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THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MEDIA LITERACY IN THE SOCIAL STUDIES
CURRICULUM

A Dissertation in

Curriculum and Instruction

by

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Abstract

In 2009, the National Council for the Social Studies released a position statement calling for the implementation of media literacy in social studies education. If today's students are to become engaged citizens as adults, they must acquire the skills and knowledge associated with media literacy. Using this position statement as foundation, I developed a media literacy approach for use in the social studies classroom. The ensuing study followed pre-service student teachers through a social studies methods course in which they learned this approach, and followed them into their per-service field experiences. The collected data provides insight into how these student teachers took-up the NCSS call for media literacy in the social studies in their pre-service placements, and how they may further develop media literacy within their future classrooms.

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more than just a typical social studies teacher. Her approach to teaching film studies inspired me to expand on the disciplines within the social studies, and led me to include film and media in my high school classroom beyond what are considered traditional uses. It is not an overstatement to suggest that this project started in her COMM 150H class fifteen years ago, and because of that, her involvement with this project is certainly fitting and *flattering*.

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My wife deserves more credit than I could possibly describe here. She fell in love with, and married, a musician who became a high school social studies teacher and who now wants to be a college professor. Through all of these changes, she has been my muse, my confidant, my critic, and unwavering supporter. I would not have wanted it any other way. Tammi, it's been a hell of a ride, hasn't it?

Introduction

***“I used to trust the media to tell me the truth, tell us the truth
But now I’ve seen the payoffs, everywhere I look,
Who do you trust when everyone’s a crook?”***

Queensryche, “Revolution Calling”
(Tate & Wilton, 1988).

It is Memorial Day 2010. My wife and I are attending a Memorial Day party at my best friend’s house—the typical kind associated with grilled food, cocktails and the seasonal opening of my friend’s swimming pool. As the day wears on, I have struck up a conversation with another attendee about politics, the economy and various other current events. Before I further discuss the details of this particular conversation, I should make something very clear. My language choice so far may give the wrong impression of this get-together. I do not want to give the impression of some sort of “Great Gatsby” era get-together, where the attendees are all wearing white and playing badminton. Therefore let me explain in detail the setting for it is vital in understanding my reasons for this project.

The grilled food does not consist of steaks, marinated chicken breast, or exotic skewers. The fare of choice is hamburgers and hot dogs companioned with various “pot luck” pasta salads—the typical middle-America picnic menu. The cocktails are by and large various flavors of domestic beer. My friends are what would be generously called “working class.” My friend’s house is located in a “typical” central Pennsylvania town—that is to say typical in its rural values, and the fact that it is one of many towns in the area that are trying to stay afloat economically as more and more industry and businesses leave the area. This is a town that offers “tax-free” building sites to lure new businesses to the area; a town that when driving through at night on a weekend, the only business lights one sees are for Bingo night at the local volunteer fire departments or the bright yellow of the Dollar General discount store franchises.

That being said, this is a town rich in heritage (established 1797) and pride, and populated by some of the friendliest people you will meet.

Most of the people at this party work hard for a living in various types of construction—for example, my best friend owns a very successful home remodeling business of which he is the only employee. Evan, the person I am discussing politics with, is a union brick layer by trade, a Harley-Davidson enthusiast (as are most of the people at this party), and a self-proclaimed “red-neck.” As a brick layer, Evan is frequently unemployed or “laid-off” in between jobs provided by the union; as a biker, he enjoys the camaraderie and distraction that riding brings; and as a red-neck, he identifies himself as a simple man with simple needs and wants.

Our conversation is pre-empted by Ronnie, another attendee who makes a sweeping derogatory comment about the failure of both the Obama administration and Congress to provide any answer to the ongoing problems with the economy—then walks away. Evan turns to me and asks, “Vince, I know I’m not a smart guy, tell me who I should listen to. I watch the news, I listen to people like Ronnie go off on what’s going on in the world. I wish I paid more attention in school because I just don’t know who to believe anymore.” Evan’s plea catches me off guard. I have long been the academic in a proletariat world in regards to the relationships I have with my friends. I’m the one who is often asked questions like this, often in situations like this. These questions usually arise among other typical questions about sports or music. As a former high school social studies teacher and currently working on a doctorate degree, I’m the “go to guy” in regards to “educated” matters. This is not an elitist position, mind you. I am an educator, someone whose job is to help bring understanding—to teach. But this time it is different. I had recently finished my comprehensive exams for my doctoral program in which

*media literacy and the role of gatekeepers in social studies education was an integral element. This was **my** focus, **my** research project. Ready the power-point....*

And I couldn't answer Evan's question. Where would I begin? Yes, Evan should have been more attentive in high school. Yes, Evan was a grown man who apparently has no insight into sifting through the mountains of information that is readily available in today's media rich landscape. Yet, Evan is like many others who, having grown up during the era of Walter Cronkite, now feel that they do not have the tools to make educated decisions about the information that is available to them. These are people who feel that in the era of new media, one cannot be sure that what is being reported is done so just to make a buck. Unlike Evan, they do not always feel comfortable admitting—with or without the added variable of cocktails—this incapacity to negotiate the many gatekeepers of media, whether they are newscasters, newspaper editors, or friends at a party.

I can't say for certain, but I'm pretty sure that Evan does not vote. I can make this claim because I am almost positive that of all of our friends who were at this party, my wife and I are the only registered voters (based on previous conversations at previous parties). Nothing my wife or I have ever said has changed anyone's mind on the issue of voter registration—at least in this circle. Regardless, these are citizens engaged in the discourse of democracy—the public sphere if you will—who through their conversations try to gain insight into the problems of the world and how those problems affect them. They care about each other, and they do care about the country at large, regardless of their voting status.

I'm not sure how to answer Evan's question for several reasons. As I said earlier, where would I begin? Do I backtrack through a civics lesson at the risk of insulting the rather physically large Evan? Second, Ronnie is still close by and standing sentry, presumably waiting

*to jump back into the conversation in case I try to lead Evan down a liberal path. Third, because my views **are** distinctly different than Ronnie's, wouldn't I just be yet another gatekeeper, succeeding in only confusing Evan further and increasing his distrust for the system? After all, the educator in me doesn't want to inculcate—I want to provide the tools to help people like Evan draw their own conclusions.*

Sadly, this project won't help Evan—I can only hope that it helps Evan's children and other children like his. This project will offer insight into how young social studies teachers take up the call of media literacy; why media literacy is important in social studies education; how the media influences the nature of engaged citizenship—particularly digitized media and the role of gatekeepers of media; how a profit-motivated mass media affects the landscape of citizenship in regards to providing the resources necessary for a public to be informed citizens; to offer examples of how media literacy can be used in the social studies classroom; and provide evidence on how future social studies teachers are using media literacy in their pre-service teaching experiences and how they may use media literacy in their own classrooms.

Evan will never know how much I labored over that conversation—I would be surprised if he even remembered that it took place. Regardless, that conversation was inspirational. What are friends for? Thanks Evan.

When considering all of the obligations of social studies teachers, one could argue that teaching citizenship is foremost on that list. Consequently, an acknowledgment of the importance of that position must lead to a discussion on the role media literacy in citizenship education and the social studies in general. After all, how can a citizen like Evan above engage in democratic practice without the ability to critically analyze available information in the modern media world?

This problem was recognized in the spring of 2009 issue of *Social Education* when the National Council of the Social Studies released a position statement on media literacy in social education. As noted by the NCSS, “the multimedia age requires new skills for accessing, evaluating, creating, and distributing messages within a digital, global, and democratic society” (NCSS, 2009, p. 187). The NCSS call for the inclusion of media literacy skills in the social studies brings specific attention to a topic that has been previously discussed at length, i.e. media literacy has already been recognized as an important part of school curriculum—particularly Language and Literacy curricula, high school English or communications curricula, etc.—but its place in social studies education has been astonishingly absent. Said again, despite its recognized importance, media literacy is rarely visible within social studies teacher education programs, the professional literature, and the social studies curriculum. If we as social studies educators expect to aid in the development of engaged citizenship in our students, how can we not add media literacy to the social studies curriculum? This study includes media literacy explicitly within a social studies methods course and follows pre-service teachers into local high schools to see how they make sense of the NCSS call to make media literacy more visible within the social studies field.

With this in mind, the study has two goals. First I seek to make sense of a media literacy curriculum within a social studies teacher education program, explaining a) why media literacy is important in social studies education; b) how the media influences the nature of engaged citizenship—particularly digitized media and the role of gatekeepers of media; c) how a profit-motivated mass media affects the landscape of citizenship in regards to providing the resources necessary for a public to be informed citizens, and d) which topics of media literacy can be used in high school social studies classrooms. Second, I intend to provide e) insight into how young

social studies teachers take up the call for media literacy; f) evidence on how future social studies teachers are using media literacy in their pre-service teaching experiences; and g) plans for how they intend to use media literacy when they become the teacher of record in high school social studies classrooms.

To accomplish these goals, I developed a three week unit on media literacy in social studies to be used in the social studies methods courses and designed a phenomenographic study that affords me the opportunity to probe pre-service teachers' perceptions and actions regarding media literacy before, during, and after their field placements. I primarily focused on five students as they worked their way through the unit and the school based practicum during the semester before they become student teachers. The Pennsylvania State University College of Education categorizes "pre-service" student teachers as those students (usually in the first semester of their senior year) who are placed in part-time field placements in school districts within a 70-mile radius of the University Park Campus. These students generally attend their placement site schools from approximately 8AM to 12 PM for five weeks of the semester. This experience allows the students to get accustomed to the teaching profession while still enrolled in methods courses and acts as a precursor to the full student teaching placement in the following semester. These pre-service student teachers are required to teach at least six lessons during their placement under the supervision of mentor teachers and their field supervisors from the university. I was both the methods course instructor and the field supervisor for these five students, which provided me with considerable access to their stated thoughts and actions, but also challenging my abilities to hold my biases in check.

Personal Connection to the Topic

As related in the opening vignette, my personal connection to the topic of media is partly rooted in conversations I have with family and friends. My interest in media may be described as normal considering my age and background. Born at the tail end of the baby boom, television was a significant part of my daily life in suburban Pittsburgh, PA. As was common in most households at that time, our family life often revolved around the television schedule. My mother often reminded me that as a child it was Fred Rogers (of the *Mr. Roger's Neighborhood* television show) who taught me how to tie my shoes and hang up my clothes. Subsequently, I grew up in arguably one of the golden ages of television that included shows such as *The Twilight Zone*, *All in the Family*, *M.A.S.H.*, *Star Trek*, and numerous police dramas. Television of this era featured the talents of Rod Serling, Lucille Ball, Carol Burnett, Johnny Carson, and numerous others that would culminate in a list too lengthy to provide here. In addition to television, my entertainment diet was rounded off with healthy doses of classic horror films (including those provided by Hammer Studios and those provided by director George Romero—a Pittsburgh native), and music of nearly all genres. I also remember that when I was a teenager, on a family visit to a friend of my father, I played the video game Pong for the first time—I was immediately hooked on video games. Music became an increasing part of my life the older I got leading to my becoming a professional and semi-professional musician for many years, playing guitar in numerous rock and heavy metal bands. Through those years, I have had many encounters like the one described in the vignette above.

Many people I meet outside of my professional life have the same concerns as my friend Evan. When people discovered that I was a social studies teacher, they often remarked that in hindsight they wished that they had paid more attention in their social studies courses when they

attended public school. Like Evan, they too felt they were in over their head when it came to staying current on national and world events. And like the song lyrics above, they find it more and more difficult to trust news sources. Fearing that I have used too broad of a brush to paint this story I should mention that these are not unintelligent people—far from it. These people, citizens who engage in public discourse about events occurring in the world around them and do so in numerous venues outside of and in addition to the voting booth, suffer from what CBS Foreign Correspondent Tom Fenton calls “news gaps” (2005).

News gaps understandably occur when, for example, an event happens in a part of the world we have little knowledge of, regarding a topic that we also have little knowledge about. These gaps are understandable because no person can have extensive knowledge of every topic and every locale in the world. At the heart of the issue lies the question, “What resources are available to *close* that gap?” Some would argue that that responsibility lies within the educational system; some would blame those in the business of broadcasting and publishing news. While the answer more likely has something to do with both, it is important to note that both institutions are hamstrung by forces inside and outside of each. For example, history educators face a daunting task that other disciplines do not—by definition there is more subject matter to teach *with each passing year*. More often than not, high school US history curricula are rarely able to move beyond post-WWII America. While schools are able to add electives that can make up the difference (such as courses titled “Untaught History”), largely students leave high school with a background in history that has roughly a 60 year gap.

Conversely, media news corporations are not in the business of educating. Due to the profit driven nature of broadcast news media, time is money and the news industry would be hard-pressed to sell advertising for such programming. Furthermore, there is simply no way for

either institution to predict where events happen and what background will be needed to make sense of the events. For example, when the United States invaded Afghanistan in 2001, none of the maps in the geography textbook that I taught from had a clear image of the country. Whether looking at a map of Europe or Asia, Afghanistan was obscured in the binding of the book. The textbook publisher could not foresee the need for maps of the area. Therefore, what is needed is a media literacy that would enable citizens to quickly identify legitimate news sources on any topic. Of course, news or information literacy is only one branch of the media education tree.

How I Came to the Topic Professionally

As a self-confessed junky of media and a musician, it was not long before I began implementing my hobbies into my professional career as a public high school teacher. Beyond the typical history film and discussions on current events, my uses of media branched into the use of satire, soft news, music, internet, etc. In addition, classroom projects utilized digital technologies (video, photo) and audio recordings produced by the students (I own a portable recording studio).

Beyond the classroom, I started a musician's club (called the String Guild) as an extra-curricular activity, that resulted in more student-produced recorded music and video as well as live performances before school the start of the school day (that we called coffee houses). Whether in the classroom or via the club it became clear that, students who would normally be ambivalent began to take an interest in school. Students who were normally involved used the after school club as a way to expand their identity. For example, one student known as an above average student-athlete shocked the student body by singing in a heavy metal performance—a performance that was spot-on. The String Guild would meet before school at 7:30AM, which meant that students from the geographical extremes of the district had to leave early in the

morning to attend. One morning a parent arrived at the meeting. When asked if she needed assistance she replied, “No, I just wanted to see what it was that had my son wanting to get up at 6AM to be at school early—something he has never wanted to do.”

