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The Impact Of A Media Literacy Education Plan On The Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (fcat) Reading Scores Of 9th And 10th Grade Students

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THE IMPACT OF A MEDIA LITERACY EDUCATION PLAN ON THE FLORIDA COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT TEST (FCAT) READING SCORES OF 9TH AND 10TH GRADE STUDENTS

by

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the impact of a media literacy education plan on the Reading test scores of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) at an urban high school in Central Florida. A team of 9th and 10th grade teachers created a professional learning community and developed a treatment to enhance language arts instruction with various forms of media. This media literacy education plan included four lessons utilizing media such as television commercials, magazine photographs and the Internet; the lessons were taught during the four months leading to the administration of the 2007 FCAT.

Data were gathered from the 2006 and 2007 FCAT scores of students in a control and treatment group. Using these pre test and post test data, statistical analysis comprised two independent t-tests and one repeated measures ANOVA. The data revealed statistical significance at the 9th and 10th grade level, but did not show statistical significance at any particular reading level (Levels 1-5).

Implications from this study included strong professional learning communities produce effective teachers and that student achievement increases when a media literacy education plan is included in ELA instruction. Furthermore, this study illustrates the need to embrace modern media as viable classroom instructional tools. Recommendations were made for further research utilizing different materials, different forms of media, different student populations. This study also concluded that further qualitative research be conducted. Ultimately, this study makes a strong argument for the inclusion of media and media literacy education in the secondary English Language Arts classroom.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CML	The Center for Media Literacy, Los Angeles, CA
ELA	English Language Arts
FCAT	Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test
FLDOE	Florida Department of Education
IRA	International Reading Association
NAEP	National Assessment of Educational Progress
NCA	National Communication Association
NCES	National Center of Educational Statistics
NCLB	No Child Left Behind Act of 2002
NCTE	National Council of Teachers of English
OCPS	Orange County Public Schools
PLC	Professional Learning Community
SSS	Sunshine State Standards

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Alvermann, Moon, and Hagood (1999) reported the following:

> The act of reading is no longer perceived as transmitting facts from the printed page to the mind. Nor are texts perceived any more as that narrow vein of technology known as print media. Today's reader interprets a broad range of texts that use a variety of symbols, or signs, to communicate their messages (p. 9).

This change for today's reader is critical and must be reflected in the instruction of reading. Today's teachers must embrace this broad range of text and blend it into instruction. Media literacy education enriches the curricula, and regardless of how these curricula are assessed, this authentic, meaningful instruction effectively addresses the critical literacy needs of today's student.

Background and Significance

The fundamental skills of reading and writing are the foundation to a literate, productive, and successful society (Tyner, 1998). The United States continues to drop in international rankings of literacy; its academic standing is on the decline among other industrialized countries (The Education Trust, 2003). At the same time, the call for good quality literacy skills within the curricula of a public school system continues to be a major focus in educational reform (Vacca & Vacca, 1999; Guthrie, 2000; Wilkinson, 2004; Alvermann, 2006). There is a disconnect between the tests used to measure literacy and the realities of the students taking those tests. Today, being literate is defined by demonstrating continual growth on standardized reading tests, that not only measures individual academic progress of a student, but also the progress of the individual teacher, school, district, state, such as the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), and nation, such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

Students have significant experiences with media today; they have developed multiple literacies and no longer connect solely to the traditional written word on paper. They do, however, connect to the images on a computer, story lines on television, and other messages found in various forms of media. Of late, the expansion of media in society is competing with print for the attention of students, specifically in the classroom, potentially obstructing, instead of bridging new text to old text as a means for effective instruction (Hobbs & Frost, 2003). The 2002 U.S. Census reported 75% of American adolescents are online and 85% of all Internet users expect to find key news information online, thus revealing many students today are online and are engaged with some form of media. Pahl and Rowsell (2005) state succinctly, "there is a clear gap between the way we are teaching reading and writing in school and the sophisticated set of practices students use outside of school," (p. 29). Whether formally trained or not, students today have a wealth of knowledge and background experiences that can enhance their formal education when tapped appropriately. Students who struggle to read deserve instruction that is developmentally, culturally, and linguistically responsive to their needs (Alvermann, Moon, & Hagood, 1999).

Media literacy education takes the concept of text and expands it; text, as defined in the context of media literacy, includes messages of any form, such as verbal, aural, or visual, as well as the written text (Thoman & Jolls, 2004). Students have tremendous exposure to media, yet for many of them, the school they attend may have antiquated technology and outmoded instruction with limited technology in the classroom. Incorporating a broad range of media into instruction can enhance and strengthen what students inherently bring to the classroom, making for a meaningful, authentic, and purposeful educational experience. Thoman and Jolls (2004) explain that when students engage critically with a medium, such as an Internet website or a television commercial, they are using higher-order thinking skills to make connections among ideas, mediums, background knowledge and personal experiences. "Media literacy adds the element of critical inquiry…and the

need to state one's own point of view to provide a meaningful context for the reader," (Brunner & Talley, 1999, p. 161).

This study examined how students performed on the Reading sub-test of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) after practice and repetition with guided critical thinking questions about media messages. Teachers in the study used seven guiding questions with the intention to help students build stronger media comprehension and analysis skills, then transfer these questioning strategies to the study of nonfiction and fiction in 9th and 10th grade English Language Arts (ELA) classrooms. Students exposed to this practice and repetition with guided critical thinking questions about various media achieved higher reading scores on the FCAT than students who received this instruction using the standard curriculum. The results of this study reveal the importance and necessity of using media as a strategy to enhance critical thinking and reading skills in the classroom.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of studying and analyzing various media through the repetition of questions and activities in 9th and 10th grade ELA classrooms on the FCAT Reading scores of the 9th and 10th graders respectively. The strategic use of various media cultivated students' abilities to analyze various texts as well as validate the importance of using media in instruction. Teachers in the study worked collaboratively to create lessons that utilized different mediums. For this study, television advertisements, Internet websites, and magazine photographs were used. These lessons were presented to students four months before the FCAT. Teachers then used the same questions with different selections within the standard ELA curriculum. Using the pieces of media as text, students developed analytical proficiency to demonstrate better print literacy skills. The purpose of this study was to address the following research questions:

1. Is there a significant difference in FCAT reading scores between 9th grade students taught with a Media Literacy focus in the ELA classrooms and those taught without one?

2. Is there a significant difference in FCAT reading scores between 10th grade students taught with a Media Literacy focus in the ELA classroom and those taught without one?

3. Is there a significant difference in FCAT reading scores between students at specific reading levels (Level 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) taught with a Media Literacy focus in the ELA classroom and those taught without one?

Justification for the Study

This study examined the impact of a collaboratively developed media literacy education plan on the Reading FCAT scores of 9th and 10th graders. The results of this study will add evidence to persuade high school English teachers to incorporate media into their instruction to enhance their students' reading and writing abilities, providing a more authentic education (Masterman, 1985).

This study used a quasi-experimental approach. The findings provide empirical backing for changes to the curriculum at the school, district, state, and national level. This study used pre test and post test data from the FCAT; this high-stakes test is integral for indicating student academic achievement, such as standard diplomas and teacher bonuses, and pivotal in school based decision making, such as curricular changes and modifications to instruction based on the results of the test.

The treatment lessons in this study were developed by the teachers who taught the lessons. This collaborative development provided strength and added authenticity to the study in that the teachers knew their students, knew the best level at which to deliver the instruction, and

knew the available resources at the school. This study can be modified to fit the needs of other teachers in different schools throughout the country.

Most important, for the first time, media literacy education benchmarks have been added to the Language Arts Sunshine State Standards for the 2007-2008 school year in the state of Florida. This study provided a meaningful background and foundation for teachers who are beginning to incorporate media into their instruction. Because of the focus on media blending naturally into the ELA curriculum, these lessons can be modified to show continued success on the Reading FCAT. The state of Florida recognizes the importance of this literacy skill; therefore, the findings in this timely study support the inclusion of media literacy education strategies in the ELA classroom.

Assumptions of the Study

This study included the assumption that all students in the treatment group received a relatively comparable level of instruction; it was further assumed that the control group received a comparable level of instruction by adhering to the standard curriculum without the media literacy lessons. The teachers in the treatment group were enthusiastic and motivated to work in a collaborative environment. This study included the assumption that the FCAT is a valid and reliable assessment tool, that the students took the test seriously, and that they performed to the best of their ability. This study further included assumptions that various mediums are considered text, for example, "reading" a picture in a magazine or interpreting a roadside billboard. For this study, the picture and billboard in this example are considered forms of text beyond the traditional meaning of printed text.

Limitations of the Study

The skills tested on the FCAT do not measure students' full range of literacy; however, it is a test that is recognized at the state and national levels. The experimental media literacy lessons were

developed collaboratively by the teachers who taught them; although they taught the same content with the same questions, there was a variety in teacher experience and approach (See Appendix A). This, however, is an asset as each teacher will have a unique connection to his students and classes. The prescription of a certain method can never guarantee specific results or the best results (Adams, 1990).

Another limitation is in the term *media literacy* as it encompasses multiple literacies that perhaps are never measured, such as visual literacy, information literacy, or cultural literacy. The study did not include a component of media production, which is one of the pillars of media literacy; however, this was neither realistic nor deemed necessary by the teachers in the study for the purpose of strengthening reading skills in an ELA classroom within a 4-month period. The focus of this study was strictly focused on media analysis skills and reading comprehension development.

Since the study used intact classes, instead of a random selection of students from the entire 9th and 10th grade at a central Florida high school, this quasi-experiment can never be an ideal substitute for a true experiment; however, "quasi-experimental research [is] a good way of evaluating new initiatives and programs in education," (Muijs, 2005, p. 29).

Pre test scores do not reflect the same full classes. Although the students all took the same pre test, the classrooms were not the same intact classes as the post test; the classroom environment and climate was different in the 2005-2006 school year. Furthermore, the classes in the treatment group were selected because the teachers of these classes volunteered to be part of the study. From these classes, the students who participated in the study had to provide their consent and attain parental consent as well.

