across students and teachers in this context. The analysis performed in this project openly accepts a social-construction

epistemology. So, it is a limitation of this study that affective and self-efficacy processes were predominantly studied from only the student's perspective. Including data from instructors or other relevant stakeholders may cast light on so far un-noticed aspects of the learning processes discussed here.

Future research should also include the collection of cognitive and behavioral learning outcomes in this context to identify actual learning efficacy in addition to learning self-efficacy and attitudes toward that learning. While the results here paint a rich picture of the initial attitudinal and self-efficacy process that students may experience at the outset of a course in media literacy learning, practitioners (reasonably) are often more concerned with how their pedagogy goes on to influence behavioral and cognitive outcomes. Collegiate coursework typically ends with cognitive (an exam) or behavioral (a project) measures; future research in this area will want to reflect this praxis. While affective outcomes can be good indicators of cognitive outcomes (Ellis, 2000; Russo & Benson, 2005), there is no perfect correlation between outcomes among these three domains, so high or positive affective outcomes only conditionally indicate learning in the cognitive or behavioral domains.

Finally, this research could readily be expanded to include a greater diversity in participant demographics which may offer a more nuanced picture of the phenomena discussed in this dissertation. There can be no guarantee based on the evidence in this dissertation that the phenomena of concern here would not or could not be influenced or be perceived differently among a more diverse demographic sample.

Conclusion

This study illustrated that media literacy learning and curriculum in online, asynchronous college learning spaces may present students with two affective hurdles. Depending on the development of the student and the delivery style through which media literacy learning content is offered, we may anticipate that: (1) students who are less epistemologically developed may struggle to receive content at all, especially in the case where a prescriptive delivery-style is employed, and especially if they never discover they may have gaps in their media literacy knowledge and so assume that "they already know all this stuff"; and (2) students who are more epistemologically developed may need some extra help disentangling some of the primary tensions of a complex media environment, especially in a learning environment where learning is more student-directed, and especially in contexts where teaching-facilitators are perceived as absent (such as in an asynchronous, mediated setting like the environment created for the purposes of this study). This latter group of students may benefit from a more direct, perhaps even prescriptive, approach from instructors as these students are also doing the work of sorting out for themselves the many nuances of discerning credibility, determining their values and commitments, and identifying appropriate experts among a post-modern media environment.

The present study highlights the need for continued research here at the intersection of education theory, instructional design, and media literacy learning. While this study has illuminated some key phenomena of concern for media literacy learning environments like the ones indicated in this manuscript, an exploratory study like this one can only identify why or how a phenomenon occurs. Future research will identify what

extent these phenomena are present and identify nuances among more diverse

populations. As any scholar would, I hope that this dissertation has led to some insight

for the reader and that it may indicate and inspire important new questions for discourse

around media literacy curriculum and media literacy learning.

Appendix A

Non-identifying Participant Demographic Information

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Year in College	Course Recruited (Level, Discipline)	Module Received
Katy	19	Woman	Junior	300, COM	Teacher-centric
Natalie	20	Woman	Junior	300, COM	Teacher-centric
Kelsey	18	Woman	Freshman	100, COM	Teacher-centric
Brody	18	Man	Freshman	100, COM	Student-centric
Nick	26	Man	Sophomore	200, COM	Student-centric
Mel	18	Man	Freshman	100, COM	Teacher-centric
Ellie	19	Woman	Freshman	100, COM	Student-centric
Jimmy	21	Man	Sophomore	200, COM	Student-centric
Michelle	20	Woman	Sophomore	200, COM	Student-centric
Rosa	18	Woman	Freshman	100, COM	Teacher-centric
Virginia	20	Woman	Junior	300, COM	Student-centric
Fey	19	Woman	Sophomore	200, COM	Student-centric
Art	18	Woman	Freshman	100, COM	Teacher-centric
Lonnie	47	Man	Senior	200, COM	Teacher-centric
Maria	20	Woman	Freshman	100, COM	Student-centric
Blair	19	Woman	Freshman	100, COM	Teacher-centric

Module Outlines

Teacher Centric Module Outline

Executive Summary: This Module prioritizes the instructor as the focus of the module. As such, instruction is delivered through 5–10-minute videos. At the end of the module, students will be assessed with a quiz (score on quiz is for a complete/incomplete grade in the course in accordance with protocol).

Page 1: Module Overview

Hello! Welcome!

In this module, we'll take a detailed look at how different sorts of media and information get produced.

Introduction Video Here (1.5 minutes). Script:

*Hi, I'm [*Instructor Actor]*! I'll be your virtual instructor for this module!*

In just a bit we'll dive into this module, but first I wanted to cover some groundwork:

- *In this module, we'll discuss the concept of "media literacy."*

- *Media literacy is the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create media in a variety of forms.*

- *Now, that would be A LOT to cover in one module, so we're going to narrow things a bit.*

    o *Rather than try and tackle all of "media literacy" in less than an hour, our goal here will be to focus on the "production" elements of media messages.*

- *The twin abilities to "analyze" and "evaluate" messages we consume from "the media" rely on our understanding how media messages get produced, who makes them, what*

industry and professional practices influence them, and how they may or may not be

regulated.

- *So, the purpose of this module is to help you identify relevant bits of information and context that we need in order to successfully analyze and evaluate media messages we encounter out in the world.*

When you're ready, be sure to review the module objectives and overview below and head on the next step of the module!

In this module, you'll learn:

- To define and identify key concepts and ideas related to media production.

- To label key stakeholders in the production of media and informative texts

- To register tools and questions to interrogate the quality of messages you encounter.

Module Overview

(1.) First, in this module you take a brief questionnaire to reflect on how you, yourself think about media literacy.

(2.) Then, you'll engage with a series of mini lessons on key concepts related to media and information production, key stakeholders in media and information production, as well as various questions we can ask to assess media.

(3.) You'll assess your new knowledge with a brief quiz and feedback from us.

(4.) You'll have the opportunity to participate in original media literacy research for extra credit within this course. At the end of this module, you'll be asked if you'd like

to participate in an "interview" discussion about your experiences and thoughts about this learning module.

Ready to get started? Click the "next" button in the lower-right of the page to advance to the pre- module questionnaire!

Page 2: Pre-module Questionnaire

Before we advance to the instructional part of this module, let's first take a moment to reflect on our perceptions and interpretations of what media literacy is and what media literacy does.

The following link will take you to a brief (10 minute) questionnaire. This questionnaire serves two purposes:

1. It will help you concertize your extant knowledge about media literacy and identify your attitudes regarding media literacy learning.

2. In participating in this module, you have the opportunity to contribute to ongoing media literacy education research. Should you consent, your responses will be collected for the purposes of this research.

While the completion of this module itself (the assignment at the end of the module) is for credit in your course, the completion of this survey is not for course credit. Rather, this survey is associated with extra credit. For more information, please review the cover letter at the beginning of the linked survey below.

To take the survey, please click this link: [Link embedded in text here will take them to the survey cover letter and survey]

Once you have completed the survey, return and click "Next" below to advance.

Page 3: Media Literacy Information and Production

<u>Instructions</u>

1. Read and view the content below in the order that the content is presented.

2. You may note or write down your thoughts as you like. You may progress through the content below at your own pace.

3. You will take a brief quiz after reviewing the below content to assess your understanding of this content.

Introduction

Media literacy is a tricky thing to define. Buckingham (2013) notes that being a media literate person requires a "constellation" of interrelated competencies and skills. According to the National Association of Media Literacy Education (NAMLE), those skills and competencies include being able.

to *access*, *evaluate*, *analyze*, *create*, and *act* upon media messages.

To appropriately *evaluate* and *analyze* the credibility or quality of a message, we must first understand how the messages we consume come to be produced, and how those messages are delivered to us.

These are the goals of the instructional videos below:

- To define and identify key concepts and ideas related to media production.

- To label key stakeholders in the production of media and informative texts

- To employ tools and questions to interrogate the quality of messages you encounter.

The videos below will walk you through the production of several types of media

text you're likely to interact with "out in the world" and here in this class. News sources, opinion edition articles, and the popular press are all sources you might employ in your work in this course - in addition to scholarly, peer-reviewed, sources. The videos will identify where those messages came from, and they will offer you some evaluative criteria for assessing the quality of information within those messages.

When you're ready, click on the first video below!

"Preliminary Considerations" video here (5 minutes). Script:

Welcome to the first of our instructional videos about the production of information and media literacy.

From the overview above, we can see that "media literacy" is a multifaceted thing and that it can be difficult to pin down just what "counts" as "media" and what qualifies a piece of media as "high quality" or not.

In this, the first of our mini lectures, we'll outline some media literacy basics by discussing:

- *What counts as a piece of media, sometimes called a "media text"?*
- *Why a firm understanding of information production is important for developing competent media literacy skills.*

First off, what counts as a piece of media? We'll call these "media texts," and they come in lots of shapes and sizes:

- *Media texts can be understood to include "any work, object, or event that communicated meaning to a public." But that's a very broad definition, so let's look at it a bit more closely.*

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- *The term "Media" is plural for "medium" and when we say "the Media" we refer to the entire range of modern communications methods: television, cinema, video, radio, photography, advertising, newspapers, magazines, recorded music, computer games, and the internet.*

- *Media texts, then, are the television programs, films, images, websites, and messages that are carried by different media.*

- *More concretely,*

  o *The Buzzfeed TOP 10 list you scrolled through last night is a "media text."*

  o *as is the movie you ordered on Amazon Prime, as is the CNN, FOX, or the Lexington Herald-Leader article you read to keep up with the news or for class,*

  o *and even the dance tutorial you watched on TikTok.*

  o *All of these are pieces of media, "media texts."*

If you haven't already, we should pause for a moment to ask ourselves "why is it important to understand media production at all?"

- *To answer this question, we must first understand the difference between media messages and media effects.*

  o *Media messages are the actual content of the texts you read, watch, and listen to. Media messages all have inherent values and ideas that are promoted, or not promoted, within the text.*

  o *Media effects are the influences that media messages have on a person.*

- *We see this relationship play out in a common argument about violent video*

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games:

- *Some people assume that if a person plays a violent video game (and so hat violent.*

- *But the relationship between media <u>messages</u> and media effects isn't nearly so straightforward as that.*

- *Talking about media effects as simple inputs and outputs is far too reductive.*

- *Media messages are not simply broadcast straight into your brain, and readers or viewers don't just agree with whatever is put in front of them.*

  - *Media messages all have "baggage." They all carry and promote specific values, beliefs, and ways of seeing the world.*

  - *But so do you. You also have "baggage"." You carry and promote specific values, beliefs, and a way of seeing the world.*

- *When we look at the combination of media "baggage" and your "baggage" together, we can start to see how individuals might react to specific media messages.*

  - *One thing you can do to improve the "baggage" you bring to this relationship is to be informed about how the messages you may consume were produced.*

  - *This knowledge gives you much more power over how you choose to interpret media messages, and therefore their impacts on you.*

  - *Understanding a bit about how media is produced empowers you.*

In this video, we've covered some key definitions and established the importance of

understanding the information infrastructure that surrounds the making of media

and informative texts.

In the next video, we'll start discussing some of the production processes and

practices that influence how media texts get made. See you there!

Influences on Media Production video here (7 minutes). Script:

Pretend for a moment that you are a critically acclaimed Hollywood movie director.

Your audience anxiously awaits your next film, but first you have some decisions to

make:

- *What will the movie be about?*

- *Who will the star actors be?*

- *Who's going to write the script?*

- *Who is your intended audience?*

Each of the decision-makers just mentioned will inevitably have a hand in the

resulting film, or "media text."

This brief exercise in imagination serves a purpose: it shows us that all media texts

are made. People-- humans-- make them.

The choices that everyone contributes to a text has a hand in the resultant media text.