For me, the use of media became a way to involve students, particularly students on the *social fringe* if you will, in the curricula and the extra-curricular who would normally not have a voice in the school or would normally not participate in activities. It was clear to both me and administrators that something important was happening, so important that the club received constant support from administration and the community at large. While I have no data to support a hypothesis of academic success among those students at that time, any success would be commensurate with research conducted by Jeff Share (2010):

As media pedagogy is multimodal and experiential, it helps overcome some of the limitations of a print-based literacy and lowers the affective filters that create invisible barriers for children acquiring a new language or with special needs, be they physical, mental, or social. (p. 64)

While it was clear that the use of media, particularly in the student production and manipulation of their own media texts increased student involvement, what was unclear at the time was that I was merely scratching the surface of the benefits of media education.

At around this same time, I became interested in using what I labeled *alternative media* in my lessons with some success. Political satire, as seen for example on Comedy Central’s *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* or *The Colbert Report*, offered a way to breathe life into the social studies curriculum. Whether using music lyrics to discuss the era of protest in the 1960’s, or episodes of *Star Trek*, or other science fiction to analyze issues of race, media offered ways to move beyond the typical. At times when I used more traditional films, I would try to use a film

that was produced *during* the era being studied as opposed to films produced *about* the era. It should be noted that I taught U.S. History from the Reconstruction Era to the present, a period that obviously gave me access to such films unlike a history course on say, Revolutionary America. Regardless, activities were designed around the use of media that afforded the students to be critical, historical, interpretive and empirical. I did not use these labels at the time, but apply them now through the benefit of hindsight.

As a doctoral student, I have been able to reflect on my time as a public school educator and apply those experiences to my graduate work. Much of my research has involved the use of political satire in the social studies classroom. In particular, I have written papers regarding the use of *The Daily Show* as a vehicle for teaching engaged, critical citizenship. This topic led to several papers of which one, *Media Literacy and Political Satire in the Social Studies Classroom: Promoting Active Citizenship Through Humor and Collective Memory* (Youngbauer, 2009) was presented at the 2009 *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing* Conference at Bergamo, Dayton, OH. A second, *Cynicism, Political Satire, and Their Effects on Civic Engagement* (Youngbauer, 2010) became the subject of one of my comprehensive exams, and was presented at the April 2010 Penn State Social Thought Conference.

Theoretical Approach to the Topic

The audience for this work will be those in the field of social studies, i.e., those who train future social studies teachers, veteran social studies teachers, and of course, student teachers. This work assumes that that audience has at least some experience within the field in regards to the language, practices, and research associated with the social studies. Implementing media literacy into the already robust disciplines associated with social studies requires an elaboration on the connection between both worlds. I accomplish this through the development of a

framework that utilizes four interrelated elements—historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical. These four elements will be explained in the pages that follow.

As indicated in the vignette, my political leanings are toward the left of the spectrum on most political and social issues. While these leanings are part of who I am personally, my goal for this research is not necessarily to create a media education curriculum that would inculcate those leanings into students. My goal is to have students become engaged citizens, arriving at their place on the political spectrum via educational approaches that are historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical in nature—not by influence of a media industry that is primarily concerned with earning profits.

As a media critic, communications theorist, and instructor of journalism, James Carey's work is well known. In his book *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society* (2009), Carey spent a considerable amount of pages analyzing the research of Harold Innis—whose work (according to Carey) contained historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical elements. Building from this observation, I developed an approach to media education that could be used in the social studies and would contain these four elements. When considering the existing work on media literacy (discussed in Chapter 2), and the many approaches to media education, it was apparent to me that an approach that was historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical, was one best suited for the social studies. These approaches will be discussed in depth in subsequent chapters.

Summary of Chapters

Throughout this work, I have laced the discourse and research with vignettes, song lyrics, and quotes from fictional novels and film. These are not meant to be distractions, indeed, I have included them to provoke myself as the writer and you as the reader to think beyond the typical

research model and to engage in what this work *is* about—media. Furthermore, these interactions provide a foundation of the socio-cultural influences on education that students bring into the classroom with them. Students are engaged in a relationship with media long before classroom exposure, and while I do not claim to be familiar with all of the media that students are acquainted, the inclusion of some of that media in this work would seem relevant.

In Chapter 1, I analyze the contributions and shortcomings of the National Council for the Social Studies *Media Literacy Position Statement* (NCSS, 2009) and use this statement as a rationale for adding media literacy to existing social studies curricula. Furthermore, I elaborate on the neglected areas within the NCSS statement in order to provide a firmer foundation for the use of media literacy within social studies teacher education programs. In particular, I argue that the NCSS statement assumes that the implied reader has single definitions of democracy, citizenship, and participation; and little knowledge of media—its processes of production, how it works, and its use in contemporary times. I attempt to trouble these assumptions about media and democracy, citizenship and participation. Understanding the role of media (and teachers) as gatekeepers of information is crucial in citizenship education and therefore included in Chapter 1. A discussion on media and gate-keeping would be lacking without including a discussion on textbooks—the most often used media and gatekeeper in the classroom. Also included in this section is an analysis of citizenship—what it means to be an active and engaged citizen in the 21st Century—and how citizenship, media, and the social studies should be linked together. It is worth mentioning here that there is no consensus in the social studies field on what citizenship looks like or how to achieve it. Regardless, I will engage in the most salient discussions on the topic in Chapter 1.

Chapter 2 explores theories on media literacy and how those theories pertain to, and can be adapted for, the social studies. Media literacy and media education are by no means new topics and the vast amount of literature and research that is available, provides the *shoulders* on which my work stands. It is important to remind you the reader, that what I am presenting is not revolutionary. My addition to the literature is the application of media education to the social studies, and to explore the ways in which young teachers will make use of media education in their own classrooms.

Chapter 3 establishes the research methodologies and methods used in the study. This section explores the use of phenomenographic research and its relevance to how pre-service teachers engaged the NCSS call for media literacy in the social studies. Since “qualitative inquiry attempts to understand, interpret, and explain complex and highly contextualized social phenomena” (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005, p. 17), I used interpretivism as a guiding theory for my research. Through interpretivism, “the goal of theorizing becomes that of providing understanding of direct lived experience instead of abstract generalizations” (Glesne, 2006, p. 27). This guiding theory is not without risk, since interpretivism can “escape systematic modes of assessment. You either grasp an interpretation or you do not, see the point of it or you do not, accept it or you do not” (Geertz, 1973, p. 12). While this position may seem unproductive to the positivist researcher, it suited this project due to the many complexities that the social interaction of media literacy brings.

Likewise, I substitute the term *approaches* for *methods* as suggested by Kamberelis and Dimitriadis, because “‘methods’ often falsely connote rigid templates of sets of techniques for the proper conduct of research” (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005, p. 17). This distinction allowed my research to be more dynamic and fluid—a need that I felt would help me borrow and

combine research techniques. As implied above, this research project would follow what Kamberelis and Dimitriadis labeled *Chronotope IV: Power/Knowledge and Defamiliarization* (p. 44), specifically because of Foucault's work on power/knowledge. Furthermore, since hegemonic influences abound within mass media, it will be important within the research to acknowledge the influence of neo-Marxist theories as proposed by *Chronotope III: Skepticism, Conscientization, and Praxis* (p. 36). Again, the use of interpretivism allows for these theoretical variants.

Since we are all exposed to the vast variety of available media texts, our perceptions of that media directly influence how we interact and engage with media. Because of these perceptions, a qualitative research project that utilized the elements of phenomenography seemed a logical venue for exploring how pre-service teachers would take up the media literacy call. The aim of phenomenography is to take the differing experiences, interactions and understandings of the phenomenon—in this case media—and characterize them : “in terms of categories of description, logically related to each other, and forming hierarchies in relation to given criteria” (Marton, 1994, p. 4424).

In keeping with the goals stated early in this chapter, Chapters 4 & 5 analyze the observations and artifacts collected in the social studies methods classroom and in the field. Chapter 4 presents and analyzes artifacts produced through pre-interviews and methods classroom interactions. These artifacts were produced by students specifically chosen for this project by criteria established in Chapter 3 and reflect the first goal: to make sense of a media literacy curriculum within a social studies teacher education program. The Chapter details the criteria and the use of media education in the social studies methods course.

Chapter 5 presents and analyzes data gathered in the pre-service student teacher placements contributing to the second goal of this project: provide insight into how young social studies teachers take up the call for media literacy and predict how they intend to use media literacy their own future high school social studies classrooms. The primary influence on the student teachers' use of media was the freedom—or lack thereof—to work within their mentor's schedule. Chapter 6 offers discussion on the implications of the data for this study and the future implementation of media literacy in social studies classrooms and teacher education programs.

Chapter 1: Media Literacy and the Social Studies; Democracy and Gate-keeping in Action

*“Eye on the TV
'Cause tragedy thrills me
Whatever flavour
It happens to be”
Tool, “Vicarious”
(Keenan, M. 2006)*

In the days leading up to the 9th anniversary of the attacks of September 11, 2001, a Gainesville, FL preacher is in the news. Pastor Terry Jones of the Dove World Outreach Center plans to burn copies of the Quran to celebrate the anniversary—how many copies remains to be seen as “donations” are still arriving at his church from supporters. A photograph of Pastor Jones and related story graces the cover page of the USA Today for Thursday September 9, 2010.

As the news cycle wears on through the day, Pastor Jones announces that he will not burn the Quran if a planned mosque is not built in New York City near ground zero. Jones’ bargain leads to comments in the press by, among others, President Obama who asks Jones to reconsider his actions since they would cause a threat to the safety of American troops stationed abroad. CNN reports at 6pm on 9/9 that real estate mogul and entrepreneur Donald Trump has offered one of the investors of the mosque the price paid for the land plus 25% if construction is moved to at least five blocks away from ground zero. Finally, Secretary of Defense John Gates calls Pastor Jones to urge him to rethink his plan since it would put U.S. soldiers in harm’s way. In the end, the Pastor chooses not to hold the ceremonial burning.

On the “Situation Room” with Wolf Blitzer, the host is joined by democratic strategist Donna Brazil and republican strategist John Feehery who claims that none of this would have happened if the media did not make the story into a circus. Later, the “Situation Room” is joined by Jeffrey Toobin, CNN Senior Legal Analyst, who points out that Pastor Jones was

“using his First Amendment rights, and so were we in deciding to cover this guy, and I think that’s going to be the really hard question that WE’RE (his emphasis) going to have to answer about why we covered him in the first place. The only reason they (President Obama, etc) talked about him is that we decided to give publicity to this bigot, this lunatic...I think the real question here is about the news media as much as it’s about the Obama administration.”

To follow this news story, citizens engage in *information triage* in order to determine the relative importance of the information in understanding the events, the representations of world, framing of the story, and positions it offers to viewer/readers. For example, the story blends local, national, and international interests, it mixes religion and politics, it connects individuals (groups) for multiple levels of authority, and it hides and then questions the choices of production that represented and framed these events in these ways across media forms. According to the National Council of the Social Studies *Media Literacy Position Statement* (NCSS, 2009), the performance of information triage in “the multimedia age requires new skills for accessing, evaluating, creating, and distributing messages within a digital, global, and democratic society” (p. 187). The first goal of this chapter is to analyze the contributions and shortcomings of the NCSS position statement as a rationale for media literacy in the social studies and teacher education programs.

Second, I elaborate on the neglected areas within the NCSS statement in order to provide a firmer foundation for the use of media literacy within social studies teacher education programs. In particular, I argue that the implied reader of the NCSS statement is assumed to have single definitions of democracy, citizenship, and participation, and little knowledge of media, their processes of production, how they work, and their use in contemporary times. In this chapter I attempt to trouble these assumptions about media and democracy, citizenship and participation,

and in the next chapter, I elaborate about media literacy (and media education) in its various forms.

The NCSS Call for Media Literacy

***“In the right light, study becomes insight
But the system that dissed us
Teaches us to read and write”***

Rage Against the Machine, “Take the Power Back”
(Commerford, De La Rocha, Morello, & Wilk, 1992)

Founded in 1921, the National Council of the Social Studies is arguably the most influential organization in regards to what is taught, and how it is taught in social studies classrooms across the nation. For example, with its publication *Expectations of Excellence: Curriculum Standards for Social Studies* (The National Council for the Social Studies, 1994), NCSS has had a significant influence on the development of state social studies standards. With the goal of providing support and leadership for all social studies teachers, NCSS considers itself “an umbrella organization for elementary, secondary, and college teachers of history, geography, economics, political science, sociology, psychology, anthropology, and law-related education” (The National Council for the Social Studies, 2011).

NCSS releases position statements regularly regarding topical and pedagogical issues related to social studies education with the intent to encourage open discourse on individual subjects including, but not limited to, the use of technology in social studies classrooms (2006), fostering civic virtue (1997), and intelligent design (2007). In 2008, the president of NCSS asked Joseph A. Braun Jr., then chair of the organization’s Technology Committee, to form a group in order to produce a media literacy statement. He recruited Jeff Share of UCLA, Joe O’Brien of the University of Kansas, and Peter Tragos, a high school social studies teacher from Illinois (Braun Jr., 2008). The NCSS Board of Directors approved the statement in February

2009, and the statement first appeared in the May/June 2009 issue of *Social Education*.

Considered the “official” journal of NCSS, *Social Education* is published seven times a year clearly reflecting its intended audience—secondary social studies professionals. That is to say, the journal is published monthly throughout the traditional school year calendar with bimonthly publication occurring in the summer months and during the months that would coincide with winter breaks. NCSS publishes a sister publication, *Social Studies and the Young Learner*, for the elementary teacher demographic. *Social Education* generally contains articles that would appeal to the classroom teacher on topics such as teaching with documents and other lesson plan ideas. The *Media Literacy Position Statement* is a 1,772 word essay divided into three headings: *Rationale*; *Purpose/Definition*; and *Implementation of Media Literacy within a Social Studies Context*. To this end, my analysis will follow these same headings.

Under the bolded heading, *Media Literacy*, the statement begins with a quotation, “In the twenty-first century, participatory media education and civic education are inextricable” (Reingold, 2008, p. 103), and a list of three questions:

First, why and how has media literacy taken on a significantly more important role in preparing citizens for democratic life? Second, how is media literacy defined, and what are some of its essential concepts? Finally, what is required to teach media literacy and what are some examples of classroom activities? (NCSS, 2009, p. 187)

The use of the Reingold quote and subsequent questions are road-markers for what will and will not be included in the position statement. The quote sets the tone for the document requiring the reader to assume that both “participatory media education” and “civic education” hold uncontested definitions. Furthermore, the quote implies that—regardless of definition—this relationship has only gained importance in the twenty-first century, when in reality, the

relationship between media and civic education has always existed. This is not to say that there is not truth in the quote—the point here is that the quote, as it stands at the beginning of the document, lacks significant context and frames the reader for the subsequent assumptions the document makes.