Definition of Terms

The following key terms are pertinent and were used for the scope of this study:

Collaboration: teachers working together jointly to create lessons, build professional relationships, and learn from one another

Engagement: the act of students being highly motivated with high levels of interest in the classroom activity or lesson. Students who are more engaged in classroom activities have demonstrated higher achievement (Frederick, 1977; Brophy & Good, 1986; Bulgren & Carta, 1993).

English Language Arts: commonly known as high school English class, this subject area includes six strands in the state of Florida: reading process, literary analysis, writing process, writing applications, communication, and information and media literacy (Florida Department of Education, 2007)

Medium - a channel, mode, or system of communication, information, or entertainment that is used to deliver a message

Media – the plural of medium

Media literacy - the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and communicate messages in a wide variety of forms (Aufderheide & Firestone, 1993)

Professional Learning Community – a group of teachers working and learning together in collegial teams. These teams work together to formally improve their practice of teaching and student learning (DuFour, R., Eaker, DuFour, R.B., 2005)

Organization of Dissertation

Chapter Two provides a review of the relevant research applicable to the investigation in this study. It also provides a historical overview of national and state-level standardized testing. The field of literacy is presented noting changes and shifts in the field over time to the status of the field today, fractured into multiple other literacies. Chapter Two concludes with an overview of the demands and dynamics of the ELA classroom and why media literacy education is so timely.

Chapter Three includes an in-depth discussion of the methodology used in this study, including information on the sample, the FCAT as instrumentation, a summary of the experimental media literacy lessons, and the procedures for data analysis. Chapter Four comprises the analysis of data. Chapter Five provides a summary of the study, conclusions and assertions drawn from the study and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

January 2007: An auditorium full of English Language Arts department chairmen and chairwomen sits to review the newly approved state benchmark revisions. The room hums with quiet whispers as the facilitator at the front lectrun asks, "So, what do you need from our district-level resources?" Hands go up all around the auditorium. Just then, a member of the audience stands, points to the back page and newest addition to the benchmarks and asks, "Media literacy? We need someone to explain what it is and *how* are we supposed to 'do' that?"

How did the field of ELA get to the stage where teachers do not even know what it is to use media as strategic tools and genuine strategies to improve reading skills and why is this important enough to include in the newly adopted state standards?

Concerns in Reading

With such focus and demand on so many initiatives in education today, many times it is hard to see what specific progress is being made in the classroom in certain subject areas. Reports publicized almost daily contradict each other or are written with a certain slant to pacify the political issues of the day (Ruberg, 2007; Viadero, 2007). They tell of what should be, what used to be, and what could be if only…; yet with all this discussion, the microscopic lenses on subjects such as reading and math expose a real crisis. There are glaring troubles in reading abilities and the literacy levels of high school students as demonstrated on standardized tests (Kladko, 2007). The Education Trust (2003) reported that achievement in reading at the secondary level is neither increasing nor decreasing. Despite the fact that achievement is not regressing, it is troublesome that secondary students are not progressing and developing literacy skills and reading ability at a higher rate. Only about 6% of American 17-year-olds can read and gain information from specialized texts such as the

newspaper or trade magazines (Haycock & Huang, 2001). When broken down by race, this statistic is startling: 8% of White American 17-year-olds, 2% of Hispanic American 17-year-olds, and 1% of African American 17-year-olds (Haycock & Huang, 2001, p.5). This issue needs attention; a literate public is the basis of a successful society.

After years of education reform, literacy still remains a major area of focus. Section 3 of the National Literacy Act of 1991 defines literacy as, "an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English, and compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job and in society, to achieve one's goals, and develop one's knowledge and potential" (National Institute of Literacy, 1991, ¶ 1). Being literate and using literacy skills is needed for everyday activities such as paying bills, surfing the Internet, applying for a library card, and writing out a holiday gift tag. Without the skills to accomplish these and other tasks, a rapid decline in civilization will occur (Carnes, 1996; Jospin, 1992). To curb this, literacy education provides a foundation for curricula in public schools not limited to the ELA or Reading classroom.

During the elementary and middle-grade years, students are taught decoding skills and phonemic awareness (Strickland & Feeley, 1998). Literacy instruction continues in the later middle grades and high school years; however, the focus is on the skills beyond the basic comprehension of sound and word recognition (Newkirk, 1998). This presents a problem; assessment during the high school years rarely, if ever, measures students' decoding skills. Instead, the assessment at this level includes concepts that require advanced comprehension, analysis, and higher-order thinking skills based on Webb's four levels of depth of knowledge (Florida Department of Education, 2005a). The 1998 Reading Report Card produced by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) showed that about 60% of U.S. adolescents can comprehend specific factual information, yet few have gone beyond the basics to advanced reading and writing. Fewer than 5% of the

adolescents assessed could expand or elaborate the meanings of the information they read (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1999).

Addressing the Concerns

National Accountability

Accountability has a central role in education. For years, state and local school districts were able to make many autonomous decisions without major input from the federal level. The authority and participation of the federal government in education evolved in the early 1980s with the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, which pointed out flaws and began questioning the output of the public schools (Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Legislators believed that funding was not being designated appropriately to best improve academic results. This focus on academics made the solution to the national education problem clear: state and local school districts needed to show progress by improving test scores and raising standards.

On January 8, 2002, President George W. Bush re-established the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, naming it the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). This law reshaped the role of the federal government in public education by tying government monies to measurable gains in student achievement at the state, district, and individual school level. The principle purpose of the NCLB legislation was to guarantee that all students in public schools would achieve high academic standards through effective instruction by highly qualified teachers in classrooms conducive to learning (No Child Left Behind Act, 2002). Specifically, NCLB was a reaction to low academic achievement in general and in reading in particular (Yell, Drasgow, & Lowrey, 2005).

This spotlight on measuring growth through assessment put pressure on the state, district, and local schools. NCLB required that states execute a set of high grade-level expectations, or

standards, and implement a statewide assessment system aligned to state standards in ELA and math (Yell et al, 2005).

State Accountability

In the 1970s, the Florida Commission on Education Reform and Accountability was created. This commission suggested measures for monitoring student learning and progress, with the goal of raising educational expectations (Martindale, Pearson, Curda, & Pilcher, 2005). The State Board of Education approved the commission's recommendations, and the Florida Legislature mandated statewide assessment of students in Grades 3, 5, 8, and 11. Specific focus went to critical thinking in of reading, writing, and mathematics. With these specific content areas as the foundation, the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) established the Sunshine State Standards (SSS), outlining what students should know per content area and per grade level. The SSS were delineated into benchmarks or specific tasks students would be able to perform or execute within each standard. The FCAT was designed and aligned to the SSS to measure students' knowledge of the standards (Florida Department of Education, 2005).

Florida's test-based system is considered one of the nation's most aggressive accountability measures (Greene, Winters, & Forster, 2004). The results of this test influence promotion to the next grade level, completion of diploma requirements, distribution of teacher merit bonuses, and allocation of large sums of money to schools that improve as a whole. Critics of the FCAT argue that some teachers teach to the test and that the test assesses only specific benchmarks, not necessarily the wide breadth of students' knowledge (Sleeter & Stillman, 2007.) The International Reading Association's (IRA) position on adolescent reading states, "Although state assessments are useful in monitoring the achievement of standards, they rarely indicate specific teaching-learning experiences that foster literacy development" (Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw, & Rycik, 1999, p. 6).

Multiple Literacies

Cultural Studies

Cultural studies, a relatively new field, examine cultural relationships mostly between society and power. Advocates of Cultural Studies have focused on specific areas within the discipline such as public pedagogy, critical pedagogy, and critical literacy (Friere, 1970, Giroux, 1985). Through the lens of Cultural Studies, scholars have critiqued many curricula taught in the public school setting (Giroux, 1994). These scholars refused to accept the traditional point of view that instruction of a set curriculum was basic delivery of unbiased and impartial skills and ideas. Instead, Cultural Studies scholars viewed the curricula through interdisciplinary studies; "textuality and representation refracted through the dynamics of gender, sexuality, subordinate youth, national identity, colonialism, race, ethnicity, and popular culture" (Giroux, 1994, p. 3). Because of this, students were viewed as active participants in the construction of meaning from a given curriculum. Within the context of Cultural Studies, texts were comprised of myriad modes: aural, visual, and printed cues. Giroux (1994) indicated that these texts were many times a small part of a larger attempt to analyze how individual and social identities activated, engaged, and transformed meaning to the learner.

Deconstruction of Text

Poststructuralist and literary critic Jacques Derrida developed a methodology of textual reading called deconstruction (Culler, 1982). He asserted that every text was "undecideable," meaning every text had *primary text* and also *subtext* to it. He reiterated that texts had multiple levels of meaning and that these levels of meaning interacted simultaneaously as the reader gained significance from the text (Agger, 1991).

Texts are social/cultural constructions built from a wide range of aspects that not only vary, but perhaps even contradict (Hobbs, 1996; Hobbs and Frost, 2003, Tyner, 2001). Deconstruction, a

critical practice which focuses on these contradictions and examines multiple meanings, brings to the forefront that readers construct these meanings and they are neither explicit nor impartial. Deconstruction does not point out contradictions in order to 'destroy' texts but to improve our reading of them (Moon, 1992)

Media Literacy

Scribner & Cole (1981) expressed that literacy is much more than simply knowing how to read and write. The definition of literacy has evolved, and new literacies have emerged as separate fields of study: aural literacy, computer literacy, cultural literacy, economic literacy, information literacy, intermediality, media literacy, multicultural literacy, multiliteracies, scientific literacy, symbolic literacy (semiotics), and visual literacy. Each field specifies an interpretation of being "literate" to the unique topic; the firm definitions of "read" and "write" start to lose rigidity and become more abstract (Dorr, 1994).