And those choices impact you when you consume the media text.

In this video, we will:

- *(1) Identify influences upon "what" gets focused on in mass media.*

- *(2) Identify who the makers of media are.*

The "focus" of a media text is the topic or subject of the text - what gets included, and

what doesn't get included in the text.

- *Sometimes, deciding what to focus on in a media text is simply a matter of page space or word counts.*

  - *Only so many article titles can fit on the front page of a newspaper.*

  - *Readers only have so much time, so the events in a piece of news cannot be told fully, but rather they are summarized into key points.*

  - *A movie can only be so many minutes long before audiences will say, "it's too long."*

  - *In all these cases, someone is still making decisions about what is "most important" to include.*

- *When making the decision about "what's important" though, sometimes things can turn a bit more… unsavory.*

  - *Consider the beverage ad you saw earlier on YouTube. Convenient, isn't it, that they didn't disclose the amount of sugar or caffeine it contains and how that will influence your health?*

  - *Consider also news reports that tell how many jobs were created or lost in the previous month. It is similarly convenient that information about the wages of those jobs and whether they were for long-term or temporary positions are often omitted from the report.*

In the previous video, we mentioned that the relationship between media messages and media effects is complicated. Both you and the media texts carry "baggage."

Here, we can identify a bit more of the baggage that is carried by media texts. And, although that baggage will have a nuanced and complicated effect upon you, it may

still likely have some effect.

Media texts exist within a complicated ecosystem, which you are a part of. To get a feel for how complicated this ecosystem can be, let's take a brief detour through the idea of media representations:

- *Though non-linear, media texts have some ability to shape our understanding about material things in the world like, "what happened in the 2020 presidential elections?" and even more abstract things like our perceptions about race, ethnicity, gender, sex, age, ability, and sexual orientation.*
  - o *Like everything in media texts, how people and places are represented in media is always a choice that someone makes.*
  - o *And, in making decisions, media producers often rely on stereotypes and heuristics, whether they intend to or not.*
  - o *Let's look at an example of when a decision like this was intentional.*
    - ▪ *In the Disney Pixar movie, "Inside Out," one of the main protagonists, Riley, is shown as a baby eating vegetables.*
      - *The point of the scene is to demonstrate the development of Riley's feelings of disgust.*
      - *So, she's portrayed as disliking the vegetables because she finds them disgusting.*
    - ▪ *In North America, it's pretty normal for little kids to think broccoli is "disgusting" - or, at least that's a common media trope here.*

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- - *For international audiences, like those in Japan, the producers of this movie couldn't rely on that trope though, because kids in Japan don't think broccoli is disgusting. So, to make the scene work, they had to swap out broccoli for a vegetable that Japanese children stereotypically dislike - green peppers.*
  - *This brief detour through the representation of people in media produces two important insights for us about the focus and production of media texts:*
  - *Representations of reality in media have two themes:*
    - *(1) As we saw in the example, they don't always represent reality particularly well. What "counts" as "good" representation will vary from audience to audience.*
    - *And (2) representations are a cycle. Humans make decisions about what to show in the media. And the decisions that make the most money tend to get reproduced over and over - not those that are necessarily the most "true."*
- *By now, we've answered the first of agenda items for this video: What influences the content we see in the media?*
  - *Sometimes it's simple things like page space, word limitations, and audience attention span.*
  - *Other times, media texts can be willfully misleading, as in the case of some advertisements.*
  - *Stereotypes and media representations, therefore, tend to get*

produced and reproduced based on what's worked in the past

- *That might seem a bit gloomy.*
  - *We must remember that every production choice isn't a part of some grand scheme or conspiracy theory to sell more soda pop or to convince children that broccoli is gross. Media stereotypes and ideologies often persist based on who has money, and where they're willing to spend it.*
    - *So, we're now ready to answer the second of our agenda items for this video: Who are the makers of media?*
    - *Well, they're a nebulous group of individuals all doing jobs related to the media industry.*
    - *Perhaps that answer is a bit underwhelming.*
      - *But, while it's difficult to pin-point individuals who are by- themselves responsible for the content of media messages, we can look toward institutional level influences of messages in media.*
      - *We'll come back to this point in the next video!*

The "Industry" video here (7 minutes). Script:

In the previous video, we discovered that there are several influences that go into the making of media texts. In many ways, social media and user-produced texts have helped break this cycle by lifting diverse voices and challenging the ways media is traditionally made. Social media campaigns have even thrown the spotlight on

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negative or non-existent representations in mass media.

Nonetheless, there are still some major stakeholders in the Mass Media game.

Because we spend a great deal of our time and our money with media, it makes sense

that we should develop our understanding of key media stakeholders. Media doesn't

just appear out of nowhere; humans made it. And humans will do a great deal of

things where financial gain is concerned.

In this video we'll cover:

- *Who owns the companies that buy and sell media?*

- *And, how media companies make profit.*

Ready? Let's Jump in!

- *Consider for a moment your phone. Many of us don't own our phones, rather we*

sort of "rent" them. The "lease" on your phone likely comes as part of a bundle. You

get your phone, your internet, and your cable all on one bill as part of that bundle.

Sometimes these bundles even come with deals on streaming services like Netflix, Hulu,

and Disney+. Not to mention, the streaming services just bought up your favorite movie

franchise, so soon you'll be binging on all the super-hero action flicks you can handle.

As a consumer of media, there are many deals and bundles of which you can take

advantage. It kind of makes you wonder, who owns "the media?" Who runs all this

stuff?

The answer here might make your head spin a bit. Today, 90% of the mass media texts

you read, watch, or listen to, are owned by only 6 companies.

- *So what? Perhaps you are unbothered by that fact.*

- *Okay, what if I told you that about 40 years ago the same 90% of mass media*

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texts you would have read, watched, or listened to were own by 50 companies?

- *If you're not already a bit concerned, you likely will once we consider that your internet service provider (your ISP) is also probably also owned by one of these 6 companies.*

In the US, if your ISP is too slow, you can often pay for a different service provider, assuming there are options in your area.

But most ISPs think that since they're delivering you a service, they should then also determine how that service should be delivered.

To capitalize on the service maximally, they'd like to create tiered services, where you can pay more to get faster internet.

Imagine the internet is a multi-lane highway in a large city. Internet service providers would like to create a slow, medium, and a fast lane for your internet speed. Depending on what you can afford, you'd pay for that speed.

Because financial gain is important in the US, we might be able to imagine how ISPs might abuse this power quickly:

- *We probably wouldn't be paying for a "slow" lane or a "fast" lane.*

- *We would not get a "fast lane" and a "faster lane."*

- *Rather, there's considerable probability we'd get a "my internet is so slow I can't even email my professor to let them know I'll be turning in the assignment late on account of my slow internet speed" lane, and a "it's probably the same speed you have now, but doubly expensive" lane.*

- *Without regulation, it would even be possible for ISPs to disallow some cars*

to even get on the highway.

As I'm sure you're aware, having internet access is vital to living in the digital age. Most entry level jobs will not see you for an interview until you've submitted a job application - and you would have done so online, on the internet. Hiking internet prices could box some people to the outskirts of society altogether.

For now, though, we need to return to how this all fits in with media producing companies.

- *Note that large media-producing companies also generally own ISP companies.*

- *So, they own both the means of production and the means of delivery.*

- *In other words, 6 media companies not only own 90% of the media you consume, but they also own the internet upon which you are delivered that media.*

- *Sometimes these 6 companies have a healthy amount of capitalist competition to keep each other in-check.*

  - *It is, however, somewhat likely that the monopolization these companies have over media will continue to drive up prices on need-to-have services like internet access.*

  - *Similarly, the conglomeration of telecommunications companies over the previous 40 years has probably done some of the work of perpetuating the stereotypes and media ideals we discussed in the previous video.*

- *Finally, while not inherently problematic, it is notable that with 90% of media messages being produced from 6 companies, it stands to reason that these 6*

companies hold massive power and authority over how we communicate as a

society.

So, who are the Big 6? In the past 40 years, media companies have consolidated into

the following 6 companies. As of 2017, they were:

- *Disney - who owns ABC, ESPN, Miramax, Pixar, Marvel, Buena Vista, and 270*
  radio stations.

- *NewsCorp - who owns Fox, FX, the Wall Street Journal, the New York*
  Post, The Daily News, HarperCollins, and 20th Century Fox

- *Comcast - who owns NBCUniversal, so CNBC and MSNBC too, plus channels*
  like Telemundo, USA Network, and Bravo - oh, and Hulu.

- *Hearst - who owns 20 U.S. magazines like Cosmo and Esquire, as well as 31*
  television stations.

- *Viacom - who owns MTV, VH1, Nickelodeon, Comedy Central, and BET*
  among its 160 cable channels, not to mention Paramount Pictures

- *CBS - who owns everything with the CBS logo, 29 TV channels, 130 radio*
  stations, plus three book publishers.

I hope now that it's clear why it's important to understand how media companies are

interrelated. When they come together and form monopolies, they have a significant

impact on communication in society, for better or for worse.

Fortunately, there is some regulations for these companies, and communication

scholars have studied these companies for a while. More on this in the next video.

"Regulation" video here (5 minutes). Script:

In the previous video, we mentioned that there are some regulations for media texts for conventional "media" companies. But not all companies that produce media are technically "media" companies, so they don't abide by the same rules.

So, for this video, were going to take a brief look at:

- *Regulatory forces for conventional media*

- *And regulatory forces for social media (or the lack thereof)*

As of 2018, some 45% of adults in the U.S. got their news information from Facebook.

- *While getting information for a social media site is not inherently problematic, it does open to the likelihood that the information we find there is mis-leading or false all together.*

- *A summary of this problem is that,*

    o *Media companies and news producers have some regulation on what can and cannot be presented.*

    o *Media companies employ professional reporters who maintain industry and disciplinary standards in both the ethics and professionalism of their reporting (although, clearly these standards vary across different companies).*

    o *Social media sites (and the tech companies who own them) do not fall under the same regulations as conventional media companies. The FCC currently does little to regulate Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, or TikTok.*

    o *Similarly, because you are not a media company, the posts and*

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messages you produce in social media are not regulated at a
governmental level.

- o *It is for these reasons that we've seen so much controversy over*
  censorship on sites like Twitter.
- o *A big philosophical question our society is wrestling with right now is*
  to what extent social media and tech companies should or should not
  have parallel regulations to major media companies.

In the previous video, we identified that when one media company has too much
control (or a monopoly on the market) they have the ability to abuse that power.
Tech companies (like Google, Amazon, and Microsoft) are the owners of social media
platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and TikTok. They are - in many ways - also media
companies. But they aren't upheld to the same responsibilities and accountability that
conventional media companies have - accountability that, as a consumer, you rely on.
Some notable media policies you might recognize are:

- *Rules about indecency and obscenity from the FCC regarding television*
  programs
- *The FCC has also established rules that limit the national share of media*
  ownership of broadcast radio stations and televisions stations. This promotes
  market competition and circumvents the development of outright monopolies.
- *the ESRB (Entertainment software ratings board) offer similar consumer*
  guidelines for video games.
- *The MPAA (Motion Picture Association of America) offers viewership rating*
  guidelines for movies.

Something to note though among these policies is that there are no regulations on
"truth" or "factuality."

- *In media texts that are intended as fiction, this isn't a problem.*

- *However, much of the media we consume, like news, is intended to be factual.*

    - *Currently, in both conventional media and social media, there are no formal regulations regarding "fact."*

    - *The only "monitoring" or "fact checking" that happens in these spaces is performed by the public and in-house policies within technology and media companies.*

    - *Self-regulation, is perhaps not the best way to ensure that the media intended to portray "truth" is actually "truthful."*

Yet, there are two sides to this argument:

- *While some will argue for increased regulation, others will argue that it's not the place of our government to censor messages.*

- *Instead, they argue that it is the consumer's responsibility to educate themselves.*

Interestingly, regardless of which side of this debate you are on, it is still to your advantage to understand how media and information are produced, and so these videos still have merit regardless!