This context is never provided in the position statement even though it is implied by the statement's list of questions. Building from the Reingold quote, the first question proposes to demonstrate that “media literacy has taken on a more important role in preparing students for democratic life.” The statement provides statistics on the increased prevalence of digital technology (e.g. mp3 players, cell phones, etc.) use among today's young people. However, this statement of evidence fails to acknowledge that media literacy—depending on the definition—is present among today's young people since some form of literacy (or competency) is needed to operate such technologies.

The second question prepares the reader for an eventual unpacking of the term media literacy—how it is defined and its “essential concepts”—again, assuming that there is one agreed upon definition and that the concepts are all compatible. There are several theoretical approaches, as well as *tensions* within the media literacy community. While the potential for compatibility does exist, the document gives no insight into how these tensions would affect the success of media literacy implementation by the classroom practitioner.

The final question implies that pedagogical foundations for a media literacy curriculum will be provided as will examples of media literacy activities for the social studies classroom. The implication that what is included in this less than 1,800 word document would be sufficient for the successful application of media literacy to the social studies curriculum is problematic.

In answering these three questions, the NCSS position statement attempts to outline a skeletal foundation for media education in the social studies classroom that is based on predominant theories of media literacy. Furthermore, NCSS establishes that active citizenship through participatory media literacy is a focal point for the rationale of media education in the social studies. However during both of these processes, NCSS makes assumptions in regards to definitions and pedagogical practices that are in need of elaboration and— particularly in regard to the final question—fails to elaborate on what is required to teach media literacy.

Question #1: Rationale

The statement offers four rationales for including media literacy in social studies education. 1) Media industries are ubiquitous; it provides multiple access points with various sign systems; media and media technologies are frequently used for social networking and entertainment. 2) Corporations use media to position users as consumers and to reshape the world by “organizing, shaping, and disseminating information, ideas and values” (p. 188) and the small number of media corporations shrinks the diversity of ideas available to inform citizens. 3) “Media literacy offers us the framework to build upon their entertainment and social experiences with media so as to provide students with meaningful academic, civic, and public experiences that are critical and empowering” (pp. 187-188). 4) This new pedagogy of building on and providing meaningful experiences will “empower students to adequately read media messages and produce media themselves in order to be active participants in the contemporary democratic society” (p. 188). If these propositions were true and were tightly linked they would provide a strong rationale for including media in social studies teacher education.

Media are ubiquitous.

NCSS accurately states that “the 21st-century world is media saturated, technologically dependent, and globally connected” (p. 187). What NCSS fails to acknowledge is that the need for media education has *always* been necessary in a democracy regardless of the level of technology (news print, radio, etc.). NCSS is right in pointing out that we currently live in a multimedia age that is ever increasingly complex, and therefore requires new skills. The media world that our children are growing up in is significantly different from what other generations have experienced. Outside of the classroom, young people regularly engage with multiple forms of media including music and videos via MP3 players, text messaging via cell phones, and the consumption and creation of media on computers. “But, upon entering the classroom they are expected to disengage from this interpersonal, producer-oriented, digital world” (p.187). Using media literacy in the social studies classroom would make learning relevant and meaningful for current and future generations of students. Social studies classrooms that reflect the digital world that young people engage with daily are more likely to enable young people to “interact with ideas, information, and other people for academic and civic purposes” (p. 187).

Corporate media.

Understanding how media influences democracy and citizenship is a priority for media literacy in the social studies. As of this writing, nearly all media produced in the world is owned by six mega-corporations: News Corporation, General Electric, Disney, Time-Warner, Bertelsmann, and Viacom (cf. Bagdikian, 2004; McChesney & Nichols, 2010). One cannot put too fine of point on the possible consequences to democracy that this concentration of control over information holds. There are indeed other industries that have established this level of integrated oligopoly (e.g. the oil industry), and it can be argued that the public has benefitted

from some monopolized industries (e.g. the telephone carrier industry, see Appendix A). It is particularly disturbing that the media content industries have achieved this level of integration since democracy is best served by multiple story-tellers, with diverse points of view. At the root level of democratic theory, media systems are charged with providing information equally so that even marginalized citizens have the capacity to be engaged citizens, regardless of their level of access to resources. “Virtually all theories of self-government are premised on having an informed citizenry, and the creation of such an informed citizenry is the media’s province” (McChesney, 2004, p. 17). This role of media in democratic government is not discussed in the NCSS document and should be included in any media literacy program for the social studies classroom.

Media experiences are social and civic.

Media literacy is as important to the social studies curriculum as are the other literacies (reading and writing) taught in our schools. Sadly, media literacy is a topic rarely covered in social studies education. When *media* is covered, it is often done so from a historical perspective (video news coverage of the Vietnam War, for example) or the point of view of current events, in which the media serves as *gatekeeper* in a news saturated world for an informed citizenry. However, media *literacy* is rarely given the face time of the more traditional disciplines (history, civics, et.al). In fact, it is not considered a discipline within the social studies, or, at least there is a lack of attention to the role media play within these disciplines. This is ironic considering that there is probably no bigger influence on the *social* than *media*. “Whether we like it or not, this media culture is our students’ culture” (NCSS, 2009, p. 187). For example, while the *Pennsylvania Department of Education Standards for Civics and Government* do include an

understanding of the role of media, it is done from the point of view of American politics¹. Fox, Koloen, & Sahin (2007) argue that news coverage on American politics is often limited to discussions of “horse race” election coverage and “hoopla” and lacking in regard to campaign issues or candidate background (p. 219). While the authors point out that the media often fails in political coverage, what is lost here is the role that media and, therefore, media literacy play in the disciplines of the social studies.

Furthermore, it is important to note that a call for media literacy in the social studies is a call to address the need for a practical understanding of the disciplines within the social studies (history, geography, et al) and how that understanding can fill-in what former CBS Foreign Correspondent Tom Fenton calls “news gaps”(2005). The news gaps of which Fenton speaks occur when background knowledge that is necessary for understanding the significance of a news story is missing. For example, if a news consumer does not have prior knowledge of the history of U.S./Middle East relations, it would be difficult to comprehend why the events of 9/11/2001 occurred. The same can be said for understanding the significance of the vignette at the beginning of this chapter.

Media literacy is empowering.

While the National Council for the Social Studies may be the first entity to call for media literacy in social studies education, the concept of media literacy in education is not a new one. Myriam N. Torres and Maria D. Mercado stress the “urgency for media literacy... in teacher education given the crucial role of media as they touch every aspect of human life” (2007, p. 537). Specifically, Torres and Mercado emphasize the need for a *critical media literacy* that is based on three dimensions:

¹ Evaluate the role of media in political life in the United States and explain the role of the media in setting the public agenda.

1. The development of a critical understanding of how corporate for-profit media work, driven by their political and economic vested interests
2. The search for and support of alternative, non-profit media
3. The characterization of the role of teachers in helping students and their parents to become media literate users and supporters of alternative media (p. 537)

The authors argue that the need for media literacy is greater now than ever due to the current concentration of for-profit media in alliance with federal regulating agencies. Furthermore, if social studies teachers are to, indeed, incubate future citizens media literacy becomes a crucial component in obtaining that goal.

While technology has changed how media is created and distributed, what has not changed is the need for a well-informed public. In addition, while there are many sources for information, it cannot be proven that the public are any more informed now than in other periods of history. In fact, the need for media education may be more important in today's digital, 24 hour news cycle than ever before—if for no other reason, the nature of competition among news sources for a slice of the news consumer pie has made the news information business an *entertainment* business. This blurring of lines between what is sensationalized entertainment and real news can confuse even the most experienced news consumer, and this blurring is by design as networks compete for ratings and consequently profits.

Question #2: Purpose and Definition

Curious to my reading, the statement does not begin with a clear definition of media literacy. In the *Rationale* section, the authors provide a claim that ubiquitous media “requires new skills for accessing, analyzing, evaluating, creating, and distributing messages....are part of what constitutes media literacy” (NCSS, 2009, p. 187). Later in the same section, social studies

educators are encouraged to “provide young people with the awareness and abilities to critically question and create new media and technology, and the digital, democratic experiences, necessary to become active participants in the shaping of democracy” (p.187). With the *Purpose and Definition* section, media literacy becomes a “pedagogical approach,” “analysis of media content,” “an inquiry into the medium,” and “cultural competencies and social skills associated with growing participatory culture” (p. 188). For the first time, all types of messages are acknowledged as having “multiple meanings” and as working to “position audiences” and “frame public opinion” (p.188).

The two paragraphs that constitute the *Purpose/Definition* section accomplish little in establishing either purpose or definition. Instead, we are left with the bland overarching implication that media literacy can be all things to all people and subsequently ignoring the tensions within the field. NCSS implies a viable hybrid form of media education drawing on the expertise of scholars such as Henry Jenkins, Douglas Kellner and Jeff Share in an effort to help students “deepen their questioning of the relationship between information, knowledge, and power” (p. 188). However, NCSS fails to acknowledge the differences in any of the scholars’ approaches to media education and how those differences may affect how a social studies teacher would approach media literacy. For Jenkins media education is a participatory venture where students become media literate via the student production of media whether in traditional or digital formats. Indeed, the technology market is littered with products that allow the user to create and share their own media texts, such as digital video, sound recording, weblogs, etc., and the use of these products can be used as tools to further promote media literacy. The assumption here is that the student production of media texts will by default lead to critical understanding or, for that matter, that children need digital processes to produce such texts.

Kellner and Share define media literacy as a process that “involves gaining the skills and knowledge to read, interpret, produce texts and artifacts, and to gain the intellectual tools and capacities to fully participate in one’s culture and society” (Kellner & Share, 2007, p. 4 & 5). One could argue that Jenkins’ approach recognizes the importance of how fan culture can serve as a foundation for the critical reading of texts, while the Kellner and Share approach can be somewhat protectionist. That is to say, media education can be seen as necessary to protect young people from the predatory nature of advertising in a free-market economy in which young people with disposable incomes are viewed as an easy source of revenue. Of course neither approach is necessarily right, and neither approach is necessarily wrong. What is important here is that both camps provide the tools to develop a viable media literacy approach—just not in the cursory manner in which NCSS has engaged in the discussion.

Defining media literacy.

The term *media* includes the whole range of modern communications modes, channels and entities: television, cinema, video, radio, photography, advertising, newspapers, magazines, recorded music, computer games, the internet, and of course books (Buckingham, 2003). “Media *education*, then, is the process of teaching and learning about media; media *literacy* is the outcome—the knowledge and skills learners acquire” (p. 4). According to Livingstone, those skills include “the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create messages in a variety of forms” (2004, p. 4). As stated by NCSS “likewise, social studies educators should provide young people with the awareness and abilities to critically question and create new media and technology, and the digital, democratic experiences necessary to become active participants in the shaping of democracy” (2009, p. 187). Further clarification on these definitions—particularly in regard to participatory democracy—is needed if these definitions are to serve as cornerstones for

developing media education within the social studies framework. A more in-depth analysis of the fields that are elemental to media literacy (media studies, media effects, etc.) will take place in Chapter 2.

Theories on citizenship.

*“You can choose a ready guide in some celestial voice,
If you choose not to decide, you still have made a choice”*

Rush, “Freewill”

(Lee, G., Lifeson, A. & Peart, N., 1980).

Can a person be considered a citizen if that person does not vote? Iris M. Young (2000) argues that “the model of deliberative democracy implies a strong meaning of inclusion and political equality which, when implemented, increases the likelihood that democratic decision-making processes will promote justice” (Quoted in Camicia, 2009, p. 137). While the NCSS document argues that democracy and engaged citizenship are better served when the public is media literate, the document fails to define either of those terms. How one defines ‘democracy’ affects the analysis of media literacy on democracy. To define democracy, in turn, often requires us to parse out other terms that are often interchanged with or attached to democracy—citizen and citizenship, patriotism, nationalism, liberty, freedom, etc. As stated in *Democracy and New Media*, “we must recognize that ‘democracy’ is a disputed term” (Jenkins, Thorburn, & Seawell, 2003, p. 2). Furthermore, as observed by Terry Eagleton “certain meanings are elevated by social ideologies to a privileged position, or made the centers around which other meanings are forced to turn” (1983, p. 131). Like many of the terms listed above, democracy has been co-opted by factions that use the term for political gains. For example, if one believes that the concept of *freedom* provides for protest of government action, is that person still a *patriot*?

For the purpose of this section, I will primarily focus on democracy and citizenship, since citizenship is an act, or acts, that are practiced in a democracy. How should one define

competent and responsible citizenship? Traditionally, citizenship has been defined by whether or not an individual participates in the democratic process; i.e. does he or she vote. For now, let us analyze the definition of citizenship according to The Civic Mission of Schools Campaign (Golston, 2009):

Competent and responsible citizens:

- Responsible citizens are informed and thoughtful; have an appreciation of history and American democracy, understand public and community issues; and know how to obtain information, think critically; and enter into dialogue among others with different perspectives;
- They participate in their communities;
- They act politically through group problem solving, public speaking, petitioning and protesting, and voting;
- They have moral and civic virtues such as concern for the rights and welfare of others, social responsibility, tolerance and respect, and belief in the capacity to make a difference. (p. 4 & 5)

It is interesting to note that *voting* is listed in the third bullet point demonstrating that the act of voting is, at most, not the most important act of citizenship or, at the least, only one part of the many acts that competent and responsible citizens partake in. While it should be obvious that voting is an extremely important part of citizenship and democracy, it is also obvious that there is more to citizenship than showing up at the polls at election time. This is further complicated by the fact that there is no consensus in the social science field on what constitutes citizenship or for that matter, what classroom practices should take place to ensure that students will become engaged citizens (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p. 238).

Benjamin Barber provides an explanation on what he views as the three different types of democracy (2003). Barber first identifies what he terms *thin democracy* in which representative institutions dominate government interactions and where citizens are relatively passive.

“Citizens choose representatives, but leave those representatives, who remain accountable to the voters in the abstract, to do most of the real governing” (p. 36). Under thin democracy, experts and elites do most of the actual work of government, whereas citizens remain watchdogs and monitors, primarily engaged in private lives and private affairs. The role of the electorate in a thin democracy is akin to what Michael Schudson termed “monitorial citizens” (quoted in Jenkins, 2006) in that citizens go about their lives serving essentially as watchdogs over those they have chosen to represent their interests.

Barber defines *plebiscitary democracy* as one in which a referendum style of government dominates the methods in which citizens participate. This form of democracy is associated with mass culture and is sometimes labeled totalitarian, “since it is a form of democracy that eschews significant deliberation and debate and throws important decisions at an otherwise passive and propagandized public, who rubberstamp party choices by shouting out their prejudices” (Barber, 2003, p. 36). While Barber does not specifically state it, it would seem that the plebiscitary democracy is the least desirable as it is the form most easily influenced by power and money.