Media literacy is most commonly defined and accepted as the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and communicate messages in a wide variety of forms (Aufderheide & Firestone, 1993). It focuses on the skills of analyzing, evaluating, and creating mediated messages that use language, moving images, music, sound effects, and other techniques (Masterman, 1985; Messaris, 1994). Through media education, one can become media literate. Media education "expands literacy to include reading and writing through the use of new and emerging communications tools. It is learning that demands the critical, independent and creative use of information" (Tyner, 2003, p. 196). Media education and media literacy provide teachers an opportunity to help "transform the culture of the classroom and the school into a place where students' voices are valued and respected, where classroom learning is linked to students' lived experience, and where students can develop the

confidence to express themselves in a wide variety of forms using language, imagery, and multimedia technology" (Hobbs, 2004, p. 44).

As the conceptualization of literacy transforms, it has blended into it the nuances and trends of society: music, art, technology, and fashion, for example. Knowledge today is gained through symbolic representations of the world; these symbolic forms add another layer to creating meaning, another layer to be "read." This view, acknowledged by theorists, recognizes visual and oral communication as central to literacy as the written text (Boyer, 1995; Eisner, 2002; Hobbs, 2005). Hobbs (1998) described media literacy as a logical progression of traditional literacy. Media education teaches students to "read" visual and audio messages as well as text-based ones. It helps students recognize the basic "language" used in various media forms, as well as empowering students to tap into their analytical and evaluative skills by judging the credibility, reliability and accuracy of information presented (Hobbs, 2001; Megee, 1997). Students develop an appreciation for persuasive techniques used by the media; with an understanding of these concepts, students then are able to produce their own messages and communicate through various forms of media (Hobbs, 1998; Tyner, 1998).

The impact of media literacy can be both powerful and exciting. Students respond quickly and easily to music, pictures, film clips, and advertisements (Center for Media Literacy, 2002). They are entranced by media, and this level of intense engagement is something hard to duplicate in the classroom with test prep material and selections from the canon (Hobbs, 2001). As state standards continue to develop and evolve through multiple revisions, media literacy is accepted as a viable skill students need. Kubey and Baker (2000) and Baker (2004) noted that nearly all states refer to aspects of media literacy or media education within their standards and benchmarks; however, the term "media literacy" may not be explicitly used.

On December 12, 2006, the FLDOE approved the new ELA SSS for the 2007-2008 school year. Modifications were made to the benchmarks, and new categories were added. With the addition of media literacy and information benchmark, teachers in the state of Florida will be expected to include media analysis and critical thinking using various media into their lesson plans (Florida Department of Education, 2007). (See Appendix B for a complete listing of the new Media Literacy benchmarks.)

Theoretical Framework

Media literacy education is an approach that emphasizes constructivist, interdisciplinary, collaborative, and inquiry-based processes of learning (Alvermann et al., 1999; Bazalgette, 1993; Brunner & Tally, 1999; Considine & Haley, 1999; Hobbs, 1996; Hobbs, 2005; Masterman, 1985; Watts Pailliotet & Mosenthal, 2000). Media literacy education involves cognition processes used in critical thinking related to language, literature, and other disciplines in the liberal arts, such as perception, reflection, reasoning, and evaluation (Brown, 1998). Thoman and Jolls (2004) explained that when students engage critically with a medium, they are using higher-order thinking skills to make connections among ideas, mediums, and their developing questions. Additionally, students create meaning from their background experience. Media are social in makeup; they consist of various modes of communication, sending various messages. Media are also culturally constructed. Mediated messages are intended for specific audiences, age groups, and interest groups (Center for Media Literacy, 2002).

Cognitive learning theories differ from other learning theories in the shift from investigating environmental factors to looking instead at human factors. The root of Vygotsky's (1978) educational theory is the understanding of human cognition and learning as social and cultural rather than individual phenomena (Kozulin, Gindis, Ageyev, & Miller, 2003). Vygotsky's (1978)

sociocognitive theory promoted demonstration, collaboration, and other forms of social interaction. His approach emphasizes the importance of sociocultural forces that influence a child's development and learning. Parents, teachers, classmates, and community play pivotal roles in the various types of interaction occurring between children and their environments. (Kozulin et al., 2003). Vygotsky's (1978) idea that a sense of the world is shaped by symbolic tools acquired in the course of education and learning fits the purpose of media literacy education. Kozulin et al. (2003) explained that Vygotsky (1978) saw the development of intellect in terms of tools, like language, which is constructed by experience and exposure. Media literacy education helps students construct an understanding of the world around them and further helps them to understand the role they play as citizens, pupils, daughters, sons, and consumers (Tyner, 1998).

Bruner's contribution to cognitive learning theory was his position on learning in context through meaningful activity. His conception of discovery learning supports media literacy education because students are asked to construct their own meaning (Driscoll, 2000). According to Bruner (1964), discovery learning leads to intellectual developments through problem solving. Through this kind of learning, students also find inherent motivation. "Exposing children to discovery learning can therefore promote a sense of self-reward in which students become motivated to learn because of the intrinsic pleasure of discovery" (Driscoll, 2000, p. 239).

Why Media Literacy Now?

Covington (2004) used this metaphor to describe the state of media today: "Just as a fish does not notice the water in which it survives, a person living in a culture accepts certain assumptions without question" (p. 122). The media's ubiquitous presence is a fixture in the daily lives of students; media form messages for society through their influence on leisure time, perception, and judgment about society (Brown, 1998; Covington, 2004). Tyner (1998) declared that

"an informed public has always been seen as the cornerstone of democratic societies" (p. 229). Using media as a teaching tool to enhance critical thinking skills can perpetuate an educated, literate, and informed future (Hobbs, 2001; Alvermann & Hagood, 2000).

Living in the Information Age requires much more than just being informed; since so much information exists, it is important to understand, manipulate, decipher, and comprehend this information (Flood, Lapp & Heath, 1998). Technology has increased the rate in which we receive information; the rate of which information is simply available is almost instantaneous. Tyner (2003) examined the reports from the National Center of Educational Statistics (NCES) (2001) and found that access to the Internet in public schools climbed dramatically from 35% in 1994 to 98% in 2000 (p. 2). In 2007, the NCES reported that 100% of public schools in the nation have online access. It is not enough to simply argue that students do or do not use media; instead, the more pressing issue is the level of engagement with the media: whether students are able to use media and technology with higher-level thinking skills (Hobbs, 2004). Scanlon and Buckingham (2003) pointed out that being wired up does not automatically equal effective learning. The intricacies of instruction and questioning strategies are necessary for effective learning (Hobbs & Frost, 2003; Hobbs, 2001). Since many of the same questions are asked when deciphering and deconstructing media as they are when reading, using higher-level questions with media messages provides effective teaching and learning about mediated and print messages (Bloom, 1956; Glaser, 1985).

Media are inherently social; they attract the senses and appeal to emotions. Interestingly though, in some situations, this social interaction with certain media creates passive viewers and consumers of media (Tyner, 1998). For example, it is very easy to drive by a billboard advertisement without even knowing what the message was, and it is very relaxing to watch television and "let" the stories on television be told to the viewer. When mediated messages simply happen to the audience, there is potential for being influenced certain ways (Tyner, 1998). To help

students become active and free participants in this process of media consumption, essential skills need to be taught so communication is no longer a one-way flow of information (Brown, 1998). Students have tremendous exposure to media, yet many of the schools they attend have antiquated technology and furthermore, outmoded instruction with limited technology in the classroom (Buckingham, 2003). Pop culture helps inform students' engagement with any teaching encounter. By bringing the media culture into the learning environment, students are more engaged, attentive and interested, thus becoming more successful (Alvermann, Hagood, & Moon, 1999). By not using the powerful resources available in the media-rich world, students may be inefficiently prepared for life (Thoman & Jolls, 2004).

National and international organizations promote the importance of media literacy. The College Board, developer of the Advanced Placement programs in the nation, initiated media literacy components into its curriculum (Hobbs, 2004). The International Reading Association (IRA) endorsed media literacy by providing a wealth of classroom lesson plan ideas with digital resources in the Web Resources section of their website. On this website, a page called Exploring Literacy in Cyberspace outlines at the natural progression of literacy from the printed word to the digital space (International Reading Association, 2006). The National Communication Association (NCA) published a document in 1998 entitled K-12 Speaking, Listening, and Media Literacy Standards and Competency Statements, which supported and partnered with the K-12 curriculum to help produce competent communicators. Effective communication skills such as speaking, listening, and media literacy, were outlined in this set of competencies (National Communication Association, 1998). Furthermore, the leading national professional organization in the field of teaching ELA, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), published a position statement on media literacy. It states in the Resolution on Composing with Nonprint Media:

> We affirm, in our theory and practice of teaching English language arts, that reading and writing are ultimately different but inherently related aspects of the same process of meaning making. Why, then, would we treat the reading and writing of new media texts in any different manner? (National Council of Teachers of English, 2003, ¶ 1)

Varying texts, technologies, and even instructors leads to a strong curriculum in the ELA classroom (Hobbs & Frost, 2003; Hobbs, 2001).

Media Ecology

Media ecology is the study of media as dynamic changing environments (Postman, 1979). Scholars in this emerging field focus on discovering how media environments influence and shape our thoughts, attitudes, values, and behavior (Postman, 1979; Ong, 1982). They focus on the study of complex systems of communication as environments and how these environments interact with human behavior (Strate, 1999).

Neil Postman's contributed to the field of Media Ecology by emphasizing what humans may not recognize within this communications environment. As in basic scientific ecology, the focus of study is on the dynamics of change within environments, how these environments relate, and how organisms relate back to the environment. Because media environments are subtle and the structure of these environments is informal, humans believe the various media (such as books, television, and internet) are only machines. According to Postman (1970), these simple machines are really information environments that shape human behavior.

In his publication Understanding Media: Extensions of Man, Marshall McLuhan (1964) explained that pairing mediums together could enhance the message instead of canceling out the effect of each medium. Strategic pairing creates a better use of media (McLuhan & Staines, 2004). There is a synergy that comes from this pairing; today, that is evident in such combinations as an

iPod and the Internet. Basic college lectures are enhanced by podcasts and online reviews of the lecture.