That's everything for now! In just a bit, I'll see you in the final video of this module series: Media Production and You!

"Media Consumption and You" video here (5 minutes). Script:

Over the course of the previous videos, we covered a broad swath of topics. We

defined several key concepts and ideas relevant to the media production industry to get a firmer grasp on what it means to be "media literate." We covered the status quo of many ongoing debates relevant to media production. And, most importantly, we established some important bits of context and information that you need to be an informed consumer of media.

At the start of this module, we established that we had 3 goals:

- *(1) was to define and identify key concepts and ideas related to media production - Yes, we've certainly done that.*

- *(2) was to label stakeholders in the production of media and informative texts - Yup, we've done that*

- *And (3) is to register tools to question the quality of*

messages you encounter We've done a bit for this final goal, but

let's review.

- *We know that we should be cautious about where messages come from. We identified that there are several cultural motivators that influence what messages we receive, namely financial motivations.*

- *We also established that there are some regulations that we can rely on, but we should note that while those regulations often cover issues of "decency" and "age-appropriateness" there are few federal regulations regarding "truthfulness" or "factuality" - rather, most of these matters are handled "in house" without much government oversight (if they are addressed at all), and so we know we must consume messages critically.*

- *We also know that all media messages come with values and beliefs*

"baggage" because those messages are produced by humans (which they all are). There's no way around this - there is no such thing as "value-free" communication wherever humans are involved (which is everywhere). And, you have these predispositions, beliefs, and values that shape how you view the world too.

It is, therefore, important that we ask ourselves the following questions sincerely and frequently about the media we choose to consume:

- *Who made this text?*

- *How was this text constructed? Who made decisions about what appeared in the text, and what didn't?*

- *What values, points of view, and ideologies are present in this text? And, perhaps more importantly, which are missing?*

- *Why was this text produced?*

- *How does the intended purpose of the text match up with our other considerations? Are they misaligned, is something fishy going on?*

- *Who does this text advantage? Who might it disadvantage or disparage?*

Finally, before we adjourn, I'd like to connect what we've done in this module to some other experiences you've likely had.

- *First, any time your teachers have you seek out sources, or texts, for an assignment they are hoping that you will exercise good judgment and that you will keep the things we identified in this module in mind.*

  - *To find "Credible" sources you must be critical of the sources you review.*

- *Similarly, this is, by the way, why many teachers will ask you to find "peer - reviewed" or "scholarly" sources.*
  - *These sources already have all this critical work done for you.*
  - *The text has already been "reviewed" by other expert "peers" in your discipline to a much higher degree of scrutiny than you are likely to perform.*
- *Finally, remember, you are also a "producer" of media. While, in these videos, we've often situated you as the "consumer" of media texts, you also produce and contribute to media on a daily basis.*
  - *For this reason, we often use the term "prosumers" to capture the idea that the same person can be both a "producer" and a "consumer" of media.*
  - *And many of the thoughts you had while watching this module about media producers may also apply to you.*
  - *Every now and then, we should reflect on our own roles as media producers and ask ourselves if we're being the kind of producer of media, we'd like to see others be.*

We hope that this video lecture series has given you some concrete understanding of the media ecosystem of which we're all a part, and that that knowledge helps you be an informed consumer of media messages.

Thank you for your time and attention!

Thank you for your time in reviewing the above materials! When you are ready, click the "Next" button in the lower-left to advance to the assessment quiz for this module.

Page 4: Assessment Quiz:

Thank you for taking the time to review the content offered within this module. This quiz will assess your knowledge over the content offered in this module.

- You will be shown the correct answers to this quiz after your completion along with explanations for the correct answers to each question.

- Your completion of this quiz is for Complete/Incomplete credit within your course.

Instructions

1. Complete the quiz questions below to the best of your ability using the content from this module.

2. Evaluate your work after completing the quiz to identify which questions you answered incorrectly and identify the correct answers.

3. Click the "Next" button to continue in the module when you are finished.

Quiz Questions and Answers:

1. Multiple Choice: Which of the following would NOT be considered a "media text"?

   a. A top-ten "listicle" on Buzzfeed

b. A news article in the Lexington Herald-Leader

c. A direct message or text-message from a relative → Correct Answer

d. A work of fine art, like the "Mona Lisa"

2. Fill in the blank using the options below: "A media literate person should

be able to access, analyze, _, and create media in a variety of forms."

a. Evaluate → Correct Answer

b. Share

c. Construct

d. Decipher

3. True or False: Media *messages* always have uniform *effects* on anyone

who consumes the message.

a. True

b. False → Correct Answer

4. Select all that apply: Which of the following factors contribute to decisions

about what is or is not presented in a media text? → All answers are correct;

a correct response would be to select all three options.

a. logistic decisions, like how many minutes long a film will be.

b. financial considerations, like which content will make the most profit.

c. financial considerations, like which content will cost the least to produce.

5. True/False: According to the definition of "media texts," a person's public

posts on Twitter or Facebook would be considered a "media texts."

a. True → Correct Answer

b. False

6. Fill in the blank, Numerical Answer: About 90% of all the media messages in the U.S. today are produced and owned by _____ companies

   a. Correct answer: "6" [exact value]

7. Multiple Choice: What is the name of the federal agency that oversees and regulates media companies in the US?

   a. FCA: the Federal Communications Association

   b. NCA: the National Communication Association

   c. FCC: the Federal Communications Commission → Correct Answer

   d. NAB: the National Association of Broadcasting

8. True/False: Social media sites like Twitter, Facebook, and TikTok each have identical communication regulation and accountability policies as do conventional media companies.

   a. True

   b. False→ Correct Answer

Page 5: Extra Credit Opportunity

Well Done! You've completed this module.

In addition to completing this module for course credit you also can collect extra credit for this course by participating in a research interview.

As a student, if you decide not to take part in this study, your choice will have no effect on your academic status or class grade.

If you choose to not participate in this study, your completion of the Canvas module associated with this project will still count toward credit in this course.

To collect the extra credit associated with this research, you need to schedule (using the link below) *and attend* a 50-minute Zoom interview.

- There are no "right" or "wrong" answers in these interviews. Rather, the purpose of these interviews is to explore your attitudes and perceptions associated with your participation in this module. You'll be asked questions like, "do you feel like things you learned from this module apply in the 'real world'?" and "What lessons from this module were useful to you?"

- You may complete the "alternate assignment" if you are unable or unwilling to participate in an interview, but you would still like to collect the extra credit incentive associated with this study. If this is the case for you, then you will also use the link below to indicate that you'd like to receive the alternate assignment.

Please click the link below to schedule a research interview or the collect the alternate assignment for extra [Link to Qualtrics Questionnaire to collect scheduling information from potential student-participants as specified in protocol].

Student-Centric Module Outline

Executive Summary: This Module prioritizes the student as the focus of the module. As such, instruction is delivered as text and images that solicit students to engage with several small (non-assessed) activities. At the end of the module, students were assessed with a brief activity that asked them to apply the "Media Literacy Toolkit" from the module to a source they'll select from one of two options. These students received qualitative feedback from the Primary Investigator for their responses before interviewing.

Page 0: Module Overview

Hello! Welcome!

In this module, we'll take a detailed look at how different sorts of media and information get produced.

Introduction Video Here (1.5 minutes). Script:

Hi, I'm [Instructor Actor]! I'll be your virtual instructor for this module!

In just a bit we'll dive into this module, but first I wanted to cover some groundwork:

- *In this module, we'll discuss the concept of "media literacy."*

- *Media literacy is the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create media in a variety of forms.*

- *Now, that would be A LOT to cover in one module, so we're going to narrow things a bit.*

    - *Rather than try and tackle all of "media literacy" in less than an hour,*

our goal here will be to focus on the "production" elements of media messages.

- *The twin abilities to "analyze" and "evaluate" messages we consume from "the media" rely on our understanding how media messages get produced, who makes them, what industry and professional practices influence them, and how they may or may not be regulated.*

- *So, the purpose of this module is to help you identify relevant bits of information and context that we need in order to successfully analyze and evaluate media messages we encounter out in the world.*

When you're ready, be sure to review the module objectives and overview below and head on the next step of the module!

In this module, you'll learn:

- To define and identify key concepts and ideas related to media production.

- To label key stakeholders in the production of media and informative texts.

- To register tools and questions to interrogate the quality of messages you encounter.

Module Overview

(1.) First, in this module you take a brief questionnaire to reflect on how you, yourself think about media literacy.

(2.) Then, you'll engage with a series of mini lessons on key concepts related to media and information production, key stakeholders in media and information production, as

well as various questions we can ask to assess media.

(3.) You'll assess your new knowledge with a brief quiz and feedback from us.

(4.) You'll have the opportunity to participate in original media literacy research for extra credit within this course. At the end of this module, you'll be asked if you'd like to participate in an "interview" discussion about your experiences and thoughts about this learning module.

Ready to get started? Click the "next" button in the lower-right of the page to advance to the pre- module questionnaire!

Page 1: Pre-module Questionnaire:

Before we advance to the instructional part of this module, let's first take a moment to reflect on our perceptions and interpretations of what media literacy is and what media literacy does.

The following link will take you to a brief (10 minute) questionnaire. This questionnaire serves two purposes:

1. It will help you concertize your extant knowledge about media literacy and identify your attitudes regarding media literacy learning.

2. In participating in this module, you have the opportunity to contribute to ongoing media literacy education research. Should you consent, your responses will be collected for the purposes of this research.

While the completion of this module itself (the assignment at the end of the module) is for credit in your course, the completion of this survey is not for course credit. Rather, this survey is associated with extra credit. For more information, please review the cover

letter at the beginning of the linked survey below.

To take the survey, please click this link: [Link embedded in text here will take them to the survey cover letter and survey]

Once you have completed the survey, return here and click "Next" in the lower-right below to advance the module.

Page 2: Media Literacy and Information Production:

Introduction

Media literacy is a tricky thing to define. Buckingham (2013) notes that being a media literate person requires a "constellation" of interrelated competencies and skills. According to the National Association of Media Literacy Education (NAMLE), those skills and competencies include being able.

to *access*, *evaluate*, *analyze*, *create*, and *act* upon media messages.

To *evaluate* and *analyze* the credibility or quality of a message, we must first understand how the messages we consume come to be produced, and how those messages are delivered to us.

Here are the goals of this module section:

- To define and identify key concepts and ideas related to media production.
- To label key stakeholders in the production of media and informative texts
- To employ tools and questions to interrogate the quality of messages you encounter.

Media messages come to us in all shapes and sizes. The Buzzfeed TOP 10 list you scrolled through last night is just as much a "media text" as is the movie you ordered on

Amazon Prime, as is the CNN, FOX, or Lexington Herald-Leader article you read to keep up with the news or for class, as is scholarly or "peer- reviewed" article you looked up to write a paper, and even the dance tutorial you watched on TikTok.

From the sheer breadth of texts and messages that can be considered "media texts" we can intuitively understand that different messages probably have varied criteria for what makes them a high quality and "credible," or not.

The resources and activities you will engage within this module will illuminate the production of several types of media text you're likely to interact with "out in the world" and here in this class. You will identify where those messages came from, and we will offer you some evaluative criteria for assessing the quality of information within those messages.

When you're ready, click "Next" in the Lower-right.

Page 3: Preliminary Considerations: What Counts as "Media"?

Big Picture Questions:

- What counts as a piece of media?

- How does having a firm grasp on media and information production industries improve Media Literacy?

Media Texts

Media texts can be understood to include "any work, object, or event that communicated meaning to a public."