In a *strong democracy* citizens actually participate in governing themselves, if not in all matters all of the time, at least in some matters at least some of the time. Though not always existing as a ‘direct’ form of government, this form of democracy incorporates strong participatory and deliberative elements. While Barber’s definitions are useful, I hesitate to fully agree with the delineations he provides because of the fine line between his definitions of *thin* and *strong* democracy. Based on his explanation, the only difference between the two is the

level of participation in each. In his own definition of strong democracy, he acknowledges that citizens will not participate all of the time on all matters of governance. It would therefore seem that the difference between a strong participant in civil affairs and Schudson's monitor citizen would be an arbitrary level of participation that Barber himself must acknowledge. Such arbitration is problematic in a discourse on democracy since different points of view will indeed yield different expectations for citizens.

Democratization via media education: the public sphere in a digital world.

Jurgen Habermas approached the subject of democracy and citizenship by describing what he termed the public sphere: "By the public sphere we mean first of all a realm in our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed" (1979, p. 198). The public sphere is not confined to a physical space or commons—it is a public venue for discourse and civic engagement that includes everything from personal conversations to mass communications and in which access is guaranteed to all citizens. Habermas has had a major impact on shaping the idea of deliberative democracy. The idea of deliberation points to the procedures of open discussion aimed at achieving a rationally motivated consensus. "Citizens behave as a public body when they confer in an unrestricted fashion.—that is with the guarantee of freedom to express and publish their opinions—about matters of general interest" (1979, p.198). Since Habermas believed newspapers and magazines, radio and television to be the media of the public sphere, it is not a far stretch to add modern forms of communication such as the Internet to this list as having the potential to positively impact civic deliberation.

While Habermas recognized the role of the media on the public sphere, this recognition was not without concern. In the second half of the 18th century, newspapers increasingly took on the role of bearers and leaders of public opinion—weapons of party politics. It was not until the permanent legalization of the politically functional public sphere constitutional state—brought

on by the revolutions of the 18th century—that the role of media began to resemble what we see today. “It has since abandoned its polemical position and taken advantages of a commercial undertaking. It has transformed from a journalism of conviction to one of commerce” (p. 200). With this in mind, the Internet and digital technologies provide interesting opportunities to bypass the for-profit model of the media.

So far the impact of digitalization has had mixed affects on democracy. On one hand, the great idealistic achievement of *Thomas*, the Library of Congress Web server has been a disappointment. An extensive archive that houses all government documents, speeches, committee hearings, reports, and bills in Congress, *Thomas*—coupled with C-SPAN—offers the public a way to “follow the tangle paths through which legislative proposals become law” (Jenkins, et al., 2003, p. 3). Both of these resources have gone largely unused. Conversely, more than twenty-five million citizens downloaded the *Starr Report* and another two million downloaded President Clinton’s grand jury testimony in the first two weeks of their availability on the Web (p. 3). It should be no surprise that citizens living in a for-profit news media world would use these services no differently than the mainstream media news sources. Driven to sell advertising to support the bottom line, traditional news sources have devolved into selling entertainment, not news. The audience is the primary commodity of the mass media (Smythe, 1977), and media companies produce audiences and deliver them to advertisers—a process that ultimately creates audiences that seek out similar products.

Those who argue that digitalization will have no effect ignore the historical evidence on the impact of other technologies on democracy (e.g. the televised Nixon-Kennedy debates). Those who believe the digital impact on democracy will be negative seem to be sentimentally attached to a fictional history where all citizens had public/political voice and that that voice was

guaranteed to be heard. One would be hard-pressed to prove that this fictional world ever existed in *any* form. Or, their arguments are entangled in rhetoric concerning the social impact, e.g. the decline of face to face interaction in a digital world. What should be emphasized is that this perspective is anchored in sets of assumptions that largely do not see beyond the traditional/historical practices of the political system, the pros and cons of the historical methods of civic engagement, and the traditional role of the media in that system. “If the question is, Is the Internet good for U.S. politics? Then the answer may very well be yes” (Hindman, 2009, p. 18). For now, it seems that the effects of digitalization on the practice of democracy have yet to materialize.

At the same time, it is important to note that the current state of the Internet still offers available space for many forms of civic deliberation. “We are especially heartened by the development of ‘citizen journalism.’ The idea that journalism is some sort of elite practice that should be restricted to professionals always struck us as dubious” (McChesney & Nichols, 2010, p. 78). The Internet is becoming integrated with the established system of political communication, yet it is also being used to challenge established power structures. This is especially true for Internet Blogs, which when viewed as news, accuracy and reliability can be questionable—but when viewed as participation in the public sphere, can be a useful democratic tool.

Defining democracy: a history.

Michael Schudson brings a historical analysis to the digitalization of democracy. For Schudson, the promise of enhanced democracy through digitalization is hampered by the failure to acknowledge how democracy in America has changed throughout history. “My fear is that our use of digital media may be imprisoned by a concept of democracy that is a century old and,

even at its inception, was a narrow and partial understanding” (Schudson, 2003, p. 49).

Schudson argues that if the new digital media are to be integrated into a new political democracy, they must be linked to a serious understanding of citizenship, and this cannot happen if we simply recycle the old notion of the informed citizen—a practice that Barber may be guilty of.

Schudson’s analysis of the history of democracy in America establishes four chronological eras of citizenship. A *democracy of trust* existed at the founding of the nation, during which the founder’s faith in an informed citizenry was “slight.” “They did not support broad publicity for government proceedings, they did not provide for general public education, and they discouraged informal public participation in governmental affairs” (p. 51). There may be no better example of this ‘lack of faith’ than the events surrounding the writing of the U.S. Constitution in the summer of 1789. Fearing that publicity would impact deliberations and with the possibility of a public panic over the current status of the government, the delegation chose to board up the windows of the Philadelphia State House and hold the proceedings in relative secrecy over the next 4 months in the sweltering heat of South Eastern Pennsylvania. To further strengthen Schudson’s point, the Great Compromise—the act that created a bicameral Congress—included the ‘higher’ house of the Senate to buffer the possibility of populist movements within the direct representation provided by the House of Representatives. While the founders—especially James Madison—were proponents of deliberation between factions for democracy to work, it was clear that a more ‘cool-headed’ legislative body was needed to add balance to the legislative branch.

The next era democracy was characterized by extreme partisanship—a partisanship that evolved out of noble and not-so-noble intentions—characterized by the rise of powerful political

parties in the 19th century that included property-less white men, and later immigrants and former slaves. In this era, people voted as part of a social and civic duty—sometimes forced to participate by powerful ward bosses, the likes of which can be observed in any review of the history of Tammany Hall and the infamous Boss Tweed.

The adoption of the Australian ballot (a private ballot standardized and printed by the state), ushered in a *democracy of information* era. “Voting changed from a social and public duty to a private right, from a social obligation to party, enforced by social pressure, to a civic obligation or abstract loyalty, enforceable only by private conscience” (p. 53). In addition to ballot changes, the media had influence on the shift in democratic practices. Newspapers claimed independence from parties and covered politics with a degree of detachment. A push for increase party power resulted in the ‘curse’ of the parties getting what they wished for: the elevation of the individual, educated, rational voter as the model citizen. Informed citizens could now express policy preferences with little to no help from political parties by voting in primary elections rather than general elections, by voting directly for senator (with the ratification of the 17th Amendment in 1913) and by voting on state initiatives and referenda.

The civil rights movement led to a new form of citizenship—a *democracy of rights*. This new model of citizenship “added the courtroom to the voting booth” (Schudson, 2003, p. 54) by opening the door to a widening web of both constitutionally guaranteed citizen rights and statutory acts based on an expanded understanding of citizens’ entitlements, state obligations, and the character of due process.

So how should one define “active and engaged citizenship?” Traditionally, citizenship has been defined by whether or not an individual participates in the democratic process; i.e. does

he or she vote. In studying the relationship between media and participatory government, Jeffrey Jones has identified “three central and flawed” assumptions:

that news is the primary and proper sphere of political communication; that the most important function of media is to supply citizens with “information”; and that political “engagement” must necessarily be associated with physical activity. (Jones, 2006, p. 365)

From this approach, it becomes obvious that media literacy should play a vital role in citizenship education. For hundreds of years, traditional news sources have been the primary, accepted source of political information. It is with the advent of new media sources—television and, more recently, the internet—that the status of traditional news as the primary and accepted source has been challenged.

Our sense of what it means to be a citizen is framed by many sources outside of the traditional realm. Every magazine we read, television shows or movies we watch, discussions with friends, music we listen to—all create a lens through which we view our political world. In this sense, political participation goes beyond the concept of voting as the primary goal of democracy. Politics and media are intertwined in a purposely-created construct to benefit both sides. As Jones states, “we engage politics everywhere, all the time, and media are central to that engagement” (Jones, 2006, p. 379).

Question #3: Implementation

The *NCSS Media Literacy Position Statement* explains that the inclusion of media literacy will mean two changes in the social studies curriculum. First, teachers must expand traditional definitions of text to include the use of multiple sign systems, multiple design formats for those symbols individually and in combinations, and multiple ways to invoke meanings and emotions.

Second, teachers should deepen their “questioning of the relationships between information, knowledge, and power” (p. 188). Yet, the authors assert that media literacy skills are embedded in the NCSS curricular standards in other categories, and then list suggested “probing questions” and “media literacy activities,” which express some of the tension between the intent of media literacy reading and of media literacy creation/design of media texts. The statement’s last paragraph restates one rationale for media literacy in the social studies and ends with a claim that media literacy fosters civic agency.

These differences are slight and insignificant when focusing on the bigger picture of media education as outlined by NCSS. Consider the following from NCSS:

Media education built on critical inquiry encourages students to ask probing questions such as:

1. What social, cultural, historical, and political contexts are shaping the message and the meaning I am making of it?
2. How and why was the message constructed?
3. How could different people understand this information differently?
4. Whose perspective, values and ideology are represented and whose are missing?
5. Who or what group benefits and/or is hurt by this message? (p. 188)

And:

The following are examples of media literacy activities in social studies classrooms:

- Students compare and contrast the benefits and limitations of different types of maps before creating their own maps highlighting different geographic regions.

- Students analyze newspaper articles about historic events that affected their community and collaboratively create a wiki to share their findings.
- Students produce a video about their community with original interviews and share their video online as an active form of public civic participation.
- Students study the electoral process through analyzing mainstream media coverage of presidential campaigns and then create their own public awareness campaign about civic participation for youth. (p. 189)

It is evident that these examples provided by NCSS utilize media education approaches as espoused by Jenkins, as well as Kellner and Share. While this is a perfectly viable methodology in theory, I believe that for the social studies, further elaboration on a working framework is necessary to put these theories into practice. It is unclear from the activities and questions listed above that students will indeed become media literate because of the activities and questions. There is no discussion in the position statement on the amount and type of background information students will need to accomplish the example activities, nor is there discussion on how students will further develop media literacy. For example, teaching the causes of World War II requires teaching at least some content from World War I and the world economic depression that followed. These types of problems regarding background content are not unusual in social studies education.

The sample activities listed above also fall short pedagogically. For example, for students to analyze newspaper articles as suggested above, they would need the historical and social contexts to conduct that analysis, not to mention that assumptions must be made on the authenticity of the story, the news sources as gatekeeper of information, and so on. Alternatively, if the students were to study mainstream media coverage of elections, again,

necessary background information is necessary, as would be discussions and research on the effects of news framing, etc. In short, the NCSS document assumes that social studies teachers will be able to blend effortlessly media education into existing curricula, and while media literacy may indeed be a common sense fit into the social studies, further elaboration provided by this work is necessary.

The NCSS statement also acknowledges that media education, or its variant media studies, has been institutionalized in many countries while the U.S.—the world’s leading producer of media—has lagged behind. To this point, the NCSS statement adds “In the name of participatory democracy, this neglect can no longer continue” (p. 188). While I agree on this point, what is absent here is the need for curriculum that utilizes this legacy of media studies. That is to say, media education in the social studies should include background content on the history of media and the work of media and communications theorists in addition to borrowing the activities listed earlier.

In the end, the National Council for the Social Studies has indeed identified what is an important, somewhat obvious—and neglected—aspect of the social studies: the inclusion of media literacy to the existing social studies curricula. Regardless of intentions, the NCSS position statement can only serve as a starting point to further develop a media literacy framework specifically for social studies education due to: the author’s assumptions on how media literacy is defined and should be approached; the assumptions that there is one accepted definition of democracy; that the skeletal insight into the implementation of media literacy it provides is sufficient for social studies teachers to adapt into their existing curricula. In the remainder of this chapter, I will discuss and elaborate on the key pitfalls of the NCSS

document—particularly in regards to gate-keeping, and what considerations must take place if we are to avoid those pitfalls.

A firmer foundation.

On several levels, the authors of the NCSS statement make the case for including media literacy in the social studies classroom. In the United States, most citizens participate in a media ssaturated environment with new demands on their abilities to understand and produce media texts. Many of those texts are commercially produced and distributed with the pedagogical intent to teach users what we should know, who we are, and what we should value. Moreover, it is likely, but certainly not proven, that learning to read and create media texts and engaging in informed discussions around the practices could lead to increased civic agency. I am convinced that media literacy has an important place in social studies classrooms and by extension in social studies teacher education program.

I am troubled, however, by the apparent assumptions about the implied reader of the NCSS statement. Publishing in *Social Education*, the authors, and perhaps the Board of Directors, selected a particular readership of public school social studies teachers, pre-service social studies teachers, and college faculty who teach social studies education. According to my reading of the statement, these readers are positioned as holding stable and singular definitions of democracy, citizenship, and participation, little knowledge of media text use, and even less knowledge of media text creation. Although little evidence is offered to substantiate these claims, the tone of the statement is one of certainty and consensus. The terms are used frequently without definition and connected to digital civic agency without a strong bridge. For me, the statement is missing an elaboration of how the study of media content can be (should be?) tied to inquiries into media (ownership, pedagogy, and practices of production). Social studies teachers as social scientists

are prepared to construct and walk that strong bridge through an analysis of gate-keeping of information through media.

Further considerations: digitized democracy and gate-keeping.

Discussions concerning digital technologies and how those technologies affect engaged citizenship must include discussions on the importance of gate-keeping and mediators. As discussed earlier, the work of Benjamin Barber (2003) and Matthew Hindman (2009) offer concerns on the role digital technologies play in the practice of citizenship particularly in regards to gate-keeping. “The Internet is not eliminating exclusivity in political life; instead it is shifting the bar of exclusivity from the production to the filtering of information” (p. 13). Hindman points out that the process of filtering information—as exists on the Internet—is done predominantly by the traditional news networks that have a Web presence, and corporate search engines such as Google and Yahoo that restrict how information is retrieved.