The Collaborative Process

The concept of teachers making changes by working together dates back to Dewey (1938) and his idea that teachers possess theoretical and practical knowledge to make systemic and significant improvement in education. Scholars today further emphasize by professing the importance of professional development, specifically focused on collaborative teacher environments (Kliebard, 1995; Darling-Hammond, 2001). Although teaching seems to be a social, interactive profession, it is all too common for teachers to work in isolation from their colleagues, in turn making teachers less likely to be lifetime learners (Leonard & Leonard, 1999).

Collaboration is a means to facilitate teachers' growth. There is strength in collaboration and collaborative environment (Gallucci, 2003). A study was conducted with elementary teachers who worked together and developed trust in cooperative situations with work-oriented goals in the best interest of the students (Wheelan & Kesselring, 2005). The results of this study showed student learning and performance was affected positively.

A professional learning community (PLC) is a group of teachers working and learning in collegial teams to formally improve their practice of teaching and student learning (DuFour, R., Eaker, DuFour, R.B., 2005). One key to this collaboration is a supportive environment in which to work together. This environment is created by supportive conditions such as time, administrative support, and financial backing (Hord, 1994). Time spent together is essential in the success of a professional learning community.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards recognizes the importance of teachers working together. One of its five core propositions states that teachers are members of learning communities (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2007).

This vision of accomplished teaching includes a focus on collaborating with other to improve student learning, building partnerships with community groups, and working with other professionals on curriculum development (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2007).

The English Language Arts Classroom

The first extensive empirical study measuring the acquisition of media literacy skills in the United States concluded that incorporating media message analysis into a secondary ELA curriculum can enhance the development of literacy skills, such as reading, viewing, and listening comprehension, message (text) interpretation, and writing skills (Hobbs & Frost, 2003). This study measured the academic achievement of 11th-grade students in Connecticut who received year-long media literacy instruction as part of their ELA course. They found that students in an ELA classroom infused with media literacy concepts outperformed students who did not receive this exposure and instruction.

Flood, Heath, and Lapp (1997) emphasized that society now demands the ability to engage in the meaning-making process from increasingly complex and layered combinations of messages that use video, audio, and print representations. They also pointed out that visual and communicative arts develop students' skills of self-presentation, collaborative learning, and the ability to multi-task, in addition to the motivational benefits when students are engaged in activities that incorporate the media texts.

One hurdle yet to be jumped in bringing media literacy education to the classroom is overcoming the hesitation of teachers to try something new (Brunner & Tally, 1999). One reason educators are reluctant to try media literacy strategies in the classroom is that teaching with popular cultural texts is rarely a safe and comfortable situation. Alvermann, Moon and Hagood (1999) reported that teachers were taking a risk by giving up authority in the classroom when students studied popular culture through various media. Conversely, teaching media literacy skills within the ELA classroom provides the opportunity to have an integrated, multi-formatted curriculum, meeting many students at their various reading levels. Scholars argue that teaching with a media literacy focus is not an addition to the curriculum; instead it is a way to enhance what is already being taught (Tyner, 1998). Bazalgette (2003) noted the importance in moving far from the idea that media literacy is detached from literacy as a separate entity. ELA encompass various forms of media naturally. English teachers not only analyze and compare films based on literature but also include the formal study of advertising and nonfiction text such as the news (Hobbs, 2004). With the wealth of resources available in schools today, integrating media literacy skills can be done per subject area (Baker, 2004). Since the ELA classroom balances reading, writing, speaking, viewing, and listening skills daily, media makes the delivery of instruction and that instruction itself more efficient, effective, and exciting. Schiebe (2004) acknowledged that by taking a curriculum-driven approach to media literacy integration, it is crucial to explicitly lay out these connections between media literacy and state or district learning standards. Florida maintains its commitment to reaching struggling readers and the revision of the benchmarks to include media literacy education demonstrates this (Florida Department of Education, 2007)

The higher-level reading skills tested on the FCAT include inference, cause/effect, and compare/contrast. These are the same skills needed to be active consumers of media and aware citizens. Students who struggle to read deserve instruction that is developmentally, culturally, and

linguistically responsive to their needs (Alvermann et al., 1999). Using media texts to introduce these skills may improve visualization and provide a context for the student to help with essential reading skills (Hobbs, 2001). Particularly for struggling or reluctant readers, opportunities to analyze media texts may help ascertain a better understanding of key concepts included in state benchmarks such as genre, point of view, and elements of plot (Hobbs, 2001). Martin (2003) professed, "[the] introduction of media literacy in the secondary ELA curriculum expands and deepens students' opportunity to formulate and support their analyses and critiques of their own transactions with texts" (p. 290). Incorporating a broad range of media into instruction can enhance and strengthen what students inherently bring to the classroom, making for a meaningful, authentic, and purposeful educational experience.

Summary

There is an evident paradigm shift in what it means to be literate. Education leaders at the state and national level are slowly trying to match the accountability measures to this shift. Media literacy education is a reality in the ELA classroom, especially in Florida today. Teachers work best in collaborative environments where they have the ability to grow and learn from each other, instilling a sense of professionalism and pride in their work. Media literacy education is a powerful component to the ELA and to bettering the reading skills of students (Hobbs, 2001; Shoals, 1998).

The study that follows shows that integrating media into the ELA classroom is powerful. Together, four teachers developed the lessons to fit the immediate needs of their students within the confines of the school's technology. These lessons created a meaningful, authentic experience for students. The students in the experiment demonstrated higher reading scores than the students in the control group on the 2007 Reading FCAT.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study evaluated the differences of pre and post test scores on the Reading FCAT of 9th and 10th graders who studied media with the repetition and analysis of the Media Literacy Guiding 7 questions, which will from this point be referred to as the *Guiding 7,* and a control group of other 9th and 10th graders who did not study media nor use the *Guiding 7*. In addition, differences in pre and post test scores were evaluated between students who are at the same reading level designated by the state of Florida. This study was a quasi-experimental non-equivalent pre test post test control group design. The study follows the following design as seen in Table 1.

Table 1 Research Design

Group	Pre test	Treatment	Post test
A (Experiment)	√	→ √ →	√
B (Control)	√	——————→	√

Students went through a pre test and post test sequence. For the 9th graders in the study, the pre test data were from the scores on the 2006 8th grade FCAT reading test. For the 10th graders in the study, the pre test data were from the scores on the 2006 9th grade FCAT reading test. The post test data were collected from the 9th grade and 10th grade FCAT Reading test for the 9th and 10th grade students respectively. In between the tests, the treatment of four specific lessons using various media and repetition of the Guiding "7" questions based on media literacy analysis skills occurred from November 2006 through February 2007.

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of studying and analyzing various media through the repetition of questions and activities in 9th and 10th grade ELA classrooms on the FCAT Reading scores of the 9th and 10th grade students respectively. The strategic use of various media cultivated students' abilities to analyze various texts as well as validate the importance of using media in instruction. Teachers in the study worked collaboratively to create lessons that used different mediums. For this study, television advertisements, Internet websites, and magazine photographs were used. These lessons were presented to students during the four months leading to the administration of the FCAT. Teachers then used the same questions with different selections within the standard ELA curriculum to reiterate the thinking and analysis process. Using the selections of media as text, students developed analytical proficiency to demonstrate better print literacy skills tested on the FCAT. The purpose of this study was to address the following research questions:

1. Is there a significant difference in FCAT reading scores between 9th grade students taught with a Media Literacy focus in the ELA classroom and those taught without one?

2. Is there a significant difference in FCAT reading scores between 10th grade students taught with a Media Literacy focus in the ELA classroom and those taught without one?

3. Is there a significant difference in FCAT reading scores between students at specific reading levels (Level 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) taught with a Media Literacy focus in the ELA classroom and those taught without one?

Population and Sample

Setting and Participating School

Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) is the eleventh largest school district in the nation, the fourth largest in Florida. There are 166 elementary, middle, high schools and four exceptional education schools. The Orange County school system is the second largest employer in central Florida with over 25,000 employees. The school district serves over 177,000 students in pre kindergarten through 12th grade. Its student membership comprises 35% White Non-Hispanic, 30% Hispanic, 28% Black Non-Hispanic, 4% Asian, and 3% American Indian or Multicultural (Orange County Public Schools, 2007).

The study was conducted on the campus of one central Florida high school, in Orlando. This large, urban high school serves students in grades 9-12, and the student enrollment is 2499. The student membership comprises 47% Black Non-Hispanic, 36% White Non-Hispanic, 12% Hispanic, 3% Asian, and 2% American Indian or Multicultural (Orange County Public Schools, 2007). About 33% of the student population at this central Florida high school qualifies for free and reduced lunch.

Sample

The school was selected because of its large, diverse population in reading ability as well as racial breakdown. Two hundred 9th grade students and two hundred 10th grade students from this central Florida high school were selected for this research study. They were part of a whole class selection instead of randomly selecting students in various classes. The whole class experimental group was compared with other whole classes who were not exposed to four specific lessons using a mediated message and repetition of the *Guiding 7* based on media literacy analysis skills within the ELA curriculum. The experiment group consisted of students in the classrooms of two teachers per

grade level (Teachers 9A & 9B; 10A & 10B); the control group consisted of students in the classrooms of two different teachers per grade level (Teachers 9C & 9D; 10C & 10D). The teachers were selected based on their teaching assignment in 9th and 10th grade and their willingness to participate in the study. The teachers were randomly assigned to either the experiment or control group. Furthermore, the teachers selected to participate were all aware and sensitive to incorporating media into their curricula. They were all open to change and trying new strategies in their classrooms.

Within these whole class groups, students were further selected by the reading level assigned to them by the state based on their 8th or 9th grade FCAT reading test. There were five subgroups, Levels 1-5 respectively.

Table 2 Breakdown of Population

9th Grade	TREATMENT Teacher 1 Teacher 2	Total students 50 students 50 students
	CONTROL Teacher 5 Teacher 6	Total students 50 students 50 students
10th Grade	TREATMENT Teacher 2 Teacher 4	Total students 50 students 50 students
	CONTROL Teacher 7 Teacher 8	Total students 50 students 50 students
		Total Number of students in experiment = 200 Total Number of students in control = 200 Total number of students in population = 400

Instrumentation

The FCAT results are delineated into three score categories: a scaled score, a percentage sub scores, and an achievement level score. The scaled score, a number between 100 and 500, is scaled so that the average score in the state is about 300 (Johnson & Johnson, 2000). The scaled score is

then converted into an achievement level score from 1 to 5. In 1999, the scaled score range for a Level 4 reading score was 340-374, a scaled score of 375 or higher earned a Level 5, and a scaled score of 339 earned a Level 3.