The term "Media" is plural for "medium" and when we say "the Media" we're usually referring to a whole range of modern communications media: television, cinema,

video, radio, photography, newspapers, magazines, music, video games, and the internet.

Media texts are the programs, films, images, websites, and messages (and so on) that are carried by different media.

Media Effects

Media texts are the actual content you read, watch, and listen to. Every text has inherent ideological values it carries. Media texts all promote or disparage specific ways of seeing the world.

We may therefore consider that the messages we consume will have some impact upon how we ourselves see the world. When our opinions, thoughts, values, or beliefs change or are supported by media, we say that a *Media effect* has occurred.

We see this relationship between media texts and media effects play out in a common argument about violent video games: Some people assume that if a person plays a violent video game (and so receives violent messages from that text) then they will themselves become violent. However, the relationship between media messages and media effects isn't nearly so straightforward as that.

Your Turn: Consider the meme, media text, below. List 3 likely impressions a viewer might have in response to viewing this image. What individual-viewer differences might account for varying interpretations of this image?

Media Values and Individual Values

Talking about media effects as simple inputs and outputs is too reductive to capture how humans realistically and frequently interact with media.

The values, ideas, and thoughts that the creator of the image above are not "broadcast" directly into your mind. Rather:

- Media messages all have "baggage." They all carry and promote specific values, beliefs, and ways of seeing the world.

- But so do you. You also have "baggage"." You carry and promote specific values, beliefs, and a way of seeing the world.

Information Production Literacy

At the intersection of the ideological assumptions that media texts bring to you, and the ideas, beliefs, and thoughts you bring to a piece of media, we can start to see how individuals might react to specific media texts.

One thing you can do to improve the "baggage" you bring to this relationship is to be informed about how the messages you may consume were produced. This knowledge gives you supremely more power over how you choose to interpret media messages, and therefore their impacts upon you.

Understanding a bit about how media is produced empowers you.

Your Turn: Consider the image below. Perform a reverse image search on this image. What can you learn about the creator of this image? When and where was this image created? Why, what motivated, the creator to publish this image? What ideas or beliefs does the creator of this image want you to internalize? Do you agree or disagree with those motivations?

In the next section of this module, we'll start discussing some of the production

processes and practices that influence how media texts get made.

When you're ready to advance to the next section of this module, click the "Next" button below.

Page 4: Influences on Media Production

Big Picture Questions

- What aspects of culture influence the content of media texts?

- Who are the makers of media?

- Do we need to think about media production processes in user-generated arenas, like social media networks?

Production Processes

Pretend for a moment that you are a critically acclaimed Hollywood movie director. Your audience anxiously awaits your next film expectantly, but first, you have some decisions to make:

- What will the movie be about?

- Who will the star actors be?

- Who's going to write the script? You, or will you purchase a script or employ a group of authors to write a script?

- Who is your intended audience?

Each of the decisions just mentioned will inevitably have a hand in the resulting film, or "media text." Not to mention, you've still got to film the thing!

This brief exercise in imagination serves a purpose: it shows us that all media texts are made. People, humans, make them.

The choices that everyone contributes to a text have a hand in the resultant media text. And those choices impact you when you consume the media text.

Factors Influencing Media Content

The "focus" of a media text is the topic or subject of the text - what gets included, and what does not get included in the text.

Sometimes deciding what to focus on in a media text is simply a matter of page space or word counts.

- Only so many article titles can fit on the front page of a newspaper.

- A movie can only be so many minutes long before audiences will say, "it's too long."

- In these cases, someone is still making decisions about what is "most important" to include.

When making the decision about "what's important" though, there are many factors a producer of media content will experience.

- Consider the beverage ad you saw earlier on YouTube. Notice that they probably didn't disclose the amount of sugar or caffeine it contains and how that will influence your health?

- Consider also news reports that describe how many jobs were created or lost in the previous month. Notice that details about the wages of those jobs and whether they were for long-term or temporary positions are often omitted from the report.

Media Representation and Decision Making

Media texts exist within a complicated and multifaceted ecosystem, of which you are a part. To get a feel for how complicated this ecosystem can be, let's take a brief detour through the idea of media representations.

When we see common themes about people, events, or ideas show up across multiple media texts, we call those themes "tropes."

When an idea, portrayal of a person or group of people, or portrayals of an event are consistent across multiple media texts, we can make some inferences about how and why those tropes came to exist. In other words, we might be able to identify what decisions media content producers were considering when they created the media text.

Your Turn: Explore the descriptions of the television tropes listed below.

Why do you think these tropes exist? Why do you think television producers consistently make the decisions that they do leading to representations indicative of these tropes?

"Wine is Classy."

"The Depraved Bisexual"

"The Big Red Devil"

Production Decision Making

Though non-linear, media texts have some ability to shape our understanding of material things in the world like, "what happened in the 2020 presidential elections?" and even more abstract things like our perceptions about race, ethnicity, gender, sex, age, ability, and sexual orientation.

Let's use the "Deprave Bisexual" as an example here: Media portrayals of bisexual

people have often skewed toward the stereotype that a bisexual person will "sleep with anyone."

Our brains do enjoy familiar things and consistency. So, it comes to little shock that media producers and writers may rely on this and other stereotypes for a couple of reasons:

- First, the reasons to expend finances on better, more nuanced, character writing may be overshadowed by other production expenses.
- Second, stereotype tropes (whether helpful or not) make a character easier to "read" for broader audiences.

Both reasons point in the same direction: profit. And more money feeds back into producing more media that carry identical stereotypical tropes.

This brief detour through the representation of people in media produces two important insights for us about the focus and production of media texts:

- o First, money talks. Because the U.S. is itself a capitalist society, many media production decisions are made by people who always have an eye on the budget.
- o Second, representations of reality in media have two themes:
  - (1) As we saw in the example tropes, they don't always represent reality particularly well.
  - And (2) representations are a cycle. Humans make decisions about what the content of media will focus upon. The decisions that make the most money tend to get reproduced over and over - not those that are necessarily the most "true."

Who Makes Media?

People make media. Perhaps this claim is obvious or tautologous. But the people who make media content are a nebulous group of individuals all doing jobs related to the media industry. And, in the context of social media, the answer is similarly straightforward; the answer is "you."

Most major productions of media in the U.S. are driven by 6 companies. Through this lens, the consistency of stereotypical representations and ideologies among media texts begins to make a bit more sense.

Still, there are lessons here we can connect to our everyday media consumption: we should keep in mind matters of money:

- Even your Twitter post cost you something. You have a phone on which you typed the post, you have a data plan or Wi-Fi-access upon which you uploaded your post, and someone paid for your schooling from which you learned to read and write.

- Not everyone has access to the financial resources you do when you post on social media.

- One component of understanding the media ecosystems is that because you must have money to participate, there are inevitably voices being omitted from the media conversation.

Your Turn: About how much money would you need to produce a 30-second ad-spot on YouTube? What is the production cost of a 15 second TikTok? About how much money was spent on the production of the last movie you watched? Spend 5 minutes doing a bit of research to roughly estimate these numbers. Who is likely to be able to

participate in each of these types of media productions?

In the next section of this module, we'll look at the industry of "media." We'll identify major stakeholders and figure out how they profit from the messages you consume.

When you're ready to advance to the next section of this module, click the "Next" button below.

Page 5: The Industry

Big Picture Questions:

- Who owns the companies that buy and sell media?

- How do media companies make profit?

Media Ownership

We can estimate that about 90% of the media text you consume on a given day was produced and is owned by 6 media companies: Disney, NewsCorp, Comcast, Hearst, Viacom, and CBS.

- Disney - owns ABC, ESPN, Miramax, Pixar, Marvel, Buena Vista, and 270 radio stations.

- NewsCorp - owns Fox, FX, the Wall Street Journal, the New York Post, The Daily News, HarperCollins, and 20th Century Fox

- Comcast - owns NBCUniversal, so CNBC and MSNBC too, plus channels like Telemundo, USA Network, and Bravo - oh, and Hulu.

- Hearst - owns 20 U.S. magazines like Cosmo and Esquire, as well as 31 television stations.

- Viacom - owns MTV, VH1, Nickelodeon, Comedy Central, and BET among its 160 cable channels, not to mention Paramount Pictures

- CBS - owns everything with the CBS logo, 29 TV channels, 130 radio stations, plus three book publishers.

And, here we've only listed the most salient and well-known ownerships of each company. From the graphic above, we can also identify that, in the past, there used to be a bit more market diversity than we have today. Forty years ago, the same 90% of media texts were owned by about 50 different companies.

Media Profits

At first glance, it may not seem problematic that 6 companies have the lion's share of ownership over the media you consume. But the monopolization of media could become problematic soon - that is if it isn't already.

To understand why, let's consider a closely associated and analogous phenomenon: In the US, if your internet service provider (your ISP) is too slow, you can often pay for a different service provider, assuming there are options in your area.

- But most ISPs think that since they're delivering you a service, they should then also determine how that service should be delivered.

- To capitalize on the service maximally, they'd like to create tiered services, where you can pay more to get faster internet.

Your Turn: Presently, market competition keeps the cost of your internet services "down." What is likely to happen to the cost of your internet services if there is one and only one ISP available to you in your area? Would it be possible for ISPs to deny access to the internet to some people altogether?

Interestingly, the same companies that own your ISP tend also to own the media production companies that make the media texts you'll consume over the internet. For example, if you have Spectrum internet services, your ISP is owned by Time Warner. When media companies conglomerate to form monopolies, they have a significant impact on communication in our society, for better or worse.

Media Focus and the Consumer

Reconsider the activity from the previous section regarding representation and media tropes. How might the conglomeration of media companies be contributing here? Should we make analogous considerations about our consumption of informative media productions, like news media?

Your Turn: We can track the impact that the Coronavirus is having on communication by looking at charts that capture thousands – even millions – of news articles that cover COVID-19 globally. With the Global Media and News Tracker from Nexis NewsDesk, you can do just that, with updates being provided every 15 minutes. When we combine coverage of media from many diverse sources, we may get a different picture of the news than if we were to rely on a sole source.

- Consider your current perceptions about the Coronavirus pandemic. Do your perceptions match the data you can glean from the Nexis NewsDesk tracker?
- How might the data on the NewsDesk tracker look different if there were more than 6 companies contributing to the majority of the news texts this site is summarizing?
- Conversely, how might this summary of data look different if there were only 1 or 2 companies contributing to most of the news texts this site is summarizing?

In the next section, we'll consider what regulations media and technology companies are accountable to, and what responsibilities they have toward consumers.

When you're ready to advance to the next section of this module, click the "Next" button below.

Page 6: Regulation

Big Picture Questions

- What policies exist and what regulatory authorities oversee media companies?
- What policies exist and what regulatory authorities oversee technology companies? Media and Technology Companies

As of 2018, some 45% of adults in the U.S. got their news information from Facebook. While getting information for a social media site is not inherently problematic, it does open us up to the likelihood that the information we find there is misleading or false altogether.

A summary of this problem is that,

- Media companies and news producers have some regulation on what can and cannot be presented - Namely, they're regulated by the FCC (the Federal Communication Commission; more on them in a bit)
- Media companies employ professional reporters who maintain industry and disciplinary standards in both the ethics and professionalism of their reporting (although, clearly these standards vary across different companies).
- Social media sites (and the technology companies who own them) do not

fall under the same regulations as conventional media companies. The FCC currently does little to regulate Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, or TikTok.

- Similarly, because you are not a media company, the posts and messages you produce in social media are not regulated.

It is for these reasons that we've seen so much controversy over censorship on sites like Twitter. A big philosophical question our society is wrestling with right now is to what extent social media and tech companies *should* have analogous regulations as to major media companies.