Benjamin Barber (2003, p. 46), Matthew Hindman (2009, p. 131), and Henry Jenkins (2006, p. 254) all agree that the current state of media concentration has had a negative impact on the promises of a digitalized democracy. Jenkins acknowledges that this situation puts the onus of change on the public; “The question is whether the public is ready to push for greater participation or willing to settle for the same old relations to mass media” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 254). While Barber and Hindman acknowledge the implications of media concentration on democracy, it is odd that both seem to prefer these traditional gatekeepers to the plurality that is possible via the internet.

Hindman’s analysis on the gate-keeping of information in a digitalized democracy raises valid points. “Democratization presumes first and foremost that the technology will amplify the political voice of ordinary citizens” (2009, p. 6). According to Hindman, some of the valid

skepticism over digitalized democracy stems from concerns over the concentration of media conglomerates (discussed above); the movement of ‘cyberpolitics’ mirroring traditional politics because of the increased Web presence of traditional political actors; and the so-called *digital divide*. Even as Internet use expanded dramatically during the 1990s, disadvantaged groups—blacks, Hispanics, the poor, the elderly, the undereducated, and those in rural areas—continue to lag behind in their access to and use of the Internet. These three points exist as hurdles to overcome if the effects of digitalization of democracy are to be positive.

If the political voice of ordinary citizens is crucial to digital democratization, then it is important to analyze the impact the Internet has had on that voice. If Hindman’s observations are accurate, then that impact has had mixed success. While it is true that citizens face few formal barriers to posting views online, we care most not about who gets to post but who gets read, and there are plenty of formal and informal barriers that hinder ordinary citizens’ ability to reach an audience. “When citizens vote, their ballot carries the same weight in deciding an election. Posting speech online does not follow these egalitarian patterns” (p. 17). But again, this all assumes that the public are being ‘heard’ when utilizing traditional avenues to political participation, e.g. letters to elected officials, or letters to editors of newspapers. It also conflates voting with voice by first failing to acknowledge that most eligible citizens do not vote and therefore their voice is not being heard, albeit by choice. Second, it again fails to appreciate the fact that any letter to a politician will be screened by numerous aids and handlers resulting in no guarantee of the public voice being heard; and in the case of newspaper editorials, the news-for-profit model separates the wheat from the chaff allowing into print only the ideas that will sell copy. So the main question here needs to be, are the citizens voices being heard *without*

digitalization or are only a select few being heard? I would argue to Hindman that the ‘egalitarian patterns’ he believes to exist are questionable at best.

While I disagree with his faith in analogue democracy, I *do* agree with Hindman that much needs to be done if the promise of digitalized democratization is to be achieved.

According to Hindman the barriers that need to be overcome include:

- Political traffic is a tiny portion of web usage. Noncommercial sources of political information have failed to mount a real challenge to traditional media outlets, getting only a fraction of the visitors that news and media sites receive.
- The link structure of the web limits the content that citizens see. How search engines find and rank content results in a winners-take-all pattern. The importance of links challenges the notions that online equality is easy or inevitable.
- Much search engine use is shallow. The search strategies that people employ limit the political content they see.
- Even in the digital world some content is expensive to produce. It is cheap to start a blog—but traditional news organizations supply most of the public’s political news and information.
- Even in areas without incumbent players, social hierarchies have quickly emerged. A small-A-list group of bloggers actually get more political blog traffic than the rest of the citizenry combined. Top bloggers are better educated, more frequently male, and less ethnically diverse than the elite media that blogs often criticize. Hindman (2009, pp. 131-133)

Ultimately, the Internet seems to be both good news and bad news for the political voice of the average citizen. For motivated citizens, vast quantities of political information are only a click

away. Yet where the Internet has failed to live up to its billing has to do with the most direct kind of political voice. It may be easy to speak in cyberspace, but it remains difficult to be heard. While it does hold promise so far, the internet has not erased existing structures of politics.

Gate-keeping and the Engaged Citizen

"The mythology of your culture hums in your ears so constantly that no one pays the slightest bit of attention to it. Of course man is conquering space and the atom and the deserts and the oceans and the elements. According to your mythology, this is what he was BORN to do."
(Quinn, 1992)

The ability to obtain and negotiate the value of available information on government policies, political party platforms, and candidate backgrounds at local, state, and federal levels is crucial if one is to engage in the democratic process. This gathering of information results in a *perception* of knowledge that is influenced by the many gatekeepers involved in the collection process (newscasters, teachers, etc.), and in the production and distribution processes (heavily controlled by corporate interests). That is to say, gatekeepers influence our perception of information, whether consciously or unconsciously; on purpose or by happenstance.

While the National Council of the Social Studies should be commended on its call for media literacy in the social studies, the position statement fails to address the role that media—and teachers—play as gatekeepers in regard to information and knowledge that is necessary for engaged citizenship to take place. Important distinctions must be made to elaborate on NCSS's concern for students' ability to question the relationship "between information, knowledge, and power" (NCSS, 2009, p. 188).

For citizens to be informed and know how to obtain information and think critically about that information, it is obvious that an understanding of *how* information—drawn particularly from news sources—is created and manipulated in a profit-driven media climate. The idea of an

informed citizenry is as old as the country itself, for the founding fathers saw the importance of creating a sustaining, diverse, competitive media system if the new nation were to flourish.

According to James Madison, “a popular government without popular information or the means of acquiring it, is but a Prologue to a Farce or a Tragedy or perhaps both” (John, 2010, p.). For the early republic, information referred to the time-sensitive intelligence about public affairs and market trends that was commonly called *news*. Information was news for a spatially dispersed population that would never meet face-to-face; its circulation presupposed the establishment of institutional arrangements to keep this population well informed (John, 2010, cited in McChesney & Nichols, 2010, p.2).

This standardized definition of information is not without its detractors, especially when we add the digitalization and accessibility of information via the Internet to the discussion. How citizens use this information is at the core of much of the criticism regarding digitalized democracy. Benjamin Barber points out that the new technologies are information-based rather than knowledge-based. “Knowledge—defined as information organized according to values, theories, and paradigms—is the key to political competence as well as to culture and civilization” (Barber, 2003, p. 43). Barber believes that unmediated, raw information lends itself to manipulators we do not choose; information organized as knowledge allows us to choose authoritative manipulators. To be an informed citizen and therefore engage in democratic processes, requires the ability to obtain information on government policies, political party platforms, candidate backgrounds, etc, at local, state, and federal levels. This gathering of information results in a *perception* of knowledge that is influenced by the many gatekeepers involved in the collection process (newscasters, teachers, etc.). Again, gatekeepers influence our perception of information, whether consciously or unconsciously; on purpose or by

happenstance. The good teacher, the good editor, and the good facilitator represent trustworthy intermediaries to whom we entrust the initial filtering of raw data to help educate and inform ourselves. Mediators and gatekeepers, editors, teachers, pastors, novelists, journalists, or philosophers, all helps us make sense of the world. In a democracy, they are brought under democratic controls and are accountable to those they guide. “Democracy is not served by eliminating mediators” (Barber, 2003, p. 43).

Gate-keeping is an important issue under the umbrella of media literacy in the social studies. On the importance of gate-keeping and mediators, Barber is not alone as Matthew Hindman echoes his concern: “Gates and gatekeepers remain a critical part of the information landscape. The Internet is not eliminating exclusivity in political life; instead it is shifting the bar of exclusivity from the production to the filtering of information” (2009, p. 13). Hindman points out that the process of filtering information, as exists on the Internet, is done predominantly by the traditional news networks that have a Web presence, and corporate search engines such as Google and Yahoo that restrict how information is retrieved.

However, both Barber and Hindman make an assumption about the accountability and trustworthiness of traditional gatekeepers. Robert McChesney and John Nichols (2010) point out that throughout the evolution of journalism—specifically during the period from the Civil War to the first decades of the 20th century—the gate-keeping role of journalism was tainted by two core developments. First,

the core problem with professional journalism as it crystallized was that it relied far too heavily upon official sources (i.e., people in power) as the appropriate agenda setters for news and as the ‘deciders’ with regard to the range of legitimate debate in our political culture. (pp. 45-46)

It made reporters careful about antagonizing those in power, upon who they depended for access to their stories. Second, as professional journalism developed in the United States it opened the door to an enormous public-relations industry that was eager to provide reporters with material on their clients. More often than not, media outlets use the public relations industry as sources for information and news—sources that are rather dubious in terms of accuracy. When considering these two points, the high pedestal that gatekeepers are placed upon by the likes of Barber and Hindman becomes a dubious one.

This point is further emphasized by former CBS News Senior Foreign Correspondent Tom Fenton. Fenton's analysis is one shown through the lens of journalist who has seen firsthand the failures of those in a position to be gatekeepers:

As surely as 9/11 pointed up the myriad of failures of official agencies in Washington, it also revealed the abject failure of the news media. We had failed to warn the American public of the storm clouds approaching our shores. And in failing to do so, we betrayed the trust of the public. (2005, p. 3)

Fenton's accurate concerns reflect the experience and knowledge that only a former foreign correspondent would have. As he points out, newscasts are not interested in, nor do they have the time for history lessons. As a result, the public has no idea why news-making events, for example, in Bosnia, Rwanda, or Chechnya ever happened, or for that matter how events like these affect America at home and abroad. Fenton believes that among the several reasons for this decline in foreign news reporting is the expense of maintaining foreign news bureaus and the corporate ownership of media—a topic that I will return to often in this paper. To summarize, Fenton's work draws attention to the decline of quality journalism in regards to world events and how that decline affects the average American citizen.

If we as social studies educators expect to aid in the development of engaged citizenship in our students, how can we not add media literacy to the social studies curriculum? At the root level of democratic theory, media systems are charged with providing information equally so that even poor citizens have the capacity to be engaged citizens, regardless of their level of access to resources. Furthermore, it is important to note that a call for media literacy in the social studies is a call to address the need for a practical understanding of the disciplines within the social studies (history, geography, et al) and how that understanding can fill in what Tom Fenton's news gaps. For Fenton and other foreign correspondents like him, the events of September 11, 2001, were a watershed moment because while the public saw the terrorist attacks as disconnected events that occurred without warning, journalists like him knew it was a catastrophe waiting to happen. This observation becomes more salient when considering a Pew Center for the People and the Press survey that found "powerful evidence that broad interest in international news is most inhibited by the public's lack of background information in this area" (2002, June 9). Examples like this add further necessity for media literacy to be taught in the context that best suits the promotion of informed and engaged citizenship—the social studies classroom.

It is important to point out that while the obvious use of media literacy in the social studies classroom may engage in discussion of news coverage, other forms of media are equally important. Hollywood films, internet content, books—both hard copy and digital—even video games, influence our view of the world. These cultural artifacts are readily available to students, and indeed students most likely engage with these forms more so than news media. For this reason, all forms of media need to be included in media education.

Addressing so-called bias in American media.

“Exchange value, not truth value counts.”

(Marcuse, 1964, p. 7)

With the advent of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, it was only a few short years before nearly all media produced in the world was owned by six mega-corporations: News Corporation, General Electric, Disney, Time-Warner, Bertelsmann, and Viacom (cf. Bagdikian, 2004; McChesney & Nichols, 2010). One cannot put too fine of point on the possible consequences to democracy that this concentration of control over information holds. The global commercial-media is ultimately politically conservative, “because the media giants are significant beneficiaries of the current social structure around the world, and any upheaval in property or social relations—particularly to the extent that it reduces the power of business—is not in their interest” (McChesney, 1999). Media corporations are implicit in conveying a belief that much of what occurs in the media has a politically left-leaning bias. This allows for media corporations to be as conservative in their reporting as suits their needs all the while convincing the public that the opposite is true. This dialogue pushes what were historically considered centrist positions to the left in the public memory creating a situation where *actual* left positions are pushed outside the field of debate. To be clear, regardless of the political positions in this example, all political positions need to be actively represented in the field of debate.

While much discourse is produced concerning media/journalism bias—and whether that bias leans to the political left or right—it is important to note that these discourses are essentially made moot by the global commercial-media mechanism. The only bias that dictates what and how news is covered is the bias for turning a profit. That is to say, the corporations that own news organizations only permit newscasts that result in ratings, and therefore profit, primarily drawn from advertising. As Mosco reminds us, “commodification applies to audiences as well

as content” (2009, p. 12) and “the process of commodification thoroughly integrates the media industries into the total capitalist economy not primarily by creating ideologically saturated products but by producing audiences, en masse and in specific demographically desirable forms, for advertisers” (p. 137). Audiences are the primary commodity of the mass media and the ultimate goal of media companies is to produce audiences and deliver them to advertisers (Smythe, 1977). This process is secured by broadcasting a viewpoint that individual journalists control what is reported, not the corporate ownership (McChesney, 2004, p. 102).

Generally, this amounts to a sensationalized news journalism that gives the impression that the story is worth telling because it is important and has a direct affect on the public. For example, networks reportedly offered large amounts of money to get an exclusive interview with Paris Hilton on her release from prison for a drunk driving charge, although in 1997 CBS declined to fund a news team to Afghanistan for what would have been the first American television interview of Osama bin Laden (Fenton, 2009).

Furthermore, this concentration provides the power to control news events that affect the corporations themselves, i.e., newscasts that would show an unfavorable side to the parent corporations. “Corporations have multimillion-dollar budgets to dissect and attack news reports they dislike” (Bagdikian, 2000, p. 65). As noted by McChesney (2004, p. 52) the media corporations chose to provide very little coverage of the passage of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 and what the implications of the Act were to the public. Another example can be observed in the scandal in 2009 between News Corporation and General Electric in which McChesney and Nichols report:

Chairman Rupert Murdoch (owner of Fox News) and General Electric Chairman Jeffery Immelt (owner of MSNBC) reportedly agreed after a private summit meeting to not have

some of their news programs criticize each other's programs and the activities of the parent organizations. (2010, p. 41)

The question arises, "who watches the watchdogs?" In other words, if a vigorous press is essential to a democratic society, and that press is driven by profit instead of public service, how can we expect informed, engaged citizenship to take place? Contained within the requirements of being media literate is the ability to challenge the gatekeepers of information.

The nadir of textbooks.

*"Don't wanna be an American idiot
One nation controlled by the media
Information nation of hysteria"*

Greenday, "American Idiot"
(Armstrong, B. J., Pritchard, M., Wright, F., 2004)

No study or analysis of media literacy in social studies education would be complete without a discussion on the most-used classroom medium—the textbook. Furthermore, while the bulk of this section to this point has concerned how news media creates an "information nation of hysteria," we cannot overlook the role of classroom textbooks as primary source of information—a point neglected by the NCSS Position Statement. The textbook is not only a largely used medium; it is—along with the classroom teacher—the most important gatekeeper of information for students. The current climate of school textbook production and distribution offers a unique opportunity to study the gate-keeping function of textbooks for two reasons. One focus is on the influences of institutional process on the economic attributes of textbook production; the other on the content of the textbooks—in this case social studies textbooks.