The descriptions of the achievement levels are as follows: Level 5 indicates success was achieved with the most challenging content of the Sunshine State Standards, Level 4 indicates success was achieved with the state standards, Level 3 indicates partial success was achieved but performance inconsistent, Level 2 indicates only limited success was achieved with state standards, and Level 1 indicates little success was achieved with the state standards (Johnson & Johnson, 2000). Achievement Level 5 is very difficult to achieve. In fact in 1999, as few students as 5 percent in reading in the state of Florida earned a Level 5 (Johnson & Johnson, 2000).

The FCAT is the high-stakes instrument chosen to assess the goals set out by the state, however, the test does not allow for the standard error (normal variation around any score), which makes the FCAT the absolute standard for educational accountability in Florida (Smith, 2004).

The administration of the FCAT at the school was organized. All 9th grade students in the school tested together, broken up in groups of 20 based on a master alphabetized list. All 10th grade students tested in the same situation; a master list of 10th graders was alphabetized, then students were assigned to classrooms in groups of 20. Students who were labeled Exceptional, or special education, were separated from the grade-level population and tested in another environment without time limitations.

Instrument Reliability and Validity

The Florida Commission on Education Reform and Accountability began creating the FCAT in 1995. The Commission recommended procedures for assessing student learning in Florida that would help them compete for jobs in the global marketplace. The State Board of Education

adopted the recommendations, called the Comprehensive Assessment Design, in June 1995. The Design specified the development of new statewide assessments. As a result, the Florida curriculum frameworks, also called the Sunshine State Standards, were developed and adopted by the State Board of Education. The frameworks and standards established guidelines for a statewide system that incorporated assessment, accountability, and in-service training components.

In a civic report from the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, Greene (2001) reported that the FCAT test scores were correlated with the Stanford 9 test scores, a well-known, well-respected national standardized test, which showed the reliability of the FCAT. Further, he reported the Florida A+ grading and testing system was a valid measure.

Data Collection

Treatment Summary

The four teachers and the researcher met to discuss ideas, concepts, preconceived notions, realities, goals and objectives of the study in advance. The lessons were created based on a few things. First, the teachers used the Basic Principles for Curriculum Integration published by Project Look Sharp at Ithaca College to guide the lesson development. These four basic principles: identify erroneous beliefs about a topic fostered by media content; develop an awareness of issues of credibility and bias in the media; compare the ways different media present information about a topic; and use media as an assessment tool (Schiebe & Rogow, 2003). Second, the lessons were built around the available resources at the school, such as the computer lab, multimedia materials available, etc.

The teachers in the treatment group created the lessons in a building block manner to include easier comprehending media first, then working up to more challenging media next. The sequence of media was: television commercials, to non-print magazine pictures, to interactive

Internet. To ensure the treatment teachers stayed focused, they met every two to three weeks to debrief about previous lessons and to plan for the next lesson. This was also a time to reflect on lessons learned and what changes the teachers noticed in their students and in their instruction. The treatment teachers communicated further and more frequently through email to share lesson procedure tips and suggestions as they completed the lessons.

For the four months that led up to the administration of the 2007 FCAT Reading test (November 2006, December 2006, January 2007, February 2007), four lessons were taught to the experiment group above and beyond the standard curriculum. The control group received only the standard curriculum without these five lessons. The first lesson was an introductory lesson where students learned the *Guiding 7* and practiced by analyzing an advertisement by the Truth Campaign (See Appendix D).

The next three lessons (one per month for the duration of the study) varied in medium and focused on different critical-thinking skills: in Lesson Two, students investigated television commercials and focused on critical thinking skills (See Appendix E); in Lesson Three, students examined magazine images (both advertisements and non-advertisements) and focused on what stereotypes were depicted without words (See Appendix F); and finally, in Lesson Four, students compared five Internet news websites and focused on how the same information is presented in different ways (See Appendix G).

These four lessons were developed collaboratively in a session with the researcher and two of the four teachers who taught the lessons. They also met with the researcher after the collaborative session to review the lessons and make further suggestions. The teachers represented both grade levels in the study, and during the meeting their input and perspective guided the development of the treatment lessons. The media used in the lessons were specifically selected based on the realities of the students they teach and the resources available at the central Florida

high school. Discussion broke out initially about what technology and media should be used in the lessons. The teachers expressed concern in strictly using newer technologies such as Internet videos, blogs and podcasts, because not all students used, or had access to, these technologies when off campus, therefore, the study only included media that was attainable for every student through school or home resources. The teachers decided to use television advertisements, Internet websites, and magazine photographs because they felt these would be media all students had had experience. The teachers articulated that the television advertisements, Internet websites, and magazine photographs seamlessly fit into their instruction and students will already have the background knowledge of the media itself, rather than trying to teach a new technology, while asking the students to analyze something unfamiliar.

During the months of the study, the teachers decided to teach in units or cycles in which all four teachers began with the treatment lesson, followed by curricula that varied based on teacher preference, and the standard curriculum depending on grade level; they wanted to keep some kind of similar genre throughout the month that logically blended with the treatment lessons. They decided to teach the treatment lesson, which was the same for all four teachers, then phase into nonfiction, followed by fiction, and then connect back to media. After the connection of fiction to some kind of media, the teachers then taught the next media literacy education treatment lesson. They did not teach the experiment on the exact same day, but they used the same questions and procedures as identified in the bi-monthly collaborative meetings. In between each of these lessons, the teachers in the treatment group using the *Guiding 7* when discussing nonfiction and fiction pieces in their classrooms. They had large posters in their classrooms with each question posted for reference with the mediated messages as well as the texts they read as part of the standard curriculum.

Development of the *Guiding 7* Questions

During the first collaborative session, the teachers and researcher reviewed the Five Key Questions of Media Literacy from the Center of Media Literacy's MediaLit Kit (2002). The teachers wanted to add the basic overview question of "What is the message being sent?" which is not included in the *Five Key Questions.* The teachers also felt there was no return to that concept after analyzing with the original *Five Key Questions,* to see whether the students' view of the message had changed. They wondered how they would know whether the students had seen the message any differently; therefore, they added the same question to the end with an optional use of the word "really," with the goal of showing a change of interpretation after working through the *Five Key* Questions. Termed the *Guiding 7*, the list in Table 3 is based on the Center of Media Literacy's MediaLit Kit (2002) and adapted by the teachers in the study.

Table 3 The Guiding 7 Questions

Number	Question
1	What is the message being sent?
2	Who created this message? (authorship)
3	What techniques are used to attract my attention? (format)
4	How might different people understand this message differently from me? (audience)
5	What lifestyles, values, and points of view are represented in or omitted from this message? (content)
6	Why was this message sent? (purpose)
7	Now, what is the message *really* being sent?

The teachers agreed to meet with the researcher every two weeks during the period of the study to debrief, continue collaboration, and share ideas and experiences. This was a chance to monitor the treatment teachers and their fidelity to the plan. Teachers in the control group followed

the state and county curriculum; they were observed every two weeks to ensure they were following that curriculum.

Data Analysis

The statistics software called Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 11 was used for the analysis of data. The major analysis for this study was an independent t-test using the 8th grade FCAT Reading Score and the 9th grade FCAT Reading Score for the 9th grade students and the 9th grade FCAT Reading Score and the 10th grade FCAT Reading Score for the 10th grade students. The t-test is a parametric test used to determine whether a difference between the samples is significant. It was assumed that if the significance level of .05 or less was obtained, then the results were not by chance but due to some difference in the comparison groups.

Analysis included a subgroup comparison based on FCAT reading levels to see whether there are larger differences at specific reading levels across the grade levels. An ANOVA was used for the subgroup comparison.

Summary

This chapter provided relevant information on the methods used to develop the questions and teach the treatment lessons for the duration of the study. Background information was provided on the district and school where the study was conducted.

Chapter 4 provides the results of the statistical tests which address the three research questions.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of studying and analyzing various media through the repetition of questions and activities in 9th and 10th grade ELA classrooms on the FCAT Reading scores of the 9th and 10th graders respectively. The goal of the population was 400 students. For various reasons, 337 students returned their consent forms. This broke down to 169 students in the control group and 168 students in the treatment group.

Research Question 1

In Table 4, the descriptive statistics are presented. An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the 9th grade 2007 FCAT Reading scores for the two comparison groups. Using Levene's test for equality of variances, the variances for the two groups were not the same. Therefore, equal variances were not assumed. As presented in Table 5, the results of this test indicate there was a significant difference in scores for the control group (M=1843, SD=191) and the treatment group [M=1873, SD=348; t(135)=-3.15, p=.002]. The magnitude of the differences in the means was very small (eta squared =.0497).

Table 4 Descriptives for Research Question 1

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Control	101	1843.00	191.207	19.026
Treatment	90	1973.03	348.127	36.696

Table 5 Independent Samples T-test Results

		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
RDGSS 07	Equal variances assumed	19.947	.000	-3.245	189	.001	-130.03	40.070	-209.075	-50.992
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.146	134.622	.002	-130.03	41.335	-211.783	-48.284

Research Question 2

In Table 6, the descriptive statistics are presented. An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the 10th grade 2007 FCAT Reading scores for the two comparison groups. Using Levene's test for equality of variances, the variances for the two groups were not the same. Therefore, equal variances were not assumed. As presented in Table 7, the results of this test indicate there was a significant difference in scores for the control group (M=1863, SD=217) and the treatment group [M=2034, SD=390; t(123)=-3.33, p=.001. The magnitude of the differences in the means was very small (eta squared =.0721).