Media Regulating Bodies

The Federal Communication Commission (FCC) is the United States of America's federal regulatory agency over media texts. In other words, they make the rules about what can and cannot show up in a piece of media. They also have some policies regarding the distribution of media. There are other media regulating bodies in the U.S. as well.

Some notable media policies you might recognize are:

- Federal Communication Commission (FCC):
  - Indecency, Profane, and Obscenity regulations determine time of day and context in which television programs may be broadcast.
  - Rules limiting the national share of media ownership of broadcast radio or televisions stations.
- Entertainment Software Ratings Board (ESRB)
  - Consumer guidelines for video games
  - Ex. "E" "E 10+" "T" "R"

- Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA)
    - Viewer guidelines for movies
    - Ex. "G" "PG" "PG-13" "R"

We should note though that while those regulations often cover issues of "decency" and "age- appropriateness" there are few federal regulations regarding "truthfulness" or "factuality" - rather, most of these matters are handled "in house" without much government oversight (if they are addressed at all), and so we know we must consume messages critically.

Still, there are two sides to this argument:

- While some will argue for increased regulation, others will argue that it's not the place of our government to censor messages.
- Instead, others will argue that it is the consumer's responsibility to educate themselves.
- Interestingly, regardless of which side of this debate you are on, it is still to your advantage to understand how media and information are produced.

<u>Your turn</u>: Take 5 minutes to reflect on the following questions:

- What do you think?
    - Should the U.S. federal government have increased monitoring of the media messages you consume? If so, what policies or "rules" would you create?
    - Or should there be fewer policies regulating the media messages you consume? If so, which existing policies or "rules" do you think are problematic?

- What values do you have regarding censorship generically?

  - How are your opinions informed by those values?

  - Do you also have facts and evidence to support your opinions?

In the next section of this module, we'll look at some resources you can employ to think critically about media messages you consume.

When you're ready to advance to the next section of this module, click the "Next" button below.

Page 7: Media and You

Big Picture Question

- What tools can you employ to accomplish your own media literacy goals?

Module Review

At the start of this module, we established that we had 3 goals:

- (1) define and identify key concepts and ideas related to media production - Yes, we've certainly done that.

- (2) label key stakeholders in the production of media and informative texts - Yup, we've done that

- And (3) register tools and questions to interrogate the quality of messages you encounter.

We've done a bit by way of this final goal, but let's review.

- We know that we should be cautious about where messages come from. We identified that there are several cultural motivators that influence what messages we receive, namely financial motivations.

- We also established that there are some regulations that we can rely on, but we should note that while those regulations often cover issues of "decency" and "age- appropriateness" there are few federal regulations regarding "truthfulness" or "factuality" - rather, most of these matters are handled "in house" without much government oversight (if they are addressed at all), and so we know we must consume messages critically.

- We also know that all media messages come with ideological "baggage" as far as those messages are produced by humans (which they all are). There's no way around this - there is no such thing as "value-free" communication wherever humans are involved (which is everywhere). And, you have these predispositions, beliefs, and values that shape how you view the world too.

Media Literacy Toolbox

The graphic above (credit NAMLE; adapted from Rowgow & Scheibe, 2007) helps us identify questions we should ask ourselves about the media we consume. Crucially though, we often won't have time to address each of these questions every time we engage with a media text. Rather, the "short-list" below can attune us to where we need to investigate a bit more about a text, and conduct such an investigation as needed:

- <u>How</u> was this text constructed? Who made decisions about what appeared in the text, and what didn't?

- <u>What</u> values, points of view, and ideologies are present in this text. And, perhaps more importantly, which are missing?

- <u>Why</u> was this text produced?

- <u>How</u> does the intended purpose of the text match up with our other considerations? Are they misaligned, is something fishy going on?

- <u>Who</u> does this text advantage? Who might it disadvantage or disparage?

Connections 'IRL'

Finally, we'd like to connect what we've done in this module to some other experiences you've likely had.

- First, any time your teachers have you seek out sources, or *texts*, for an assignment they are hoping that you will exercise good judgment and that you will keep the things we identified in this module in mind.

  - These sources already have all this critical work done for you.

  - The text has already been "reviewed" by other experts, "peers," in your discipline to a much higher degree of scrutiny than you are likely to perform.

  - To find "Credible" source materials you must be critical of the sources you review.

  - Similarly, this is, by the way, why many teachers will solicit you to find "peer- reviewed" or "scholarly" sources.

- Also, remember, you are also a "producer" of media. While in this module, we've often situated you as the "consumer" of media texts, you also produce and contribute to media on a daily basis.

  - For this reason, we often use the term "prosumers" to capture the idea that the same person can be both a "producer" and a

"consumer" of media.

  o And many of the thoughts you had while watching this

     module about media producers may also apply to you.

  o Every now and then, we should reflect on our own roles as

     media producers and ask ourselves if we're being the kind of

     producer of media, we'd like to see others be.

Your Turn:

Using the knowledge you've learned throughout this module, apply your media literacy

skills to analyze and assess the two news articles below. Both articles concern freedom

of speech policies and decisions, but in different contexts.

Instructions: Open and review the two articles linked below. Both links will solicit you

to log in to UK libraries to view them.

1.   National Catholic Reporter: The Debate about Debate.

2.   Chronicle of Higher Education: Free Speech or Threat? An Anti-Gay Pamphlet

Roils a Public University:

3.   Apply the questions from the "media literacy toolbox" to each article.

   • Who made decisions about what appeared in the text, and what

      didn't? Who was the author and how are they affiliated?

   • What values, points of view, and ideologies are present in this text.

      And, perhaps more importantly, which are missing?

   • Who does this text advantage? Who might it disadvantage or disparage?

   • Why was this text produced; what can you infer is its intended purpose?

   • How does the intended purpose of the text match up with our other

considerations? Are they aligned or misaligned?

When you're ready to advance to the module assessment quiz, click the "Next" button below.

Page 8: Module Assessment Activity

Using the knowledge you've learned throughout this module, apply your media literacy skills to analyze and assess the two news articles below. Both articles concern speech policies and decisions, but in different contexts.

Instructions: Open and review one of the two articles linked below. Both links will solicit you to log in to UK libraries to view them.

1. National Catholic Reporter: The Debate about Debate.

2. Chronicle of Higher Education: Free Speech or Threat? An Anti-Gay Pamphlet Roils a Public University: Choose _one_ of the two articles to review for the remainder of this assignment:

Apply the questions from the "media literacy toolbox" to each article. Write a 1-2 sentence response to **each** of the following questions for one of the articles (you choose which you'd like to write about):

- Who made decisions about what appeared in the text, and what didn't? Who was the author and how are they affiliated?

- What values, points of view, and ideologies are present in this text. And, perhaps more importantly, which are missing?

- Who does this text advantage? Who might it disadvantage or

disparage?

- Why was this text produced; what can you infer is its intended

  purpose?

- How does the intended purpose of the text match up with our other

  considerations? Are they aligned or misaligned?

3. Submit your response to this submission portal using either the "text entry"

box or by submitting a Word document or PDF. A complete response will address

each of the 5 questions with 1-2 sentences.

4. This exercise should take about 20 - 30 minutes in total. You may need to

consult some external sources to respond to some questions (for example, you may

need to Google the name of an author to identify how they are affiliated).

When you have completed your submission, please click the "Next" button in the lower-

right.

Page 9: Extra Credit Opportunity

Well Done! You've completed this module.

In addition to completing this module for course credit you also can collect extra

credit for this course by participating in a research interview.

As a student, if you decide not to take part in this study, your choice will have no

effect on your academic status or class grade.

If you choose to not participate in this study, your completion of the Canvas module

associated with this project will still count toward credit in this course.

To collect the extra credit associated with this research, you need to schedule (using

the link below) *and attend* a 50-minute Zoom interview.

- There are no "right" or "wrong" answers in these interviews. Rather, the
  purpose of these interviews is to explore your attitudes and perceptions
  associated with your participation in this module. You'll be asked
  questions like, "do you feel like things you learned from this module
  apply in the 'real world'?" and "What lessons from this module were
  useful to you?"

- You may complete the "alternate assignment" if you are unable or
  unwilling to participate in an interview, but you would still like to collect
  the extra credit incentive associated with this study. If this is the case for
  you, then you will also use the link below to indicate that you'd like to
  receive the alternate assignment.

Please click the link below to schedule a research interview or the collect the
alternate assignment for extra [Link to Qualtrics Questionnaire to collect scheduling
information from potential student-participants as specified in protocol].

Appendix C

Pre-Module Questionnaire

Demographics

1. Please type your full name here as it appears in Canvas: [Open response]

2. Please identify for which course and section you are completing this module and questionnaire (ex. COM 352.001) [Open response]

3. Please type your age in years: [Open response]

Media Literacy General Knowledge and Attitudes

1. If a person is "media literate," what does that mean? [Open response]

2. Should people be media literate? Please briefly elaborate on your response. [Open response]

3. Is "media literacy" something you should be learning about in college? Please briefly elaborate on your response. [Open response]

4. Is being "media literate" something everyone should strive for? Please briefly elaborate on your response. [Open response]

Self-Efficacy

1. Please rate the extent to which you agree with the following statement: "I think I am more media literate than most people like me." [5-point Likert scale; Strongly Agree – Strongly Disagree]

2. Please rate the extent to which you agree with the following statement: "I think I am a media literate person." [5-point Likert scale; Strongly Agree – Strongly Disagree]

Appendix D

Interview Guide

Introduction (5 minutes):

1. Introduce yourself, establish rapport.

2. Overview and complete informed consent and related documentation.

3. Solicit and answer any questions the respondent has before beginning the interview.

Demographics (2 minutes):

1. What is your name [used also to identify which exposure module the student received]? Follow-up:

a. In my report for this research, I will use a pseudonym (a fake name to keep your information confidential).

b. Would you like me to make up a pseudonym for you, or would you like to tell me your pseudonym now?

2. How many course credits have you collected so far? (What year of college are you in?)

3. Which course are you taking that prompted your participation in this interview? Follow-up: Who is your instructor for that course?

4. Can you please identify your race or ethnicity?

5. Can you please identify your Gender?

Media Literacy General Knowledge and Attitudes (8 minutes)

1. If a person is "media literate," what does that mean?

a. What sorts of things does a "media literate" know that a "media illiterate" person might not know?

b. What sorts of things can a "media literate" person do that a "media illiterate" person

couldn't do?

2. Should people be media literate?

a. Is "media literacy" something you should be learning about in college?

b. Is being "media literate" something everyone should strive for?

Instructions: For the questions moving forward, I'd like for you to recall your experiences with the Canvas module you recently participated in for "X" class.

Affective Outcomes (10 minutes)

1. Was the module "worth your time"? Probe: Why or why not?

2. Were the lessons involved in the module useful to you? Probe: How so or how not?

3. Were the lessons involved in the module something that might be useful to others? Probe: Why or why not?

4. Would you employ the lessons you learned in the module in "real life"? Probe: Can you give me a hypothetical or recent example of when the lesson might be (or have been) useful to you and how you applied that lesson?

5. Would you want to learn more about the content offered to you in that module? Probe: Why or why not?

Self-Efficacy (10 minutes)

1. In the "real world" do you think you could apply what you learned from the module? Probe: Could you provide a hypothetical or recent example of this?

2. If you were faced with X ["X" is a problem determined by which of the modules they participated in], do you feel you could solve that problem? Probe: How so, or why not?

3. Compared to other people, do you feel equipped to "put into practice" the things you

learned in the module?

a. Probe: How do you think you compare to others?

b. Probe: What can you do that you think others couldn't?

c. Probe: What couldn't you do that you think others could?