The economics of textbook production has a profound effect on what books are published, and consequently on the quality of books available for educators. Four multinational textbook companies—McGraw-Hill/Glencoe, Pearson/Prentice Hall, Houghton Mifflin/McDougal, *BL* Harcourt/Holt—are responsible for 80% of the published high school

social studies texts for grades 8-12 (American Textbook Council, 2006). Obviously, a parallel can be drawn to the mega-corporations that own other media discussed earlier in this chapter. The simple logistics of current-day *corporate* textbook publishing negatively influence the quality of textbooks. Textbook writing has become “a corporate venture where publishers tightly control the production and marketing processes to ensure adoption [by school districts] and substantial profit” (Leahey, 2010, p. 33). According to Michael Apple, textbooks are subject to three distinct influences; economic, political, and cultural (1989, p. 282). Textbooks are an “economic commodity, bought and sold in the United States and many other countries under the conditions of a capitalist market. Because of this, [they are] subject to intense competition and the pressures of profit” (p. 282).

Textbook publishers work to keep their publications competitive at a minimal cost—all the while maintaining *brand recognition*, i.e. popular textbook titles are more likely to be adopted as later editions than would entirely new titles. To this end, textbooks are continuously revised, but never completely rewritten. Credited authors *inherit* authorship of the texts from previous authors, and complete subsequent revisions via collaboration with in-house editors of the publishing companies (p. 35). This is important particularly in the example of history texts since our understanding of historic events is likely to change over time as new information or historic evidence is discovered.

The corporate model of textbook publishing is also influenced by the demand side of the business equation. For example, the largest markets for school textbooks in the U.S. are the California and Texas Departments of Education since both entities mandate which textbooks will be used in *all* of the K-12 public schools in their respective states. Those state governments control content, supplemental materials—even the *weight* of the textbooks (McDonald, 2008).

Therefore, textbook publishers must publish books that are *one size fits all* in order to get the most profitability from the texts. That is to say, publishers would be hard-pressed to not print a book that runs the risk of sitting on warehouse shelves. As a result, all of the other school districts in the country, by default, must also use the books chosen by Texas and California. Support materials that accompany those texts (workbooks, teacher editions, etc.) are then minimally adapted for the various school districts to include specifics such as state standards. If a school in California or Texas decided to choose a book not approved by their respective state agencies, they relinquish their chance to have the purchase paid for with state funds.

One must consider additionally that the controversies within the social sciences concerning content that should be taught in the schools (cf. Evans, 2004; Nash, Crabtree, & Dunn, 2000; Symcox, 2002), and how those controversies have led to inaccuracies in history textbooks (cf. Leahey, 2010; Loewen, 2007, 2009). Therefore, it is not surprising that these textbooks serve as little more than pabulum, with the content watered-down so as not to offend or marginalize any group. Due to political and economic influences, textbooks are whitewashed of any real educational substance (Michael W Apple, 1989). This can be most saliently observed in a recent controversy in Texas. As of this writing, a state textbook committee is deliberating on history textbooks and considering whether civil rights leaders like Thurgood Marshall are *over-represented* in texts or whether early women's rights activist Anne Hutchinson was really just a "troublemaker" and should be excluded in new social studies texts (Stutz, 2009).

Alternative interpretations of history are often lost or suppressed when they are in conflict with the needs of dominant values and ideologies—a result of the *selective tradition* of historic interpretation (Leahey, 2010). "The social studies curricula, textbooks, and standardized examinations still reflect the values and beliefs of North America's economic and political

leaders” (Malott & Porfilio, 2007, p. 583). To this end, societies reconstruct their past to serve the needs of the present.

However, this *reconstruction* results in a curriculum lacking the substantive qualities that at least aid in learning and in some cases *required* for student learning. Without alternative interpretations that allow for classroom discourse based on historic evidence, students fail to understand the connections between what is studied in the classroom and what they experience in their lives outside of the classroom. This “encapsulation of school learning” (Engestrom, 2005) hinders student learning as they cannot affix any real-world need to what is learned in the classroom.

To this end, textbooks are also political—in that they are regulated by government policies—and, cultural since they embody the visions of legitimate knowledge of identifiable groups of people. Both positions establish textbooks as gatekeepers—both positions require educators to address the implications of the textbook as a gatekeeper in education.

Social studies education through the lens of hegemony: a look at gate-keeping.

An analysis of the political economy of education is useful in exploring the roles of gatekeepers in media and media literacy education as it pertains to the social studies. The political economy of education can be seen as a battle for control over what is taught through the control of hegemonic factors. It is one of the principle claims of Marx’s theory that for a society to continue in existence it must produce materials and reproduce people (Matthews, 1980). While the biological reproduction of a labor force is obvious, the reproduction and formation of the individual into a human *subject* is equally important. The public school system serves well the creation of the subject—a matter of socialization into the language, knowledge, competencies, structures, and ideologies of the society:

The Marxist thesis is that schools are primarily concerned with the production and reproduction of labor power...and this in a manner that ensures the stability of the productive relations. That is, schooling legitimizes the existing system of privilege, power and resources. Schools create competencies; they also create and procreate a public knowledge; this knowledge has a political function. (Matthews, 1980, p. 185)

There is no doubt that schools are, on the whole, effective in doing what they do; namely reproducing society's social and cultural values and public relations. They accomplish this by not only creating skilled workers but by also creating subjects for the dominant class.

Antonio Gramsci's theories on hegemony are helpful for understanding the role of schools in capitalist society. Gramsci sought to understand the specific contours of advanced capitalist societies by concentrating on their capacity to base control on consent more than on physical coercion (Mosco, 2009). "The notion of tradition is a powerful instrument in the construction of hegemony" (p. 206) and social studies education is one of the chief reproducers of tradition. Ernest Gellner further supports this observation; "the monopoly of legitimate education is now more important, more central than the monopoly of legitimate violence, the educational system therefore becomes a critical component of the social infrastructure" (1983, p. 35).

Henry Giroux further articulates the role hegemony plays in regards to public schooling and social reproduction. Hegemony "involves the successful attempt of a dominant class to utilize its control over the resources of state and civil society, particularly the mass media and the educational system, to establish its view of the world as all inclusive and universal" (Giroux, 1981, p. 17). Public education is an important social and political force in the process of class reproduction, for by appearing to be an impartial and neutral *transmitter* of the benefits of a

valued culture, schools are able to promote inequality in the name of fairness and objectivity. What happens in practice is far from this neutral appearance.

Herbert Schiller also addresses the nature of neutrality in regards to the manipulation of mass media. In *The Mind Managers* (1973), he highlights the myth of neutrality in his '5 Myths that Structure Content' announcing that "for manipulation to be most effective, evidence of its presence should be nonexistent" (p. 11). While Schiller's research applies this theory to communications, it is important to note that he believed manipulation to be a product of institutions outside of communication, e.g. government and education. This is echoed by Matthews when he states that, according to Marx, any theory of schooling is going to be dependent upon a theory of society. "Schools are locked into a social structure; an understanding of schools will depend upon an understanding of this structure. They may give the appearance of being independent institutions, but this is mere appearance" (1980, p. 182).

For schools to function in the maintenance of hegemony, they must give the appearance of being ideologically neutral. "The system of schooling, from the elementary through the university level, is also, according to the manipulators, devoid of deliberate ideological purpose" (Schiller, 1973, p. 12). This lack of ideological purpose is central to the concept that schools are neutral transmitters of culture possessing autonomy seemingly unaffected by outside influences. Bourdieu (1977) argues more specifically that it is precisely the relative autonomy of the educational system that "enables it to serve external demands under the guise of independence and neutrality, i.e., to conceal the social functions it performs so as to perform them more effectively" (Quoted in Giroux, 1981, p. 8). In schools, the production of hegemonic ideologies *hides* behind a number of legitimating forms. These forms include the claim by the dominant classes that their interests represent the entire interests of the community. This claim becomes

truth through the mechanisms of public education as these claims are more likely to find widespread acceptance if they are woven into the school curriculum:

Hegemony is also embodied in a range of substantive ideas such as the widespread acceptance of the marketplace as the cornerstone of a productive economy, of voting as the primary means of carrying out democracy, and of journalistic objectivity as the product of two views on an issue of the day... They constitute the common-sense currency of everyday life, developing out of those social relationships that make up hierarchies of class gender, race, etc. (Mosco, 2009, p. 207)

In the end, public education is anything but neutral, and in truth forms common-sense ideologies that help reproduce the subject-citizen. These common-sense ideologies are propagated through the curriculum and textbooks used in the schools and in the media in general.

Gate-keeping in action: why history content is important to the dominant class.

*“Who controls the past controls the future;
who controls the present controls the past”* (Orwell, 1949)

Educational reform movements that occurred in the latter half of the 20th Century offer excellent examples of hegemony and gate-keeping at work. According to Herbert Schiller (1973), “no cultural committee draws up secret instructions for the daily schooling of the American people. In truth, the process is much more elusive and far more effective because it generally runs without central direction” (p. 5). However, a brief analysis of these reform movements show that the process may no longer be elusive, but in actuality, overt. The primary reason for this change lies in how groups try to appropriate social studies education—particularly history education. “If we analyze the historical struggle over the curriculum, two competing themes emerge; social control competes with social justice; individual rights compete with collective rights” (Symcox, 2002, p. 11). As we will see, dominant groups who have tried to

command control over history content in schools attach their rhetoric to calls to patriotism and nationalism. Hermann Goering's famous quote rings true here:

Of course the people don't want war. But after all, it's the leaders of the country who determine the policy, and it's always a simple matter to drag the people along whether it's a democracy, a fascist dictatorship, or a parliament, or a communist dictatorship.

Voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked, and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism, and exposing the country to greater danger. It works in any country. (Goering, quoted in Gilbert, 1947)

Goering's appraisal of how patriotism is used by nation-states is easily adapted to education reform. I also feel it necessary to elucidate on what may be considered a comparison of Nazism to those who have had control over curriculum development and educational reform in the United States. The use of the Goering quote is not a knee-jerk reaction on my part to unfairly color the reform movements that I do not agree with professionally or theoretically. The processes that Goering described are not processes of Nazism—they are processes of *power*. Therefore, the quote is a way to analyze the discourses of power, not of Nazism—Goering's party affiliation is coincidence only.

While reform movements have been prevalent throughout American history, it is in recent history that the idea of the country being exposed to danger has been used more and more to trumpet in an era of school reform—another criteria pointed out by Goering. The launch of the Soviet satellite Sputnik in 1957 led to the Congressional enactment of the *National Defense Education Act of 1958*, representing a new chapter of federal involvement in American educational history. From that point on it was evident that public education was no longer just a

public benefit—it was vital to national security. The same can be said for two more explicit examples: the first, the release of the *Nation at Risk Report* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) will be discussed in further detail below; and the post-9/11 push for a commitment to reciting the Pledge of Allegiance in schools.

Following the attacks on September 11, 2001 and the following wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, conservative groups pushed to have the Pledge of Allegiance a required event at the beginning of the school day, with punishments (ranging from detention to notes sent home to parents) issued for those who did not participate. The fact that this requirement and subsequent punishments are a violation of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in the *Barnette* case ("*West Virginia Board of Education v. Barnette*," 1943), seemed to go unnoticed. For those who did notice, few would dare push the issue in the climate of patriotic fervor that existed at the time. What goes further unnoticed today is that Justice Robert Jackson's decision—pointing out that empty celebratory gestures are not necessary to demonstrate patriotism—came during the very war that Goering provided commentary on. It was not unnoticed by Jackson whose eloquently written decision may be one of the finest American documents ever written.

A Nation at Risk came on the heels of a policy goal by then President Reagan to disband the U.S. Department of Education and to fund voucher plans to encourage the privatization of America's schools (Bell, 1993). This was consistent with his overall campaign to strengthen corporate America by removing government regulations, by privatizing public services, and by devolving power to the states as part of his doctrine of "New Federalism" (Symcox, 2002, p. 40). No longer content to argue for the application of business principles to the organization of schooling, the forces of corporate culture had adopted a more radical agenda for public

education. While this may not have been the first time this was attempted, Henry Giroux sees it as pattern:

Central to this agenda is the attempt to transform public education from a public good, benefiting all students, to a private good designed to expand the profits of investors, educate students as consumers, and train young people for the low-paying jobs of the new global marketplace (1999, p. 140).

With the release of the report, it became clear that a situation arose in which Reagan's financial and ideological supporters saw unique opportunity to further their interests. In the final analysis, *A Nation at Risk* "was a policy paper that outlined a plan for the marketization or privatization of American public schools, combining the arguments of economic conservatism with the agenda of the Christian right" (Symcox, 2002, p. 157). For Michael Apple, the shift to market philosophy of education meant that instead of teaching students how to discharge their duties as democratic citizens, schools would now teach students how to discharge their duties as producers and consumers in a global economy (1996, p. 5).

This was particularly poignant on the ideological side of the equation as Christine Sleeter and Carl Grant point out:

Debates about curriculum content can be understood broadly as struggles for power to define the symbolic representation of the world and of society, that will be transmitted to the young, for the purpose of either gaining or holding onto power. (1991, p. 281)

Again, hegemonic control is perpetrated through the education of future citizens. Those in power want to preserve the status quo, and those without power want to challenge it. If the content of what is taught in schools can be controlled by the dominant class, the possibility of

challenge to that power becomes minimal. Of course, the status quo is quick to use Goering's tactics as did Secretary of Education (1985) William Bennett demonstrated:

National greatness, in the end, depends on—is embodied in—the character of our people. This in turn depends on three things: first, on our sense of who we as a nation are and what we believe in; second, on the well-being of institutions we create to express those beliefs; and third, on the values according to which we shape the next generation of Americans. (1986, p. 3)

For Bennett and others like him, those values and beliefs that are to be transmitted to succeeding generations should be the same that benefit the ruling class, for it is the true nature of hegemony to convince the 'other' classes that the interests of the dominant class serve themselves too.

There is perhaps no better way than to do this than via public education as pointed out by Althusser who argued "schools within advanced capitalist societies have become the dominant institution in the ideological subjugation of the work force" (Quoted in Giroux, 1981, p. 5).

In addition, we must not ignore the impact the standards movement has had on the economic side of the political economy of education formula. With *standards* come *tests* to measure the achievement of those standards, and standardized testing is an extremely profitable business. In the wake of the *No Child Left Behind Act* American schools administer approximately 45 million tests a year. With an average cost of \$3 per test there is little wonder why Kaplan, the biggest of the testing companies, was valued at \$70 million in 1991 (prior to NCLB); and is now worth \$2 billion (Leahey, 2010, p. 42).