Table 6 Descriptives for Research Question 2

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Control	68	1863.25	216.672	26.275
treatment	78	2034.69	389.586	44.112

Table 7 Independent Samples T-test Results

		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.	95% Confidence Interval of the Diff.	
									Lower	Upper
RDGSS07	Equal variances assumed	23.293	.000	-3.220	144	.002	-171.44	53.247	-276.690	-66.195
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.339	123.470	.001	-171.44	51.344	-273.072	-69.813

Research Question 3

The purpose of this statistical analysis was to investigate the change in FCAT Reading scores of the treatment group over time. The scores were grouped in 5 different reading levels, assigned by the state. It was hypothesized that the increase over time for Levels 1 (lowest) and 5 (highest) would show the largest growth and exceed the reading growth of the Level 2, 3, and 4 students.

To determine which reading levels outperformed other reading levels, the focus of this analysis was placed on the interaction between reading level group and time. A review of this result reveals that there is no statistically significant interaction between reading level group and time, $F(4, 158)=1.121$, $p>.001$ (see Table 8).

Table 8 Tests of Within-Subjects Contrasts

Source	TIME	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
TIME	Linear	106467.497	1	106467.497	5.517	.020
TIME * LEVEL06	Linear	86550.568	4	21637.642	1.121	.349
Error(TIME)	Linear	3049366.947	158	19299.791		

There are a relatively equal number of students in each of the reading level groups, as shown in table 9.

Table 9 Between-Subjects Factors

		N
Level 06	1	40
	2	28
	3	39
	4	38
	5	18

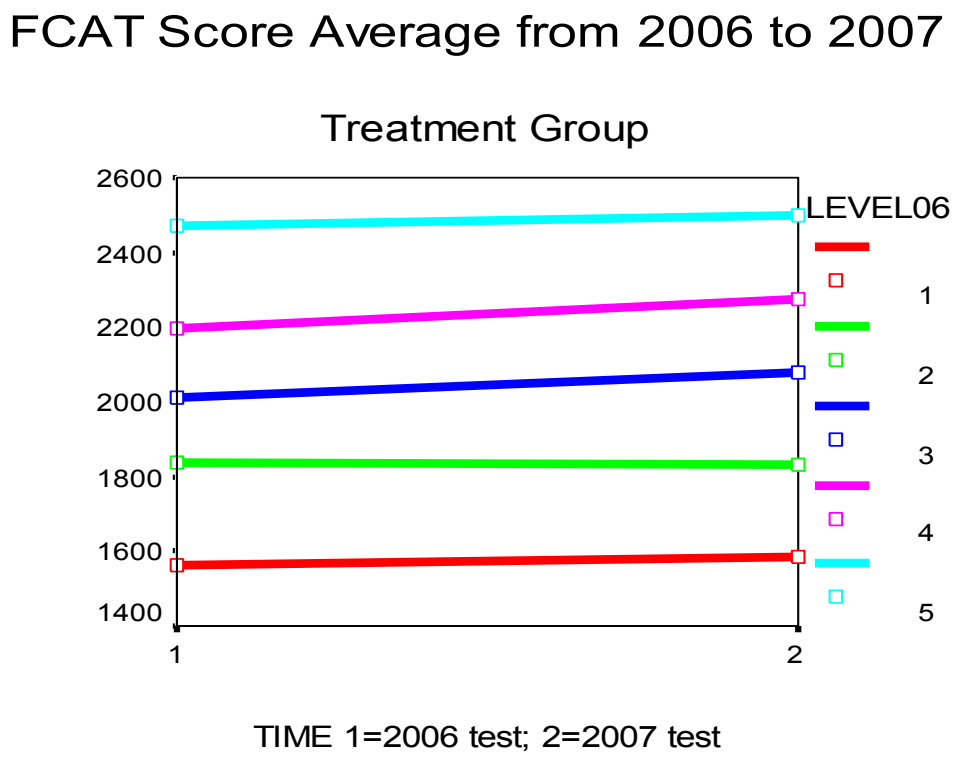
To ensure that the change was in the predicted direction, it is important to inspect the means in Table 10.

Table 10 Descriptives for Research Question 3

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
DSS06	163	1965.32	313.536
DSS07	163	2007.18	371.131
LEVEL06	163	2.79	1.340
Valid N (listwise)	163		

Review of the means affirms that there is a change in FCAT reading score over time; however, when investigating where the change was for each reading level, there was no significant interaction at any level, contrary to the prediction. The post test mean for all 5 groups was much higher than the pre test, however, no individual reading level stands out. The plotted means demonstrated visually what is seen numerically above.

Table 11: Plotted Means of Research Question 3



Conclusion

In conclusion, this project found that the deliberate teaching of media literacy skills within the ELA classroom does contribute to the improvement of FCAT reading scores. This study does not, however, identify an area at which this media literacy plan works best. The overall findings were positive even though the third research question was not statistically significant.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This study documented the impact media literacy education strategies used in the 9th and 10th grade English classrooms had on the 2007 FCAT Reading Scores. The quantitative design of this study explored the experiences of 9th and 10th grade students, their comprehension of mediated messages, and their ability to transfer those thought processes to a state standardized test. The literature review contextualized the study in relation to previous research in the areas of reading, state and national accountability, literacy, media ecology, teacher collaboration, and the ELA classroom. Eight teachers and 337 students participated; four of the eight teachers participated in the development of the lessons, questioning strategies, and delivery of the lessons.

In general, the findings of this study indicate that students who are able to interpret and comprehend mediated messages are able to transfer these interpretation and comprehension skills to a state standardized reading test.

Discussion

Research Question 1

Based on the 9th grade scores presented, using a media literacy plan within the English language arts classroom may significantly increase FCAT reading scores. The media literacy curriculum used in this study supported the overall language arts curriculum to enhance instruction, which was evident by the FCAT reading scores of the treatment group. While the control group showed improvement as well, there was a significant increase in the treatment group. This media literacy plan may be best served within the existing language arts curriculum.

Research Question 2

Based on the 10th grade scores presented, using a media literacy plan within the English language arts classroom may significantly increase FCAT reading scores. The media literacy curriculum used in this study supported the overall language arts curriculum to enhance instruction, which was evident by the FCAT reading scores of the treatment group. While the control group showed improvement as well, there was a significant increase in the treatment group. This media literacy plan may be best served within the existing language arts curriculum.

Research Question 3

As originally hypothesized, it was expected that the highest and lowest-level reader in the treatment group (Level 5 and 1 respectively) would show a significant difference in response to the media literacy plan within the ELA curriculum. Although an increase was evident in both the 9th and 10th grade students' scores, there was no statistically significant difference at any of the reading levels.

Conclusions

Strong PLCs produce effective teachers who contribute successfully to their students' achievement scores. The teachers in the treatment group quickly became a cohesive group, willing to sacrifice time and energy to incorporate media into their classrooms. Also, this study was supported fully by the administration and resource personnel at the school. Throughout the duration of the study, teachers formed a collaborative environment and team atmosphere, in which they were comfortable learning from each other and sharing personal experiences.

Students respond positively to varied media in instruction. This study included the use of television commercials, magazine advertisements, and the internet as instructional tools. These tools are not commonly used in instruction. When students were given further tools, in the form of

questions, to lead inquiry into the motivation, perspective, and construction of the media, they demonstrated higher reading scores on the FCAT. Through these media, students practice critical thinking skills.

The education community, including teachers, curriculum resource personnel, and administration, need to embrace modern media as viable classroom instructional tools. Students read and write in MySpace every night, they watch movies regularly, they are connected to and interacting with the internet multiple times a day. Moreover, cell phones have internet connections, text messaging functions, and even music videos. Education community largely holds a condescending view of these media. Perhaps future research should work with this trend toward multiple versions of text, recognizing the potential, rather than running from it we can't turn back the tide.

Media literacy, including the production of media, could be enhanced by emerging Web 2.0 technologies. These second generation technologies add the element of sharing and collaboration between and among users. Social-networking, wikis, and blogs are a few examples of this interactivity that integrates technology and communication to enhance instruction, curricula, and learning (O'Reilly, 2005). Future research should integrate and emphasize these technologies in relation to academic achievement.

Recommendations

This study contributes information to the field of media literacy education in a limited scope. Much more can be explored specifically at the high school level, but also with different school settings, populations, and age groups.

Different materials and forms of media may be of benefit to future studies. This study used media that was specific to the school in which the study took place. Based on these limited

resources, the results may reflect different media. Furthermore, with more time and planning, students could select the media used in future studies. The constructivist theories support student interest and building knowledge from the known to the unknown. This could be achieved through a questionnaire to inventory student interest level of certain materials, instead of just creating materials to which teachers think students can relate.

The results of this study may be affected by the questions asked, specifically the number of questions. Because the teachers in the study selected and modified the questions, future studies may find it appropriate to reorder, add, or delete any or all of the questions used in this study.

One of the pillars of media literacy is production. This study did not include any student creation of media, perhaps limiting the scope of understanding of mediated messages. Once students are able to internalize a skill, evaluate it, and explain it back to an audience, they have reached the highest level of thinking (Bloom, 1956).

This study could be replicated in a vast array of different settings. Although the large, urban high school presents advantages and allowed the researcher a glimpse in to its individual needs, this study may find various and differing results in different settings. This study focused only on 9th and 10th graders, who range from 14-16 years old. Testing different age students throughout grades 9-12 may impact the results. This study used state data from the FCAT administered in February 2007. Although this test has major implications for Florida schools, as well as implications for students to graduate from a Florida high school, it is not the only measure available to students in Florida. It would be interesting to see the same study in another state with a strong state testing system (like Texas and its TAAS test), as well as national aptitude tests such as the SAT or ACT. This study was conducted at a school in a downtown area of a large metropolitan city. Within the same school district, there are more rural populations, as well as suburban areas. This study could be replicated at schools of different makeup, yet still in the same district.

Further research in this area could focus on different populations within a school. This study was limited to the teachers who were willing to participate. Although this provided a wealth of sample from low-level reader to high-level reader, it would be of particular interest to focus on isolated groups of students. For example, isolating the following groups to see how the results differ: struggling readers, students who have English as their second language, gifted population, exceptional education students, and disaggregate data by gender and race.