4. Please rate the extent to which you agree with the following statement: "I think I am more media literate than most people like me." [5-point Likert scale; Strongly Agree – Strongly Disagree]

5. Please rate the extent to which you agree with the following statement: "I think I am a media literate person." [5-point Likert scale; Strongly Agree – Strongly Disagree]

Instructional Mediation (5 minutes)

1. Would you have preferred to have done that module in class or over Canvas? Probe: Why or Why not?

2. What challenges did you have in completing the module?

a. Probe: Would having a teacher with you, in-person, have helped you with those challenges? How so?

b. Probe: How would you have constructed that module differently if you had the opportunity?

Member Reflections (5 minutes)

Instructions: In this final part of the interview, I'll be telling you what I've found so far in talking with other students. I'll summarize what I've learned so far and I want you to tell me if those ideas match your perceptions or not.

1) Summaries will be prepared in advance of interviews on roughly a bi-weekly basis:

a) Early in the interviewing process, these summaries will be based on initial, open

coding of initial interviews.

b) Later in the interviewing process, these summaries will articulate the initial themes generated from open coding as I move toward focused coding.

c) As I approach theoretical saturation, I'll begin discussing the themes generated from focused coding, and how I think those themes are related (in axial coding).

2) Adjourning Questions:

a) Is there anything you feel like I should have asked you but did not. Follow-up: Ask that/those questions.

b) Do you have any questions for me before we adjourn?

Code Book

Code	Sub-codes	Definition	Example from Data
Gender of participant	Man	Participant indicated their gender identity as "man" or "male"	Demographic item response (questionnaire).
	Woman	Participant indicated their gender identity as "woman" or "female"	Demographic item response (questionnaire).
Year in school	Freshman	Participant indicated that they had collected 30 or fewer credit-hours toward their degree.	Demographic item response (interview).
	Sophomore	Participant indicated that they had collected 31-60 credit-hours toward their degree.	Demographic item response (interview).
	Junior	Participant indicated that they had collected 61-90 credit-hours toward their degree.	Demographic item response (interview).
	Senior	Participant indicated that they had collected 90 credit-hours or more toward their degree.	Demographic item response (interview).
Race/ Ethnicity (participants were from a predominately white institution, though more coding categories were considered here, they were not warranted).	White-Caucasian	Applied where a participant identifies that their racial or ethnic identity aligned with "White" or "Caucasian"	Demographic item response (questionnaire).

	Black- African American	Applied where a participant identifies that their racial or ethnic identify is "Black" or "African American"	Demographic item response (questionnaire).
Course of Solicitation (All participants were solicited from Communication courses at the institution of interest)	100-Introduction Course	The participant indicated they were participating in this study from one of two large-lecture introductory courses in Communication that were involved in this study.	Identified outside of interview or questionnaire data.
	200-Survey Course	The participant indicated they were participating in this study from one of four survey courses (200-level; about 10-30 students/course) courses in Communication that were involved in this study.	Identified outside of interview or questionnaire data.
	300-Discipline Core Course	The participant indicated that they were participating in this study from one of two discipline-core courses in Communication that were involved in this study.	Identified outside of interview or questionnaire data.
Module-received	Teacher-centric module	The participant had received the "teacher-centric" module as part of their participation in this study.	Identified outside of interview or questionnaire data.

	Student-centric module	The participant had received the "student-centric" module as part of their participation in this study.	Identified outside of interview or questionnaire data.
Indication Epistemic Development	Dualistic – Basic Duality	The student makes a statement, comment or argument that indicated a dualistic (basic dualism) approach to their thinking; the claim will indicate that the student believes/feels that: authorities (such as parents, teachers, lawmakers, etc.) exist to give "correct" answers. And they(non-authorities) exist to obey authority. All problems are solvable, so the student's task is to *learn the right solution*.	"There are laws and stuff about what you can and can't put online; so, I think part of media literacy is knowing those so that […] you don't mess up."

	Dualistic – Full Dualism	The student makes a statement, comment or argument that indicated a dualistic (full dualism) approach to their thinking; the claim will indicate that the student believes/feels that: People who disagree with them are wrong; those who do not offer clear-cut answers are also wrong. Some authorities are right, and others are wrong, so the student's task is to *learn the right solution and ignore others*.	"I guess people just wake up and hear whatever things on tv or their social media and they only know part of the story, whatever headline they read, then they post the things they agree with – that's wrong, and it's bad that they do that. So, to be 'a media literate person' you have to do this [module content] stuff."
	Multiplicity-Early	The student makes a statement, comment or argument that indicated a multiplistic (early multiplicity) approach to their thinking; the claim will indicate that the student believes/feels that: either they or an authority should know/have an answer, and in the event that they do not the student settles and waits for other authorities to offer an answer, so the task of the student is to *learn how to find* the right solutions.	"I had this one teacher who, she came in on the first day of class and right of the bat gave a very controversial opinion and from then on, I was like, 'I'm not listening to her; I'll read the books and listen to those. I'm not saying she was 'wrong', but I didn't care to listen to her."

	Multiplicity-Late, Rebellion	The student makes a statement, comment or argument that indicated a Multiplistic (Late, Rebellion) approach to their thinking; the claim will indicate that the student believes/feels that: many problems don't have solutions, so everyone has a right to their own opinion. Some problems are unsolvable, but only because authorities don't have an answer *yet*, so the task of the student is *to "shoot the bull"*.	"There's not a right answer, they [teachers] just want you to have an opinion – or agree with them."

	Multiplicity-Late, "Playing the Game"	The student makes a statement, comment or argument that indicated a Multiplistic (Late, "playing the game") approach to their thinking; the claim will indicate that the student believes/feels that: many problems don't have solutions, so everyone has a right to their own opinion; therefore, if the student tells and authority what the student believes the authority wants to hear, this is just as good as having the "right" answer. The student's task is *to play the game*.	"It's [school assignments are] usually a matter of just figuring out what the teacher wants. I had this one teacher who was super, um, high-strung. She made us turn-in things with super-specific formatting and stuff, and if you didn't do it right, you'd basically fail."

	Relativism-Contextual	The student makes a statement, comment or argument that indicated a Relativistic (Contextual) approach to their thinking; the claim will indicate that the student believes/feels that: Authorities are no longer counted upon. All proposed solutions are supported by reasons, so some solutions are better than others depending on context. So, the student's task is *to evaluate solutions*.	"I think it's really important to being in-the-know in society. If you can't figure out stuff for yourself, then you're reliant on other people to tell you what to think." "You have to be able to sift through the information. Lots of things online – even in broadcast – are not credible, so you have to do things like research."
	Relativism- "Pre-Commitment"	The student makes a statement, comment or argument that indicated a Relativistic ("pre-commitment") approach to their thinking; the claim will indicate that the student believes/feels that: Authorities are no longer counted upon. But the student begins to see the necessity of commitment, as pure relativism can generate no solution/action. So, the student's tasks are to *make choices and commit to solutions within given contexts*.	"I don't know, you sort of just figure it out, don't you? There are right and wrong ways to engage with social media, but there's no rulebook written anywhere, so you just pick it up as you go."

	Epistemic Commitment	The student makes a statement, comment or argument that indicated a Commitment approach to their thinking; the claim will indicate that the student believes/feels that: Knowledge is an integration of things learned from others and personal experience/reflection. The student's task is to *make choices and commit to solutions according to internalized ethical or moral parameters*.	I know not everyone thinks I'm right, but I don't think that people should be posting things online that they haven't checked themselves, like, I don't make a post unless it's about me or I've actually done some research – I don't post too much though."
Affect, Module Content	Module content Positive/Neutral Affect Valence	Student indicated an attitude toward the study-module that was positive or neutral.	"[…] I liked that the modules had videos I could watch."
	Module content Negative Affect Valence	Student indicated an attitude toward the study-module that was negative.	"[…] I am not a huge fan of online learning though videos. I think it probably could've been a little bit more effective if it was in person." "I wish maybe towards the end there was a reflection section, Kinda maybe just being, 'what did you take away from this? How are you going by this? [...]"

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	Module content: indication of Affective Reception	Student expressed an attitude, behavior, or claim that indicated affective reception; that they were willing to listen and receive knowledge, with respect to the study-module.	"I thought the questions [quiz] at the end were helpful – I realized what I had and hadn't gotten out the lesson [module]."
	Module content: indication of affective non-reception	Student gives indication that they have not engaged with the module at all or nearly at all.	"I just did it for the extra credit; I don't know that that's the answer you're looking for, but I did it several weeks ago while working on some other things, it didn't make too much of an impression."
	Module content: indication of Affective Responding	Student expressed an attitude, behavior, or claim that indicated affective responding; that they had or had not actively participated and engaged with knowledge-transfer, with respect to the study-module.	"I liked the chart at the end with the questions; I remember there was an article about a week after I took the module that I pulled up those questions for – I was actually surprised how helpful they were."
	Module content: indication of Affective Valuing	Student expressed an attitude, behavior, or claim that indicated affective valuing; that they found value or worth in their learning, or that they indicated motivation to continue learning, with respect to the study-module.	"Yea, I think I'd take a course like this one if it were an elective in Comm, we need to know this stuff."

	Module content: indication of Affective Organizing	Student expressed an attitude, behavior, or claim that indicated affective organizing; that they integrated or compared competing values, or that they resolved a conflict between two values, or identified where specific learning content "fits" within their schema, with respect to the study-module.	"I didn't know that there were just, what was it, six companies that control most of the media; I was shook, but then I looked at all the connections between those six and the stuff I watch and, sure enough, all of it went back to the six that the module talked about."
	Module content: indication of Affective Characterization	Student expressed an attitude, behavior, or claim that indicated affective characterizing; that had established some valuing system that would dictate behaviors (hypothetically, that behavior would be "characteristic" of the learner), with respect to the study-module.	"Oh! Yeah! I've started thinking about that whenever I'm seeing stuff on TikTok, 'is this person an expert? What are their credentials? Why are they posting that?'"
Affect, Media Literacy Learning	Media Literacy Learning; Positive/Neutral Affect Valence	Student indicated an attitude toward media literacy learning that was positive or neutral.	"I think it's really important to being in-the-know in society. If you can't figure out stuff for yourself, then you're reliant on other people to tell you what to think."

	Media Literacy Learning; Negative Affect Valence	Student indicated an attitude toward media literacy learning that was negative.	"This just seems like the sort of stuff that should be in high-school or community college; we already know this stuff, [no] I don't think it belongs in college."
	Media Literacy Learning; Affective Reception	Student expressed an attitude, behavior, or claim that indicated affective reception; that they are willing to listen and receive knowledge, with respect to media literacy learning.	"I remember in high school, we talked about credibility and stuff – how to fact-check, but I don't remember much more than that."
	Media Literacy Learning; Affective Responding	Student expressed an attitude, behavior, or claim that indicated affective responding; that they had actively participated and engaged with knowledge-transfer, with respect to media literacy learning.	"I don't think you ever stop; the media changes so you have to keep learning and keeping up with things."

	Media Literacy Learning; indication of Affective Valuing	Student expressed an attitude, behavior, or claim that indicated affective valuing; that they found value or worth in their learning, or that they indicated motivation to continue learning, with respect to media literacy learning.	"Of course, that is a thing that's supposed to be taught because everything about science and social science is recorded, and we need that material because without any references we cannot get any good background, if I can say that. It's no good if we don't have any recorded material as books or something else. […] We need media, so it is very good to teach it at school."
	Media Literacy Learning: indication of Affective Organizing	Student expressed an attitude, behavior, or claim that indicated affective organizing; that they integrated or compared competing values, or that they resolved a conflict between two values, or identified where specific learning content "fits" within their schema, with respect to media literacy learning.	"[…]in like a marketing standpoint almost, if you are making something for your school, you're going to have to kind of make it so that someone would visually – would be visually appealing to somebody wanting to see that and not just a big text, which I think that's a little bit less literacy."