Schools are now forced to allocate funding for tests (and remediation to curriculum changes to ensure that students pass the tests) that could very well be used in more needed areas. As Jonathon Kozul (1997) observed:

To speak of national standards and, increasingly, of national exams but never to dare speak of national equality is a transparent venture into punitive hypocrisy. Thus, the children in poor rural schools in Mississippi and Ohio will continue to get education funded at less than \$4,000 yearly and children in the South Bronx will get less than \$7,000, while children in the richest suburbs will continue to receive up to \$18,000 yearly. But they'll all be told they must be held to the same standards and they'll all be judged, of course, by their performance on the same exams. (Jonathan Kozul quoted in Giroux, 1999, p. 142)

Reform movements are nothing new, and more will follow this writing. With the passing of each era, more and more power is concentrated in the dominant class, the curricula support the interests of the dominant class more and more, and we do nothing. We do nothing because we want to be part of the dominant class. Schooling is *not* a vehicle for social mobility; no matter what is done in the school sphere, there is little change in the overall distribution of power and wealth in society. "Hegemony is stronger than ideology because it is based on consent, rather than coercion. But consent is very demanding, calling as it does for the ongoing formation of widespread, willing agreement to accept the dominant view as natural" (Mosco, 2009, p. 207). Education, particularly social studies education, helps spread the agreement, the tradition. Moreover, we as teachers are the prime gatekeepers of that tradition.

Four Approaches to Media Literacy for the Social Studies

If we revisit the vignette at the opening of this chapter, we can gain insight into what a media literacy approach for the social studies might look like. We could "analyze" the news story as suggested by the example NCSS activities, but what does analysis look like, sound like, for the social studies classroom? If we were to conduct that analysis from four distinct but

overlapping approaches—*historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical*—we would have a better understanding of the story and how it directly or indirectly affects our lives and the lives of our students. In the historical approach, we could look for context in regards to U.S./Middle East relations, the history of Islam, and of course, the events of 9/11/01. Empirically, we could find out the exact distance from Ground Zero the proposed mosque would be; we could find out existing building and occupancy codes for New York City, etc. We could seek to interpret the story in relation to similar events. For example, are there any Japanese owned businesses or buildings in proximity to the Pearl Harbor Memorial? How might this information impact our feelings to the mosque story? Critically, we could discuss, as Mr. Toobin did, the reasons that this story aired, i.e. why was it considered “news-worthy?”

These are simple examples that go far beyond the superficial activities suggested by NCSS. Furthermore, these four categories (historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical) are not exclusive—for example we could discuss the bombing of Pearl Harbor in a historical context as well. Or we could discuss how these geographical sites become sacred places within our culture—a discussion that may use all four of the approaches. What is important is that these approaches provide context for media literacy in the social studies and provide a more pronounced framework for the social studies teacher to build upon.

Chapter Summary

The goal of this chapter was to identify the need for media literacy in the social studies curriculum as called for by the *NCSS Media Literacy Position Statement* by analyzing the documents key points. Those points were: the rationale for the implementation of media literacy; the purpose and definitions of media literacy; and the position statements suggestions for the implementation of media literacy in the social studies. Through that analysis, I explored

the political economy of communication particularly in regard to the notion of gate-keeping. The NCSS document points to the increasingly complex world of media in which our students are immersed, and brings attention to the relationship between the media and participatory democracy. Some may approach media literacy from a protectionist camp in which our students need to be protected from such immersion by providing them with necessary skills. Others may view media literacy and the use of digital technologies as a way to keep social studies relevant in the students' lives. Either way, both circumstances demonstrate a need for media literacy to be included in social studies classrooms.

While the NCSS document brings attention to a topic that is overdue in regards to the social studies, the document failed to discuss the role of gate keeping in media/social studies education and how the definitions of media literacy, democracy, and citizenship are contested. If we are to critically analyze media and its relationship to citizenship, it is important to define democracy and elaborate on the role of gate keeping in relation to news media and textbooks. Furthermore, while the document offers a starting point for the types of projects and approaches to media education that may be useful, this starting point is only superficial and requires elaboration if we are to produce a working media education framework for the social studies classroom. In identifying the need for media education, it is important to establish a foundation for the role media plays specifically in the social studies—especially in regards to critically analyzing media particularly news sources. To this end, this research will be useful to existing social studies teachers, social studies teacher education programs, and student teachers.

In Chapter 2, I will further define and analyze prevailing theories on media literacy and how those theories can be adapted for the social studies curriculum using the four approaches outlined above.

Chapter 2: Theories of Media Literacy

“One hundred repetitions three nights a week for four years thought Bernard Marx, who was a specialist on hypnopaedia. Sixty-two thousand four hundred repetitions make one truth.”
(Huxley, 1932)

In Huxley’s dystopian world, children are subjected to hypnopaedia or sleep learning in which catch-phrases representing public policy are broadcast while they are sleeping. The result is a society that en masse can recall and repeat these phrases on social mores verbatim—the slogans mediate how they live their lives. Imagine Poor Richard’s Almanac played through headsets while, as a child, you slept.

The presidential election of 2004 pitted incumbent George W. Bush against challenger Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts. President Bush, a self-proclaimed “war president” was faced with being at a disadvantage in the campaign regarding his military service. While President Bush joined the Texas Air National Guard in 1968 and drilled with the Alabama Air National Guard in 1972 and 1973, his political opponent served two tours of active duty in Vietnam earning the Silver Star, the Bronze Star with Combat V (identifying combat heroism), and three Purple Hearts. It indeed seemed that the well-decorated war vet Kerry had the advantage in regards to military experience.

Enter the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth (SBVT), a self-proclaimed non-partisan group questioning the validity of Kerry’s deserving the medals. Regardless of partisanship, or of questionable financial backing of the group, or whether or not there was indeed ‘truth’ to their claims, one thing is fundamental clear. According to University of Wisconsin Political Science Professor Kenneth Goldstein, between May 4, 2004 and August 31 2004, the SBVT paid for four television ads that aired more than 500,000 times (Farhi, 2004). This does not include the release of a book, “Unfit for Command: Swift Boat Veterans Speak Out Against John

Kerry,” or the free exposure that both the book and the ads received from discussion in other media (e.g. news casts on political coverage). Post election surveys showed that the ads and subsequent coverage contributed to a less favorable perception of John Kerry who of course lost the election—a success story for those who would endorse hypnopaedia.

Repetition is a hallmark of media production because media corporations are in competition with one another for the same scarce resources—the disposable income of consumers. Political election advertising has adapted the same methodology as consumer advertising, i.e. the concept of barraging the viewer with repeated texts with hopes that the message sticks. For consumers of media to engage in the practice of citizenship they need to acquire the tools needed to negotiate the waters of the many media texts that are produced. For a consumer of media texts to negotiate the meaning and influence of those texts—as in the vignette above, that consumer must utilize a framework that applies approaches that are historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical. As we shall see, these approaches are necessary if citizens are to engage effectively in a democracy that is flooded with such texts.

This chapter will establish a pedagogical foundation for media literacy in social studies methods courses and lay the foundation for analysis of how student teachers approach media literacy in both methods courses and in their pre-service student teaching placements. To accomplish this, I organize the work on media literacy around those four themes—historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical. While a comprehensive discussion on all of the relevant theories and research would fill volumes, I attempt to narrow this field to those most important for this work. To do this, I will review dominant beliefs and research approaches that need to be addressed in a media literacy course for the social studies. Lastly, I will adapt that literature into a media literacy framework for social studies education that is based on those four distinct yet

overlapping approaches, and offer examples of how these approaches are already used by experienced teachers.

***“One person conditioned, to rule and control,
The media sells it, and we live the role”***

Ozzy Osbourne, “Crazy Train”
(Osbourne, J., Daisley, B., 1980)

There are many good summaries of media, media literacy and media effects on those who consume it and whether those effects were intended by the producers or not (cf. Bryant & Oliver, 2009). Regardless of the conclusions of the research, one thing is clear as implied by the lyrics above—the media is always selling *something*. That is to say, in the current climate of for-profit media, media producers must commodify and market viewership. To accomplish this, “the news media exert significant influence on our perceptions of what are the most salient issues of the day” (McCombs & Reynolds, 2009, p. 1). Yet, despite the recognized importance of media and the influence it has on informed citizenship, little has been done to promote media literacy in social studies teacher education. “We are immersed from cradle to grave in a media and consumer society and thus it is important to learn how to understand, interpret, and criticize its meanings and messages” (Kellner, 2003, p. 9). As discussed in the previous chapter, to adapt media literacy practices to the social studies requires a thorough background into the study of media literacy, the study of the political economy of communication, the role of gatekeepers in media and the classroom, and the role of textbooks as both a medium and gatekeeper of information. “By shunning the mass media, educators are missing the obvious: More public education is carried out by the media than by teachers, professors, or anyone else, particularly in the rapidly changing technological world” (Macedo, 2007, p. xix).

Applying the Four Approaches to Predominant Beliefs on Media Literacy

An adaptation of the existing literature and research on media literacy to a social studies curriculum should utilize approaches that are historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical. These approaches are not exclusive—indeed—most existing research has used combinations of these approaches whether overtly or implicitly. For example, the media/cultural studies work of Stuart Hall routinely relies on all four approaches, i.e. Hall’s work contains historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical elements. Further discussion and examples of Hall’s work are included below.

Two dominant camps have been established concerning the importance of media literacy education, each with compelling analysis of the role of media literacy. One notion is that media literacy and media education are necessary to protect young people from the culture of mass consumption that is dominant in media and regards “the consumers of mass culture as essentially duped and manipulated” (Buckingham & Sefton-Green, 1994, p. 126). This viewpoint is commonplace among cultural theorists (cf. Giroux, 2006, chap. 1) as:

discourse from left and right unite with the notion of young people as helpless victims of manipulation, and as extremely vulnerable and impressionable. These views have implicitly informed the dominant rationales for teaching about popular culture. These views seriously mistake the nature of young people’s relationship with the media.

(Buckingham & Sefton-Green, 1994, p. 17 & 18).

Conversely, young people can be seen as purveyors of popular culture. “(Popular Culture) is not the culture of subordination that massifies or commodifies (*sic*) people into the victimized dupes of capitalism” (Fiske, 1989, p. 7). Instead, popular culture is created *from the bottom up* whereas the dominant group benefits as a side effect of the process. That is to say, the artifacts and

literacies associated with popular culture only exist because the agents in society allow them to and the fact that dominant agents benefit financially is merely happenstance.

However, neither of these philosophical camps account for the complexity in the relationships between people and media. In regards to their relationship with media and the cultural industries, people are not dupes. The “circulation of media control—across different media systems, competing media economies, and national borders—depends heavily on consumers’ active participation” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 3). The current state of media control over the production and distribution of information and the incestuous relationship between government and media conglomerates, it would seem at the very least that the deck is stacked against the consumer side of the equation. That is to say, people can participate in media and drive markets but they are outnumbered in regards to the amount their voices can be heard and how much they can affect the industry through civic representation. While people can participate in the media culture and can surely create their own (as in blogs, youtube, home recording, etc) they need to have the literacy tools described earlier by Kellner to negotiate the shark infested waters of gate-keeping. Furthermore, while students can indeed create their own media with current technologies, this act alone does not lead to media literacy. What is missing from this framework of media literacy is context—context that can be provided using an approaches that are *historical, empirical, interpretive* and *critical*.

The work of Michel Foucault provides a lens through which to observe the power structure of media and popular culture. For Foucault, power is not a means or vehicle for subjugation in which one group has control or dominance over another. “Power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization” (Foucault, 1988, p. 92). For

Foucault, power is fluid among the agents who use it. While the amount and direction of power can change contextually and temporally, neither agent has the ability to hold all of the power, all of the time simply because it cannot be held by anyone (Foucault, Bertani, Fontana, Ewald, & Macey, 2003). While hegemonic forces do exist, “people are always complicit in the construction of asymmetrical relations of power and assigning differential value to various subject positions, even when they are attempting to challenge or subvert oppressive power relations” (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005, p. 47). This would imply that whether the products of popular culture are created bottom up or top down is of little importance. What is important is that products of popular culture do exist and they do so because they benefit *both the top and the bottom*.

Students and teachers are products of this power/knowledge relationship both inside and outside of the classroom. However, what is to be studied here is not the power/knowledge relationship between students and teachers per se, but to analyze how both students and teachers position themselves in regards to media literacy. To paraphrase anthropologist Ralph Linton and media analyst Marshall McLuhan, the last thing a fish would ever notice would be the water. That fact that both students and pre-service teachers have been born into, and matured within, a profit-driven, media saturated world must be considered when teaching media literacy. That is to say, it is reasonable to assume that neither students nor pre-service teachers recognize the influence of power/knowledge in regards to media and the influence it has on citizenship—at least not to the level I propose.

The Roots of Media Literacy

In developing a media literacy framework for the social studies classroom, we must acknowledge the existing foundational work on which this framework will be built. While it

would be foolhardy to attempt to present here all of the theories and theorists that have influenced media literacy, a primer of sorts is necessary.

I consider the following formula as an insight to categorizing the many works on this subject:

Media Production → Message → Consumer

That is to say, media messages are produced by entities, whether those entities are individuals or corporations, and received by consumers of media for a variety of reasons which will be discussed below. With this in mind, approaches to research and theorizing on each of the components of the formula can be conceived in the following adaptation:

Political Economy of Communication → Media/Cultural Studies → Media Effects

In this adaptation, the study of how and why media is produced is explored through political economy approaches; the messages that are produced fall under the category of media or cultural studies (terms which I will use interchangeably); how and why people consume these messages are explored through media effects research. These categories are by no means exclusive, many theorists and researchers have used combinations of the components in their work—my work being no different. That being said, the formulas act as a cornerstone for further development of a media literacy framework for the social studies. Political economy was discussed in Chapter 1 due to its relevance in regards to gate-keeping. I will now summarize the most salient arguments of media/cultural studies and media effects in turn.

Media/cultural studies: The Frankfurt School.

For the purposes dictated by this work, the realm of media/cultural studies can be said to begin in the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research (a.k.a. the Frankfurt School) in the years following World War II. Staying true to the four approaches, the work of the Frankfurt school

provides historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical foundations for media literacy. The Frankfurt School—initially established in 1923 as part of the University of Frankfurt—was founded by neo-Marxist theorists as a response to what they saw were the failings inherent in how Marxist theories were adopted by contemporary communist parties. Furthermore, traditional Marxism seemed inadequate in explaining why capitalist societies continued to flourish. With the inevitability of WWII, many of the scholars associated with the Frankfurt School fled Europe (many were Jewish) and following the war, some of the most profound theories on media and culture were developed. The impetus for this development was the belief that forces must be at play that impede the development of communism. For those in the Frankfurt School, those forces were present in the media industries.