Further research may include other content areas, such social studies, family consumer science, health, and more isolated subjects such as journalism, speech, or film study. Media literacy benchmarks are being published each year in other content areas (Baker, 2004).

From this research, it is clear there is a need for a qualitative understanding of teacher and student perspective when analyzing media. Within the PLC formed during the study, each teacher in the treatment group shared personal and professional revelations about their own connection to media. All four teachers found bias and perspective they did not realize they brought to their classrooms. Each teacher in the treatment group felt as though she thrived in this experience and became a stronger teacher. They were all eager to learn more about media literacy. This qualitative and narrative data is irreplaceable, and these voices are vital to include as the field of media literacy education continues to advance.

This study reveals a true paradigm shift in the instruction of English Language Arts. Reading and literacy can no longer be measured solely by reading books and small passages on paper tests; fields are merging, as are the literacies of today's students.

APPENDIX A: TEACHER EXPERIENCE AND APPROACH

Teacher	Self Reported Instructional Modes
Teacher 1 (Treatment Group)	Position in Classroom: Walk around through desks Delivery Mode: Socratic discussion; Powerpoint Classwork Mode: Group work; interactive class discussions
Teacher 2 (Treatment Group)	Position in Classroom: Front of classroom at teacher desk Delivery Mode: Read aloud; Interactive lecture Classwork Mode: Group work; interactive class discussions
Teacher 3 (Treatment Group)	Position in Classroom: Walk around through desks Delivery Mode: Interactive lecture; Powerpoint Classwork Mode: Group work, presentations, self paced
Teacher 4 (Treatment Group)	Position in Classroom: Walk around through desks Delivery Mode: Socratic discussion; Powerpoint Classwork Mode: Group work; interactive class discussions
Teacher 5 (Control Group)	Position in Classroom: Front of classroom at teacher desk Delivery Mode: read aloud, lecture Classwork Mode: individual and group work
Teacher 6 (Control Group)	Position in Classroom: Front of classroom at teacher desk Delivery Mode: lecture Classwork Mode: individual and Group work
Teacher 7 (Control Group)	Position in Classroom: Walk around through desks Delivery Mode: Lecture, discussion Classwork Mode: Group work; class Q and A discussions
Teacher 8 (Control Group)	Position in Classroom: Front of classroom at teacher desk Delivery Mode: Lecture; Powerpoint Classwork Mode: independent seat work

APPENDIX B: MEDIA LITERACY BENCHMARKS – STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida K-12 Reading and Language Arts Standards
http://etc.usf.edu/flstandards/language-arts/index.html

Media Literacy Standard: The student develops and demonstrates an understanding of media literacy as a life skill that is integral to informed decision making.
The student will:
LA.910.6.3.1 - distinguish between propaganda and ethical reasoning strategies in print and nonprint media;
LA.910.6.3.2 - ethically use mass media and digital technology in assignments and presentations, citing sources according to standardized citation styles; and
LA.910.6.3.3 - demonstrate the ability to select print and nonprint media appropriate for the purpose, occasion, and audience to develop into a formal presentation.

Media Literacy Standard: The student develops and demonstrates an understanding of media literacy as a life skill that is integral to informed decision making.

Access Points for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities
Independent: The student will:
- identify persuasive techniques used in advertisements in multiple media sources (e.g., television, internet, newspaper, magazines);
- use media with graphics, sound, or color to communicate information on a topic
- select print and nonprint media to use in oral presentations.

Supported: The student will:
- recognize persuasive techniques used in advertisements in a media source (e.g., television, internet, newspaper, magazines);
- use media with graphics to communicate information
- select print and nonprint media to use in an oral presentation.

Participatory: The student will:
- recognize persuasive information presented in mass media;
- use media to obtain information.
- use print or nonprint media to communicate information.

APPENDIX C: TEACHER BACKGROUND

Teacher	Yrs of Exp	Alt cert Trad cert	Degree	College of Ed?	If so, where?	Current Cert
1	10	Traditional	BS Sec LA Ed	Yes	UCF	English 5-9
2	10	Traditional	BA English	No	(NYU)	English 5-9
3	15	Traditional	BS Education Minor Psych	Yes	Syracuse U	PreK-3 3-6th English 6-12 NBCT Gifted Endorsed
4	8	Traditional	BA English	No	(Rollins)	English 6-12
5	3	Alternative	BA English MBA	No	(BC)	English 6-12
6	30+	Traditional	AA (St. Pete Jr. College) BA FAMU MA IU PhD UF College of Education)	Yes	UF	Admin & Supervision, English, Journalism, ESOL Endorsed
7	5	Alternative	BA Psychology	No	(UCF)	English 6-12
8	10	Traditional	BA English Minor Secondary English MEd English Ed	Yes for minor and masters	UF	English 6-12 Journalism

APPENDIX D: MEDIA LITERACY EDUCATION LESSON ONE

Introduction Lesson – Truth Campaign

Topic: Introduction Lesson – Overview of the Guiding "7" Questions
Objective: To introduce the guiding "7" questions
To analyze a one-minute commercial using the Guiding "7" questions
Materials: One-minute clip (commercial) from the Truth Campaign – "Newsflash Teens Like Sweet Products!"
Activity: Students will view the commercial twice, each time writing down what stands out to them (this could be anything). Students will then answer the first guiding question. Teachers will introduce the second guiding question and discuss with students the concept of that question. Then, students will view the commercial again looking only for information that addresses question two. This process will be repeated for questions three through six. Once students reach question seven, they will then review their analysis of the commercial and see if their answer has changed from question one.

1. What is the message being sent?
2. Who created this message? (authorship)
3. What techniques are used to attract my attention? (format)
4. How might different people understand this message differently from me? (audience)
5. What lifestyles, values, and points of view are represented in or omitted from this message? (content)
6. Why was this message sent? (purpose)
7. Now, what is the message *really* being sent?

(along with the secondary questions to guide student to the above concepts)
Assessment: Student activities will vary based on teacher preference, however there will be an assessment of some kind. Teachers provided the following strategies and activity options; they will use these individually or in combination.
Basic question/answer comprehension on paper
Individual written prediction and summary
Small group collaboration to analyze questions
Knowledge of questions and answers demonstrated on:
large chart paper
poster board
graphic organizers
Construction/Creation of message using storyboard technique

APPENDIX E: MEDIA LITERACY EDUCATION LESSON TWO

Topic: Analyzing everyday television commercials
Objective: To develop a thorough understanding of a mediated message
To deconstruct television commercials into the components of the message
Materials: Advertisements: VW-Jetta Crash Impact commercial; Apple/PC commercial series
Activity: These commercials will be analyzed using the same Guiding "7" questions and will be similar in format to the introduction lesson; there will be a small group focus in this lesson. Students will view one commercial at a time and address the questions for each commercial. Once students have a grasp of what message is being sent, they will then look at the similarities and differences in the commercials. The Apple/PC commercial series uses metaphor and symbolism, so this will be a focus as well.

1. What is the message being sent?
2. Who created this message? (authorship)
3. What techniques are used to attract my attention? (format)
4. How might different people understand this message differently from me? (audience)
5. What lifestyles, values, and points of view are represented in or omitted from this message? (content)
6. Why was this message sent? (purpose)
7. Now, what is the message *really* being sent?

(along with the secondary questions to guide student to the above concepts)
Assessment: Student activities will vary based on teacher preference, however there will be an assessment of some kind. Teachers provided the following strategies and activity options; they will use these individually or in combination.
Basic question/answer comprehension on paper
Individual written prediction and summary
Small group collaboration to analyze questions
Knowledge of questions and answers demonstrated on:
large chart paper
poster board
graphic organizers
Construction/Creation of message using storyboard technique

APPENDIX F: MEDIA LITERACY EDUCATION LESSON THREE

Lesson 3 – Visual Imagery – What is unspoken?

Topic: Visual Imagery – What is said *without* words?
Objective: To question what is being said in magazine photographs about the images of Male/Female, Family, and Ethnicity
To build knowledge of the visual and nonverbal and transfer to the verbal
Materials: Magazine advertisements from the following magazines: Glamour, Seventeen, Ebony, GQ, Men's Health, Good Housekeeping, Better Homes and Gardens; tape
Activity: Students will be given a topic (Men/Women, Family, Ethnicity) and will be asked to pull out pictures in the magazine that represent the topic. This will be done individually. Students will be given tape and will be asked to put the pictures they find on the front board or the front wall of the classroom. At this point, there will be about 20-30 pictures that depict the topic leading to a discussion using the Guiding "7" questions. Students will look for similarities, omissions, common themes, etc., in the pictures. Students should be able to pick up on stereotypes, labels, and what is being said about the topic without using words. This activity will continue by doing the same procedure for the other topics.
1. What is the message being sent?
2. Who created this message? (authorship)
3. What techniques are used to attract my attention? (format)
4. How might different people understand this message differently from me? (audience)
5. What lifestyles, values, and points of view are represented in or omitted from this message? (content)
6. Why was this message sent? (purpose)
7. Now, what is the message *really* being sent?

(along with the secondary questions to guide student to the above concepts)
Assessment: Student activities will vary based on teacher preference; however there will be an assessment of some kind. Teachers provided the following strategies and activity options; they will use these individually or in combination.
Basic question/answer comprehension on paper
Individual written prediction and summary
Small group collaboration to analyze questions
Knowledge of questions and answers demonstrated on:
large chart paper
posterboard
graphic organizers
Construction/Creation of message using storyboard technique

APPENDIX G: MEDIA LITERACY EDUCATION LESSON FOUR

Lesson 4 – News Website Scavenger Hunt

Topic: News Website Webquest

Objective: To investigate news websites and how these websites report the War in Iraq (or the major current event of the day)

To analyze the websites according to the Guiding "7" questions

To evaluate the various websites

Materials: Computer lab, internet access, Live www.foxnews.com, www.npr.org; www.cnn.com; www.bbc.com; http://english.aljazeera.net

Activity: As a class, the students will go to the computer lab for two days and investigate the same story and how it is reported and presented on various websites. The topic to investigate will be the Iraq war (unless there is an International current event that all websites cover). The teachers of the study would like to create the webquest (online guided scavenger hunt of sorts), but if this is unrealistic, they will provide a step-by-step paper guide to investigating the websites. Along with the Guiding "7" questions for each website, other questions and concepts will be included:

Where is the story located?