	Media Literacy Learning: indication of Affective Characterization	Student expressed an attitude, behavior, or claim that indicated affective characterizing; that had established some valuing system that would dictate behaviors (hypothetically, that behavior would be "characteristic" of the learner), with respect to media literacy learning.	"I think there's definitely things that cross over and are important in both areas. But, if I'm watching the news, or I'm reading an article on something objective, and not subjective, I'm not going to focus on, let's say, the emotion or the feelings of the author, I'm gonna look for more facts base instead of subjective based opinions. So, that's something that the subjectivity of people and their feelings is something that's important in theater – in understanding a story – but not important if somebody's reporting on Ukraine right now."
Affect, General or "other" learning	General or "other" learning; Positive/Neutral Affect Valence	Student indicated an attitude toward education that was positive or neutral.	"I would say it's similar to all by other online learning experiences. I feel like online learning – it has its limitations; in my opinion it can only go so far."
	General or "other" learning; Negative Affect Valence	Student indicated an attitude toward education that was negative.	"There's nothing I hate more than being done with class for the day, and just getting Canvas notification after Canvas notification."

	General or "other" learning; Affective Reception	Student expressed an attitude, behavior, or claim that indicated affective reception or lack thereof; that they are willing to listen and receive knowledge, with respect to education generally.	"I had this one teacher who, she came in on the first day of class and right of the bat gave a very controversial opinion and from then on, I was like, 'I'm not listening to her; I'll read the books and listen to those. I'm not saying she was 'wrong', but I didn't care to listen to her."
	General or "other" learning; Affective Responding	Student expressed an attitude, behavior, or claim that indicated affective responding; that they had actively participated and engaged with knowledge-transfer, with respect to education generally.	"Yeah. So, before I want to school in person, and then I'm just doing this online 'cause I travel so much for work. But I learned so much when I just had to read it by myself, or you give me the instructions – boom, boom. I like that rather than having to watch a video of them telling me, and I'm just like, 'f*ck this is so boring.' When I'm reading it myself, I like it, it's a challenge and you're absorbing everything."

	General or "other" learning: indication of Affective Organizing	Student expressed an attitude, behavior, or claim that indicated affective organizing; that they integrated or compared competing values, or that they resolved a conflict between two values, or identified where specific learning content "fits" within their schema, with respect to education generally.	"Well, a media literate person would be able to take that [assignment] and use the example and say, 'Okay. I'm gonna do this and this because I saw this idea," versus where a media illiterate person wouldn't be able to say that. They'd just say, "Okay. I'm just gonna copy this bullet point by bullet point, but format tit to the project that I'm doing' so they really can't elaborate or build off what they're seeing."
	General or "other" learning: indication of Affective Characterization	Student expressed an attitude, behavior, or claim that indicated affective characterizing; that had established some valuing system that would dictate behaviors (hypothetically, that behavior would be "characteristic" of the learner), with respect to education generally.	"I took a class my freshman year of high school, and it was kind of about how media in general applies to our world at large. And that was just something that our teacher kind of instilled in us, was you need to be aware, and you need to be informed before you speak about anything, or before you make an opinion on something at a surface level. You need to see everything. So, he just really kind of instilled that in me, and it just stuck."

Learning Self-efficacy indicator, Module	Learning Self-efficacy indicator, Module - Positive	The participant gives an indication that they or someone else felt the contents of the module were *not* within the scope of their ability to *learn*.	"I liked the chart at the end with the questions; I remember there was an article about a week after I took the module that I pulled up those questions for – I was actually surprised how helpful they were."
	Learning Self-efficacy indicator, Module - Negative	The participant gives an indication that they or someone else felt the contents of the module were within the scope of their ability to *learn*.	"I can see why the other students would prefer the video [teacher-centric] module; as I was going through the readings [of the student-centric module], I kept thinking, "I don't know if I'm getting this right, what is he going to ask me about?""
Self-efficacy indicator, Media Literacy	Self-efficacy indicator, Media Literacy - Positive	The participant gives an indication that they or someone else felt media literacy behaviors were within the scope of their ability to "do" (perform).	"I'm definitely not at the top of my game, but I feel like I know what I'm doing. I understand the concept [of media literacy], and I know how to generate a media text. And, I think my age has something to do with it […]."

	Self-efficacy indicator, Media Literacy - Negative	The participant gives an indication that they or someone else felt media literacy behaviors were *not* within the scope of their ability to "do" (perform).	"Well, I know in more rural areas it would be more difficult. Well, visually it would be more difficult since televisions – I'm not exactly sure how much access they have to either streaming services or other cable devices – but verbally I could see how they'd be about to use that [information] in a verbal sense. I feel like besides news castings and anything, news reports, besides that I think it might be a little bit more difficult for them to use [media] since they are either limited on other devices, and cellular range, I guess."
Learning **Self-efficacy indicator, Media Literacy**	*Learning* Self-efficacy indicator, Media Literacy - Positive	The participant gives an indication that they or someone else felt media literacy behaviors were within the scope of their ability to *learn*.	"I would say [I'd rank myself] probably [at] 75% OR 80%. Just 'because I don't know everything, but I would say I'm pretty smart when I spent time on media."

	Learning Self-efficacy indicator, Media Literacy - Negative	The participant gives an indication that they or someone else felt media literacy behaviors were *not* within the scope of their ability to *learn*.	"My mom is not very good at technology, but she's not really on social media sites or anything, so I think there's a difference. Anyway, my mom is practically against social media, she refuses to learn it."
Self-efficacy indicator, Education General	Self-efficacy indicator, Education General - Positive	The participant gives an indication that they or someone else felt learning behaviors were within the scope of their ability to "do" (perform).	"I think that was me in the beginning. 'Cause, I didn't take notes, and I was like, 'this test should be easy.' And then, I took the test, and bombed it, and then that helped me realize I'm not as good as I really am. So, now I am taking notes and focusing more. So, I think that I can apply to that group of people that were too confident, and then got knocked down a little but in good way."
	Self-efficacy indicator, Education General - Negative	The participant gives an indication that they or someone else felt learning behaviors were *not* within the scope of their ability to "do" (perform).	"I'm not very good at exams – I think I know the stuff going in, but then I just kinda freeze up […]"

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Learning **Self-efficacy indicator, Education General**	*Learning* Self-efficacy indicator, Education General - Positive	The participant gives an indication that they or someone else felt learning behaviors were within the scope of their ability to *learn*.	"[In a class] we just did an exercise, I did it last night for participation grade. [The goal was to] rank your listening skills on analytical and transactional, and relational skills. And, I mean, there's just one example; I'm quick to make judgements before understanding the entire situation or somebody's entire background on their opinion. So, there's definitely things that're the shortcomings of my communication skills [and they] have become more obvious [to me], which is good, 'cause then I can work on them, and learn from them."
Learning Modality	Asynchronous Learning	An asynchronous learning experience is mentioned.	"[…] I am not a huge fan of online learning though videos. I think it probably could've been a little bit more effective if it was in person."

	Face-to-face	A face-to-face (in-person, *not* conducted online) experience is mentioned.	"I had this one teacher who, she came in on the first day of class and right of the bat gave a very controversial opinion and from then on, I was like, 'I'm not listening to her; I'll read the books and listen to those. I'm not saying she was 'wrong', but I didn't care to listen to her."
	Synchronous Learning	An (online) synchronous learning experience is mentioned	"No one in the Zoom class had their cameras on the whole semester, it was really awkward, but the teacher never did anything about it and just kept going."
	Hybrid Learning	A hybrid learning experience is mentioned	"During the pandemic, toward the end of it I think, I had some teachers do part-in and part-out of class. One of them, I don't think, really wanted to do that, but I really liked it."

Communication Interaction	Instructor-student	An instance of a communicative interaction between the student and a teacher is mentioned.	"I had this one teacher who, she came in on the first day of class and right of the bat gave a very controversial opinion and from then on, I was like, 'I'm not listening to her; I'll read the books and listen to those. I'm not saying she was 'wrong', but I didn't care to listen to her."
	Peer-peer	An instance of a communicative interaction between two student-peers is mentioned.	"Someone in my fraternity gave me their notes from the year or two before when they took the class."
	Peer-group	An instance of a communicative interaction between the student and a class of peers is mentioned.	"On the discussion boards in that class, there was this one student who – I don't know – they would reply to everyone, and it was really annoying."
Qualities of online education	Online learning - Desirable	The participant mentions a case or quality of online learning that they felt is positive or desirable.	"Like I said earlier, it [the module] was organized, it was really easy to follow, the videos were easy to understand. There was never a time when I was like, "what is she saying?"

	Online learning - Undesirable	The participant mentions a case or quality of online learning that they felt is negative or undesirable.	"[…] because sometimes professor's Canvas pages aren't organized, it drives me crazy."
Social Presence	Student improves perceived social presence online	The participant mentions their own or an observed peer-behavior that they felt improved social-presence in an online learning context.	"I enjoy the discussion boards because I get to see what other students are thinking, so I'm usually one of the first to post in the week."
	Student reduces perceived social presence online	The participant mentions their own or an observed peer-behavior that they felt reduced social-presence in an online learning context.	"No one in the Zoom class had their cameras on the whole semester, it was really awkward, but the teacher never did anything about it and just kept going."
	Teacher improves perceived social presence online	The participant mentions their own or an observed teacher-behavior that they felt improved social-presence in an online learning context.	"That's like, when teachers use the notepad in Zoom; I get it better because I'm seeing them write it out."
	Teacher reduces perceived social presence online	The participant mentions their own or an observed teacher-behavior that they felt improved social-presence in an online learning context.	"No one in the Zoom class had their cameras on the whole semester, it was really awkward, but the teacher never did anything about it and just kept going."

	Circumstantial-reasons reduce perceived social-presence online	The participant mentions their own or recounts another's experience with circumstances (such as learning management software design/integration, or historic factors like a global pandemic, or the learning modality) as a source of reduced or negative social presence online	"I think you have to do videos online; if it's all reading then I don't see how that's different from reading a book." "No one's internet connections were good enough, so even the teacher always came thought glitchy and all the students kept their cameras off because if they didn't it ate too much of the internet."
Media Literacy Tools, Skills, Behaviors	Technology	The participant mentions a communication technology within the context of media literacy or media literacy learning. This should include both individual media (like, magazines, websites, movies, Learning Management Software, etc.) and include platforms within those media (Snapchat, TikTok, Canvas, etc.).	"Today, I don't think people still use one newspaper at all. All the young people, they don't care about newspapers. They're mostly using social media and the broadcasting media, so I think that the main things we need to talk about today. I think that's very good to stay focused on it and to help people to know a little bit more about the effects, how to use it, and the impact on our life."

	Comparison	The participant makes a comparison between their own and other media literacy behaviors or makes such a comparison between two other people or groups (may be an upward or downward comparison).	"I think in the sense of creating it, I don't know. I always did good in high school with that. I worked with the local newspaper, and I helped with that, so I'd say creating media I'm pretty experienced in, and maybe others aren't."
	"Awareness"	The participant identifies or recognizes a gap in their own or someone else's knowledge – they are [or aren't] "aware" of what they do [or don't] know.	"One thing that stuck with me was that – what – six companies own like 90% of basically what we absorb. Stuff like that is really interesting. Also, it kind of opened my eyes to like a little bit more about what I'm absorbing – to think about if I am media literate and stuff like that."

| | "Understanding" | The participant identifies, defines, or gives an example of "understanding" some concept related to media literacy or media literacy learning. See also "comprehension". | "Media literacy is kinda being able to understand the content in media, and then all the different ways it effects whatever the stakeholders are."