What is the size of the text of the headline compared to other headlines on the website?

What design elements appeal to the viewer?

Who advertises with this company?

Who owns this company?

What are the political, socio-economic, religious influences present?

Assessment: Student activities will vary based on teacher preference; however there will be an assessment of some kind. Teachers provided the following strategies and activity options; they will use these individually or in combination.

Basic question/answer comprehension on paper

Individual written prediction and summary

Small group collaboration to analyze questions

Knowledge of questions and answers demonstrated on:

large chart paper

posterboard

graphic organizers

Construction/Creation of message using storyboard technique

Media Literacy Scavenger Hunt

Name:_____

	Fox News Time: 15 minutes _____ to _____	BBC Time: 15 minutes _____ to _____	CNN Time: 15 minutes _____ to _____	NPR Time: 15 minutes _____ to _____	Al Jazeera Time: 15 minutes _____ to _____
Name of article – "Put Name of Article in Quotes"					
What is the message?					
Who created this message?					
What techniques are used to attract my attention?					
How might different people understand this message differently from me?					
What lifestyles, values, and points of view are represented in or omitted from this message?					
Why was this message sent?					
Now, what is the message (*really)* being sent?					

Media Literacy Scavenger Hunt
Procedures

You will be analyzing websites based on the 7 Guiding Questions.
Start by logging on the computer with your student ID and your password.
Work through each question and fill out your chart accordingly – Use the questions below to help guide you through your observations.

1. Start by going to the Fox News website: www.foxnews.com
On your chart, write the name of the article and "Put Name of Article in Quotes"
a. What is the message?
Where is the story located?
In 10-15 words, can you summarize the main idea of the message?
b. Who created this message?
Who owns this company?
Who advertises with this company?
How many people did it take to create this message? What are their jobs?
What are the "building blocks" of this kind of message?
What kind of message is it (sitcom, action film, advertisement, etc)?
c. What techniques are used to attract my attention?
What is the size of the text of the headline compared to other headlines on the website?
What design elements appeal to the viewer?
What colors are used? What colors are not used?
What is the viewpoint?
What are the sounds? Music? Words? Sound effects?
What do you notice about the way the message is put together?
What makes this message realistic or unrealistic?
d. How might different people understand this message differently from me?
What might other people think about this?
What might other people feel about this?
What do I think and feel about this?
How does this message fit in with YOUR experience of the world?
How many other interpretations could there be? How could we hear about them?
How can we explain the different response people might have?
e. What lifestyles, values, and points of view are represented in or omitted from this message?
What are the political, socio-economic, religious influences present?
What does this tell me about how other people live and behave?
Is anything or anyone left out?
What social or ideological messages are part of the message's subtext?
What kind of behaviors and consequences are depicted?
What questions come to mind as you watch/read/listen?
What ideas or values are being "sold?"
What seems to be the most important idea in the message?
f. Why was this message sent?
What being told?
What economic decisions may have influenced the construction or transmission of the message?
Who is served by or benefits from this message? The public? Private interests?
g. Now, what is the message (really) being sent?
Is your answer different? Why or why not?

Follow the same procedure for the following websites:
2. National Public Radio: www.npr.org 3. Cable News Network: www.cnn.com
4. British Broadcasting Corporation: www.bbc.co.uk (International Edition)
5. Al Jazeera Online: http://english.aljazeera.net/News

APPENDIX H: PARENT / STUDENT CONSENT LETTERS

November 1, 2006

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Your child's class has been nominated to participate in a study that is being conducted for dissertation research in conjunction with the University of Central Florida, College of Education. Your child's identifying information and that of the class has not been shared in any way with the researcher at this time. Your child's class was chosen because it meets the criteria for this study and you, as parent, are being offered the opportunity to have your child participate.

The research project involves a review and analysis of 2007 FCAT reading comprehension scores of the class and other classes in the 9th and 10th grade at Edgewater High School. The researcher wants to write about how various teaching strategies may or may not have an effect on reading scores. The results of this study may someday help educators develop innovative curriculum in the Language Arts.

Your child's name, the names of his/her teachers, and the name of your child's school will be kept confidential and will not be used in any report, analysis, or publication. All identifying information will be replaced with alternate names or codes. You and/or your child can discontinue participation in the study at any time without consequence and participation or lack of participation will not affect your child's status in this class in anyway. You and your child will not be compensated for the use of your child's FCAT score.

You may contact me at 407-835-4900 or email at csheehy@cfl.rr.com or my professors, Dr. Kaplan at 407-823-2041, email at jkaplan@mail.ucf.edu; or Dr. Sivo at 407-823-4147, email at ssivo@mail.ucf.edu for any questions you have regarding the research procedures. Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board. Questions or concerns about research participants' rights may be directed to the UCF IRB office, University of Central Florida, Office of Research & Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246, or by campus mail 32816-0150. The hours of operation are 8:00 am until 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday except on University of Central Florida official holidays. The telephone numbers are (407) 882-2276 and (407) 823-2901.

Sincerely,

Colleen Sheehy, Researcher

____ I have read the procedure described on the previous page.

____ I have received a copy of this form to keep for my records.

____ I give consent for the primary researcher to have access to my child's FCAT score.

I voluntarily give my consent for my child, _____, to participate in Colleen Sheehy's study entitled, "The Impact of a Media Literacy Plan on the FCAT Reading Scores of 9th and 10th graders."

_____ /_____

Parent/Guardian Date

Please sign and return this page. Keep the letter for your records.

Child Assent Form

My name is Colleen Sheehy and I am a student at the University of Central Florida. I am interested in using your FCAT score as part of my study.

____ It is OK to use my FCAT scores.

Your name, the names of your teachers, and your school will be kept confidential and will not be used in any report or publication. You may refuse to let me use your FCAT score, and you may stop participating at any time.

Sincerely,

Colleen Sheehy, M.A.
Doctoral Candidate, University of Central Florida

November 1, 2006

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Your child's class has been nominated to participate in a study that is being conducted for dissertation research in conjunction with the University of Central Florida, College of Education. Your child's identifying information and that of the class has not been shared in any way with the researcher at this time. Your child's class was chosen because it meets the criteria for this study and you, as parent, are being offered the opportunity to have your child participate.

The research project involves a review and analysis of 2007 FCAT reading comprehension scores of the class and other classes in the 9th and 10th grade at Edgewater High School. The researcher wants to write about how various teaching strategies may or may not have an effect on reading scores. The results of this study may someday help educators develop innovative curriculum in the Language Arts.

Your child's name, the names of his/her teachers, and the name of your child's school will be kept confidential and will not be used in any report, analysis, or publication. All identifying information will be replaced with alternate names or codes. You and/or your child can discontinue participation in the study at any time without consequence and participation or lack of participation will not affect your child's status in this class in anyway. You and your child will not be compensated for the use of your child's FCAT score.

You may contact me at 407-835-4900 or email at csheehy@cfl.rr.com or my professors, Dr. Kaplan at 407-823-2041, email at jkaplan@mail.ucf.edu; or Dr. Sivo at 407-823-4147, email at ssivo@mail.ucf.edu for any questions you have regarding the research procedures. Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board. Questions or concerns about research participants' rights may be directed to the UCF IRB office, University of Central Florida, Office of Research & Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246, or by campus mail 32816-0150. The hours of operation are 8:00 am until 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday except on University of Central Florida official holidays. The telephone numbers are (407) 882-2276 and (407) 823-2901.

Sincerely,

Colleen Sheehy, Researcher

____ I have read the procedure described on the previous page.

____ I have received a copy of this form to keep for my records.

____ I give consent for the primary researcher to have access to my child's FCAT score.

I voluntarily give my consent for my child, _____, to participate in Colleen Sheehy's study entitled, "The Impact of a Media Literacy Plan on the FCAT Reading Scores of 9th and 10th graders."

_____ /_____

Parent/Guardian Date

Please sign and return this page. Keep the letter for your records.

Child Assent Form

My name is Colleen Sheehy and I am a student at the University of Central Florida. I am interested in using your FCAT score as part of my study about using technology and media in the classroom. That means you will be doing some projects and activities that use technology and media in your English Language Arts class.

____ It is OK to use my FCAT scores.

Your name, the names of your teachers, and your school will be kept confidential and will not be used in any report or publication. You may refuse to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable, and you may stop participating at any time.

Sincerely,

Colleen Sheehy, M.A.
Doctoral Candidate, University of Central Florida

APPENDIX I: IRB APPROVAL LETTER

University of Central Florida

Office of Research & Commercialization

October 24, 2006

Colleen Sheehy
2837 Biltmore Park Drive, #303
Orlando, FL 32835

Dear Ms. Sheehy:

With reference to your protocol #06-3817 entitled, "The Impact of a Media Literacy Plan on FCAT Reading Scores of 9th and 10th Grade Students," I am enclosing for your records the approved, expedited document of the UCFIRB Form you had submitted to our office. **This study was approved on 10/23/06. The expiration date for this study will be 10/22/2007.** Should there be a need to extend this study, a Continuing Review form must be submitted to the IRB Office for review by the Chairman or full IRB at least one month prior to the expiration date. This is the responsibility of the investigator.

Please be advised that this approval is given for one year. Should there be any addendums or administrative changes to the already approved protocol, they must also be submitted to the Board through use of the Addendum/Modification Request form. Changes should not be initiated until written IRB approval is received. Adverse events should be reported to the IRB as they occur.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at 407-823-2901.

Please accept our best wishes for the success of your endeavors.

Cordially,

Joanne Muratori
UCF IRB Coordinator
(FWA00000351 Exp. 5/13/07, IRB00001138)

Copies: IRB File
Jeffrey Kaplan, Ph.D.
Steven Sivo, Ph.D.

JM:jt

12201 Research Parkway • Suite 501 • Orlando, FL 32826-3246 • 407-823-3778 • Fax 407-823-3299

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