"I would be able to analyze and take in information, as well as sort it into what category it is needed. I guess being able to understand what information you would need for what circumstances […]." |
| | "Engagement" - Media | The participant illustrates some interaction they have, or another person has had with a piece of media. | "My sister-in-law one time found on Onion article about the new Toy Story, Woody being bi-sexual. She brought it up and was really, really upset because she thought it was real." |

	"Engagement" ML learning	The participant illustrates some interaction they have, or another person has had with a media literacy behavior, tool, skill, or lesson.	"I'm not gonna lie, most of the [education] stuff from online, I just don't learn much. It's kinda just I'm throwing in answers, and if I get it wrong, 'oh well'. With this [module] I really did try and then after looking back on it, like I said, I figured out what was the right answer, and why it was the right answer. So, it was a lot more informative than what I'm used to."
	"Bias"	The participant explicitly mentions "bias" in a media literacy or media literacy learning context.	"But, when I hear it in her lectures, I'm just automatically – I don't wanna take in her information because I feel like it's biased."
	"Comprehension"	The participant identifies, defines, or gives an example of comprehending some concept related to media literacy or media literacy learning. See also "understanding".	"Media literacy, at least from what I understood, is being able to decode or analyze what you're reading, seeing and watching, yeah."

	"Appreciation"	The student expresses appreciation for some aspect of the media literacy learning module (see also codes regarding positive affect-valence).	"I think it was a good module. I liked the way the speaker used kind of like examples of everything that she was talking about – the fast lane versus the slow lane example or the monopolizing of the media, things like that. I like how it was kind of simple to understanding if you couldn't grasp the concept at first."
	"Knowledge"	The participant expresses somebody of knowledge, field of discourse, or training/instructive experience that they have related to media literacy or media literacy learning.	"So, I was in a Media Arts program in high school. Even short films, I know, requires a lot of effort […] knowing the effort and time that goes into creating media."

	"Motivation" – Study Participation	The participant explicitly identifies a motivation for their participation in with this study (namely, the learning module).	"We didn't have class on Thursday when we were encouraged to complete the module for the extra credit. And, doing that, if this had just been a module my teacher had assigned when she was gone and it didn't have any connection to research…I knew it was going to be for research so I was like, "I need to focus, and actually watch the videos." If it had just been an assignment that she gave us on sub work, I probably would've put the videos on high-speed and just watched them and been like "I don't really care."
	"Motivation" Media literacy	The participant explicitly identifies a motivation for themselves or another person to strive for, or to be media literate.	"So, I love everything with technology. That's kind of what I wanna…not directly media, I'm more in the social media side. And, I'm interested in learning it, I don't know about other of my classmates, but learning about media and all that type of stuff I enjoy."

	"Confidence"	The participant mentions some metric to establish their confidence in their own media literacy related tools, skills, or behaviors (always a downward or neutral comparison).	"Maybe [I'm in the] 70, 75 [percentile of media literate people] because I definitely do think there's still thing for me to learn, but I do think that I understand a little more than the average."
	"Importance"	Participant provides a rational for why media literacy skills/knowledge or media literacy learning is "important"	"I think it's an important part of life to be able to understand what's going on." "All of social media is most important because today it's inherent to all life, you know? As everything has been reduced – I'm talking about the cell phone – everything is on our phone. And we cannot live today without social media, so we have to talk about it. We have to talk about the good usage of that."

	Production	The student explicitly mentions some message production or experience with message production that they have.	"I'm good [at that]. I probably know more than most people about [media] because of my background in media. I used to work as a professional of media back home." "English and Writing has always been more of my strong suit. And I've done a lot of research papers. And I'm also into current events, so I do try my best to look at reliable sources and stuff like that."
"Influence"	Social Media	The participant discusses the relationship of social media to media literacy or a related-broad media concept.	"I know I've talked about social media a lot, but I definitely say social media because I use social media every day. It's more of just a habit at this point, just scrolling, reading things. It's kind of interesting thinking about – everyone interprets things differently. I can read a caption or a comment, or just interpret one thing one way, whereas other people interpret it differently. And, if I show my mom a funny TikTok, she's like "I don't get it."

	Broadcast Media	The participant discusses some experience where they or another person has been influenced by media.	"My father-in-law saw on Fox that "Russia is Communist." […] I had to show him that they are, in fact, Capitalist. […] He fully did not believe me. He like saw it on somewhere, He was fully like "no, you're wrong" even though I pulled up actual back sources."
Challenges/Issues	Uncertainty of Interview Response	The participant explicitly expresses uncertainty about their own response to an interview prompt. [distinct from "Uncertainty of Response Process" – here the participant explicitly questions the quality of their response, rather than their thinking processes].	"Did I answer any question inconsistent to what you wanted? Did I answer any question that was incomplete to you, in a sense?"

| | Uncertainty of Response Process

[state]

(Uncertainty about thinking processes) | The student expresses uncertainty of their own thinking processes.

[distinct from "Uncertainty of Response" – here the participant discusses the processes that lead to a response] | "That isn't much of an answer now that I'm thinking out loud. It's just hard with the way that media is right now to be able to decipher and make [such a] distinction."

"I talked about confidence, and people don't want to be wrong, so I feel like if people are kind of unsure about it, they're going to want to double check themselves. So, that kind of makes them more media literate. But it also kind of depends on the sources they're checking. I don't know. I feel like it can go either way which kind of makes it challenging." |

	Self-doubt [trait]	The participant highlights a perceived point of weakness about their own media literacy experiences and processes.	"I would say, I'm not perfect, so sometimes I can be a little gullible maybe. Like, one time I didn't check where this came from, and I thought it was so true. And, I was like, "No, this is true." And then it ended up not being true. So, I feel like there just that error almost where I'm not being supper proficient all the time."
	"Misinformation"	The participant explicitly mentions an experience or makes a claim about "misinformation" as a challenge or issue for Media Literacy	"I know when the vaccine was coming out, there were so many 'facts' coming out that just weren't accurate. And people couldn't perceive that it was a bias, or that they needed to do more research on it – and same thing where if it was a bias."
	"Censorship"	The participant explicitly mentions some form of formal censorship as an issue or challenge for media literacy or media literacy learning.	"People – certain media platforms will remove people because they don't like what they're saying or anything like that. And I feel like that's a good example of censorship kind of thing."

	Context Awareness	The participant explicitly mentions a challenge or issue for media literacy related to contextual or circumstantial awareness (or lack thereof).	"For Twitter, obviously Twitter is part of social media, which is a big part of everyday society. And I think mostly Twitter is just being able to understand what someone is saying, because people use slang, people use abbreviations for words and all that. So, being able to understand that context […] and being able to read the reply and kind of figure out necessarily what everyone is talking about."
Media Literacy Learning Experience	Formal Learning (K-12)	The participant mentions a learning experience they or someone else had that took place in a formal, primary-school context.	"Yea, I think we started as early as freshman year in high school, probably. I think in my high school I touched on it a little bit my freshman year and sophomore year 'cause that class was not a writing class, it was reading, and you learn these fallacies, and you learned sorts of media that's out there in the world."

	Formal Learning (College)	The participant mentions a learning experience they or someone else had that took place in a formal, Higher-Education context.	"I'm in a theory class right now and we do these writing exercises, and they're various, and short. And, then at the end of the writing exercises the author gets to speak about their intentions, or what they were thinking when they made it. And, sometimes we're just getting to know the person more and more 'cause that class is pretty open, you have to be pretty vulnerable. And the subtext behind people's ideas in their lives is becoming more obvious, and so I realized that the stuff that I'm learning in the communications class is stuff that I'm applying when listening to these other students in my class."

	Formal Learning (Study Module)	The participant mentions a learning experience they had that took place in the context of this module they were presented with for this study.	"Yeah, I would say it was worth my time. I think that it helped […] it gave some really good examples, and this is just one thing I remember, the graphic, I actually took a picture of it on my phone cause I was like, "That's a good graphic to have" – the graphic where it said the six main companies […] it drew my attention to that."
	Informal Learning	The participant mentions a learning experience they had that took place informally.	"I think this is something you learn while creating and analyzing the different media you come into contact with everyday."
Student Attitudes about Modality	Online-Modality-Preference	The student expresses a preference among learning experiences related to an online modality of learning.	"I am not a huge fan of online learning thought videos. I think it probably could've been a little bit more effective if it was in person."
	Offline-Modality-Preference	The student expresses a preference among learning experiences related to an in-person modality of learning.	"I like that I can do it whenever when it's online, like I don't have to get up early; if I want to work on things in the evening, I can."

	Online-Modality-Aversion	The student expresses an aversion among learning experiences related to an online modality of learning.	"I just get too distracted by the stuff that's going on in my house when I have to do online stuff."
	Offline-Modality-Aversion	The student expresses an aversion among learning experiences related to an offline modality of learning.	"I am not a huge fan of online learning thought videos. I think it probably could've been a little bit more effective if it was in person."
Media Literacy, Definitions		The participant defines what they perceive "Media Literacy" is.	"[Media literacy] is that [you] are able to visualize and analyze media." "[It's] understanding the various types of platforms and how they are used."
	ML Definition involving Industry/ Ecosystem Knowledge	Participant cites some aspect of assessing industry-contexts as relevant to being 'media literate".	"I think it's good to be kinda reminded about media literacy and everything; from a corporation-perspective, you have to know what Twitter, and Facebook, and TikTok feel about media."
	ML Definition involving Analysis of Message	Participant cites some aspect of decoding or analysis of messages relevant to being 'media literate".	"I think credibility is really important; we've learned in school that you have to look up authors and check sources and stuff."

| | ML Definition involving Production | Participant cites some aspect of production of messages as relevant to being 'media literate". | "I think part of this is that you know how to act in social media settings."

"[…]in like a marketing standpoint almost, if you are making something for your school, you're going to have to kind of make it so that someone would visually – would be visually appealing to somebody wanting to see that and not just a big text, which I think that's a little bit less literacy." |
|---|---|---|---|

	ML Definition involving Reception	Participant cites some aspect of assessing audience reception of messages as relevant to being 'media literate".	"I know it might go a little off topic, there's just so much you can talk about in media, but something that I kind of correlate with media literacy is kind of being aware of how much you consume and how much of your life is invested in media. And kind of being aware that we're addicted to media."

"I think media relations at our age – someone who's media illiterate can't relate the same way – isn't seeing the same things." |
| | ML Definition involving Information Literacy | Participant cites some aspect of Information Literacy as relevant to being 'media literate". | "Everyone knows you can't get information from Wikipedia and that you have to fact-check, you know, stuff like that." |
| | ML Definition involving Digital Literacy | Participant cites some aspect of Digital Literacy as relevant to being 'media literate". | "Like, if you can't tell on Twitter what's the difference between a reply and a repost, you'll get lost pretty fast. Like, my grandma, I've shown her post on Twitter before and it's like she doesn't even know what's going on." |

	ML Definition involving Technological Literacy	Participant cites some aspect of Technological Literacy as relevant to being 'media literate".	"You know, if you can't even use a computer or phone then I'm not sure how you'd do this [media literate behaviors] at all, so that must be part of the definition, right?"
"Learning Styles"	"Visual"	Participant mentions an attitude that shows or explicitly states they perceive themselves to have a "visual" "learning style"	"I liked the videos, I'm a visual learner."
	"Reading/ Writing"	Participant mentions an attitude that shows or explicitly states they perceive themselves to have a "Reading/Writing" "learning style"	"The way the lessons, readings(?) were set up in Canvas were good. I learn the most from reading things, so it was nice that I could go at my own pace."
	"Auditory"	Participant mentions an attitude that shows or explicitly states they perceive themselves to have a "Auditory" "learning style"	"I feel like the students who got the videos would have been more confident in what they learned – I prefer to listen to a video than read, and they probably feel like they learned it better because they got it from the teacher."

	"Kinesthetic"	Participant mentions an attitude that shows or explicitly states they perceive themselves to have a "Kinesthetic" "learning style"	"I have to do it, so when there's nothing to do online except read or watch videos, I gloss over it because I know it's not going to help me much."

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