Building off of this foundational idea, Theodor Adorno's collection of essays, *The Culture Industry* (1991), is a seminal reading in media studies. Adorno's work is interwoven with theories of political economy—particularly in regard to commodification and fetishization of cultural artifacts and audiences—through which he takes the stand that popular culture is rife with messages and practices that influence and guide consumers of those messages to support the status quo. "The dream industry does not so much fabricate the dreams of the customers as introduce the dreams of the suppliers among the people" (p. 93). For Adorno, the media industries are complicit in acts that allow for the deterioration of society in return for profit.

Another seminal work from the Frankfurt School is Herbert Marcuse's *One Dimensional Man* (1964). Marcuse argues that the mass consumerism of post-WWII era had led to a stifling conformity in culture and society. Furthermore, the mass production and commodification of culture, coupled with an almost sacred view of technology had led to a one-dimensional society, i.e. a society that had lost all ability for critical thought. For Marcuse the cult of technology and

mass communication had become a form of social control and domination: “Can one really distinguish between the mass media as instruments of information and entertainment, and as agents of manipulation and indoctrination?” (p. 8). As we become one-dimensional, we lose or squander our ability to improve the human condition. In both Adorno and Marcuse we see a connection to hegemony in that media serves as a tool of the dominant class—a focus of political economy of communication discussed in Chapter 1.

The Birmingham School of cultural studies: the work of Stuart Hall.

Stuart Hall’s work and accomplishments in British Cultural Studies are too lengthy to list here. However, two of his contributions to cultural studies are worth examining when developing a media literacy framework for the social studies for they further provide historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical foundations to media literacy. Hall’s work on the encoding and decoding of media texts is particularly important. To simplify, Hall believes that a person’s understanding of media messages is influenced by how producers of the messages encode, or present, the text while the cultural and socio-economic background of the consumers influence how the messages are decoded. For Hall, the meaning of messages lies in the process of this encoding and decoding.

Secondly, Hall’s discussion on representation—particularly constructionist approaches to representation—is worth investigating. “Representation is the production of meaning through language” (Hall & Open University., 1997, p. 28). For Hall, the concept of representation falls into three categories—*reflective*, *intentional*, and the aforementioned *constructionist*. In reflective representation, language reflects meanings that already exist. So, if someone were to utter the word “cup” one visualizes a cup whether they have seen the particular cup the speaker is talking about or not. For intentional representation, meaning is generated by what is intended by the speaker. Therefore with my example of the word “cup,” the intention of the speaker

influences whether or not the receiver is visualizing a vessel from which to drink or perhaps an award like the World Cup or the America's Cup. In constructionist, meaning is a culmination of cultural, gender, historical, etc. influences on the receiver of the message. If I have no experience in soccer or sailing, my idea of a cup may be more limited. The receiver constructs meaning based on material and symbolic processes, which, in turn, are based on the receiver's experiences.

Representation is important in media literacy because media producers manipulate signs and language to appeal to some connection to the consumer. The consumer understands the meaning of these messages because he/she understands the same signs. Cultural objects have meaning because of signs, therefore media messages use these too. In this *semiotic* approach, "not only words and images but objects themselves can function as signifiers in the production of meaning" (p. 37).

For example, as of this writing a popular series of television commercials produced by the Geico Automobile Insurance Company, takes well-known sayings and phrases from folk culture ala Poor Richard's Almanac and creates a visual representation of those phrases to comic results. To the repeated question asked by a spokesperson "can switching to Geico save you 15% on your car insurance" example answers which are then dramatized for the viewer include, "is a bird in the hand worth two in the bush?" or "do woodchucks chuck wood?" Once these familiar sayings are dramatized, their oddly ridiculous meaning—or lack thereof—is funny. But they are only humorous because the viewer has made a connection to the representation of meaning in both the spoken phrase and the dramatization.

This semiotic conceptualization is limited by the narrow uses of language. Because of this Hall believes the work of Michel Foucault on discursive practices is important in understanding representation:

“in a culture, meaning often depends on large units of analysis—narratives, statements, groups of images, whole discourses which operate across a variety of texts, areas of knowledge about a subject which have acquired widespread authority. Semiotics seemed to confine the process of representation to language, and to treat it as a closed, rather static system” (p. 42).

Foucault’s theories on discourse especially power/knowledge relations will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

Whether in the examples of the use of the word ‘cup’ or in the wordplay used in the Geico Insurance commercials, in all of these examples we observe the importance of historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical approaches for media literacy.

Media effects.

Media effects research attempts to determine how users are shaped by various media, taking into account variations in media content and forms as well as the users themselves. The field of media effects research is a vast and complex one admittedly requiring more detail than I can offer here. Regardless, I will attempt to address the more salient research and theories as they relate to my views of media literacy in the social studies. Media effects research falls at the end of the formula I offered above, focusing particular on how messages are received by the consumer. Coincidentally, they coincide with Stuart Hall’s use of intentional and constructionist representation. That is to say, media effects research often attempts to marry how messages are intended by the producer to how and why they are received by the consumer.

While media effects research can include product marketing research (for consumer goods, video games, film); the effects of media on personal and public health (wellness, eating disorders, body image); racial, ethnic, and gender stereotyping; etc.; I will primarily focus on theories of framing, media priming, third-person effect, and uses-and-gratification theories (cf. Bryant & Oliver, 2009). Furthermore, the historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical approaches can be understood as a connecting thread between and within all of the following media effects theories.

News framing is particularly of interest for media literacy in the social studies classroom. Just as artists will choose a frame to help audiences see their work a certain way, “journalists—often subconsciously—engage in essentially the same process when they decide how to describe the political world” (Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2009, p. 17). Through framing, news agencies can influence how audiences perceive different issues. This framing is a by-product of the narratives journalists create to make their stories more interesting. While those narratives do serve a purpose in regards to context, they can also be deceiving when overstating the importance of the story. Consider the vignette at the beginning of Chapter 1 concerning the pastor who threatened to burn the Quran. By framing that story as one that should concern the nation in the days leading up to the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, news agencies create a perception that did not exist prior to those reports. When framing is absent, news stories are nothing but dry facts. But framing also can be subtle, for example when journalists refer to “Obama” instead of “President Obama,” or “Bush” vs. “President Bush” thereby inadvertently denying the respect that should be associated with that elected office.

Media priming involves observing some short-term impact to the stimulus provided by a media text (in this case definitions of “short-term” vary in the research). Using the metaphor of a water pump, “priming refers to the effects of the content of the media on people’s later behavior

or judgments related to the content that was processed” (Roskos-Ewoldsen, Roskos-Ewoldsen, & Carpentier, 2009, p. 74). Examples of priming research include investigating whether or not exposure to media violence results in children exhibiting more aggressive behavior for short periods of time following the exposure; or a well-known study in which exposure to coverage of the Iran-Contra Scandal affected how people viewed then President Reagan (Krosnick & Kinder, 1990). In both examples, the viewers were “primed” or influenced by what they saw and that influence can be measured and observed.

The third-person effect refers to an individual’s perception that a media text has a stronger impact on others than on oneself –an impact that is often overestimated (Perloff, 2009). Unlike other media effects research that attempts to measure “media effects on beliefs, it examines beliefs about media effects” (p. 252). Third-person effects can be divided into two subcategories. For example, one can support the recall of a violent video game not because of its threat to their own children, but because it is perceived to be a threat to someone else’s children, again believing that the effect is stronger on others. Secondly, the third-person effect can influence one’s behavior based on their perception of what others are doing. For example, the media often contains stories of how all college students drink alcohol; I’m a college student, therefore I should drink alcohol. “The prevailing interpretation is that the third-person effect is a subset of a universal human tendency to perceive the self in ways that makes us look good or at least better than other people” (p. 256).

Uses-and-gratifications research “has focused on audience motivation and consumption. It has been guided by revised research questions shifting the focus to what people do with the media, instead of what the media do to people” (Rubin, 2009, p. 168). This shifting of focus

represents the individual as an active consumer of media—as opposed to passive—therefore, uses-and-gratifications research is particularly elemental in media literacy.

Applying Theory to a Working Framework of Media Literacy

The work of James W. Carey is also important in understanding why media literacy should be taught. Furthermore, Carey’s analysis of the ‘communication culture’ is a perfect fit for media literacy specifically designed for social education and likewise demonstrates the need for historic, empirical, interpretive, and critical approaches. For Carey, human beings create language and texts to communicate their ideas and ultimately construct the culture in which they live. This construction of culture is essentially a *construction of the social*, a foundation on which society is formed. The social culture is formed by the symbols we create and the products of those symbols—our history, our sense of place, our position in society, and our institutions—are elements of social studies education.

Carey separated his analysis on the study of communication culture into two alternative concepts: the *transmission* view of communication and the *ritual* view of communication. Both concepts have religious origins. Stated simply, the transmission view of communication culture is a top-down model, providing for control of symbols and messages over distance. Carey explains this model through historical examples of transmission evident in the historical movement of Christianity (physically, orally, etc.). Carey sees ritual communication in regard to the ‘communion,’ i.e. the “maintenance of society in time” as opposed to the maintenance of messages in space (Carey, 2009, p. 15). In this way, ritual communication is a ‘bottom-up’ model, serving a purpose in the development of community. Carey further delineates between transmission and ritual in his discussion on the roles of newspapers. In the transmission view, the role of the newspaper is to spread information and knowledge over distances. In the ritual

view news is “not information but drama” (p. 17), where our views of the world are portrayed and in some cases confirmed as we assume roles within that drama.

While these models have lost much of their religious connotation, their implications are the same. While Carey does not go so far as to claim that mass communication and media have *replaced* religion, media is a dominant thread in the fabric of society—dominance that can be traced to the construction of ceremony and community in religious practices. Furthermore, *reality is created* through the construction and utilization of symbolic forms of communication by which society creates institutions. Because of this an understanding of communication culture—a media literacy—is of paramount importance for young citizens.

Through David Hesmondhalgh, the study of media and culture moves from the theoretical to the practical. Hesmondhalgh focuses on the production of symbols and texts through what he refers to as the cultural industries (Hesmondhalgh, 2007). Hesmondhalgh’s view on communication culture echoes that of Carey in that the production of texts has an influence on our understanding of the world. Hesmondhalgh acknowledges the observations of Adorno and Horkheimer that, through commodification, culture has lost its ability to act as a utopian critique (p. 16). In modern capitalist democracy culture and industry had fused together creating an undesirable relationship between concepts that should remain separate.

While the implication here is that capitalist industry has negatively influenced culture through commodification, it is important to avoid this simplistic world view. Hesmondhalgh asserts that the cultural industries and the texts that they produce can be characterized as complex, ambivalent, and contested (p. 4). *Complex* in that there is an intricate web of symbiotic relationships between producers of cultural texts, the consumers of those texts, and government entities that regulate those texts. The cultural industries are *ambivalent* in regards to the modus

operandi of the cultural industries, i.e. the reasons that cultural industries produce texts in the first place, is due to the fact that the commodification of texts is profitable. Finally, because of the continuing struggle between those who produce cultural texts and those who consume them, it is important to understand this *contested* nature of the cultural industries.

To this end, a media studies course must recognize what is popularly viewed as two ends of a cultural industries spectrum, and then *deconstruct* that linear model. Hesmondhalgh recognizes the opinion of Bernard Mieve who “argued that the introduction of industrialization and new technologies into cultural production did indeed lead to increasing commodification, but that it also led to exciting new directions and innovations” (p. 17). The creation of this false dichotomy overly simplifies the type of scholarship needed in media literacy. Indeed, Hesmondhalgh’s view of media and media production as being ‘complex, ambivalent, and contested’ should be a keystone in media literacy.

Using the four approaches as a foundation, a media literacy curriculum for the social studies would include elements of the history of media and media studies, an analysis of the political economy of communication, and media effects research. All of these bodies of research apply historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical elements—elements that already exist in social studies curricula, but have yet to be adapted explicitly for media literacy applications. These four approaches would aid in adapting media literacy for social studies curricula, and in social studies teacher education programs.

Considerations in Adapting Media Literacy to the Social Studies

*“We got the bubble-headed-bleach-blonde who comes on at five
She can tell ‘bout the plane crash with a gleam in her eye
It’s interesting when people die-gives us dirty laundry”*

Don Henley, “Dirty Laundry”
(Henley, D., Kortchmar, D., 1982)

*“The Spectacle is not a collection of images; it is a social relation between people that is
mediated by images.”*

(Debord, 1967, p. 7)

How media texts are produced, distributed, and received, is a direct reflection of the market system present in mass communications. This is further complicated by why individuals seek out those texts. Whether or not people crave “dirty laundry” to satisfy some uses-and-gratifications need or at what level do social constructions mediate those produced texts, is only part of the media literacy process. However, these observations do serve as significant variables in understanding the whole formula of media literacy.

As mentioned earlier, while the notion of media literacy is not new, a social education approach to media literacy is overdue. This approach sees media literacy through the lens of history, citizenship, geography, et.al.—topics usually associated with the social studies. Furthermore, I acknowledge that good teachers already utilize some form of the framework that I propose whether or not they view that similar use as formalized practice (cf. Marcus, Metzger, Paxton, & Stoddard, 2010, or Matthews, 2009). Examples of these practices will be discussed below.

An integral part of media literacy for social education would naturally be a critical analysis of news media in our understanding of history and civic engagement. On this topic, James W. Carey analyzes the work of Walter Lippmann and John Dewey. Lippmann and Dewey’s differing views on the value and construction of public opinion are the kernel of

Carey's justification for cultural communication studies. Lippmann's views are especially relevant in regards to the role of the news media:

news and truth are not the same thing, and must be clearly distinguished. The function of news is to signalize an event, the function of truth is to bring to light the hidden facts, to set them into relation with each other, and make a picture of reality on which men can act. Only at those points, where social conditions take recognizable and measurable shape, do the body of truth and the body of news collide. (1997, p. 226)

According to Lippmann, "a free system of communication will not guarantee perfect information, and therefore there are no guarantees of truth even when the conditions of freedom are secure" (Carey, 2009, p. 58). Active civic engagement, therefore, can only exist when the public have access to accurate representations of the world. As mentioned earlier in Carey's discussion on the ritual view of communication, a news media that focuses on the 'drama' is problematic in creating effective public opinion.

John Dewey, as Carey points out, differed from Lippmann in how each viewed the role and construction of public opinion. For Dewey, public opinion can only be formed through active discussion in the public sphere. In this model, discussion of this nature does not only create public opinion but also determines the accuracy of representations of the world. But can discussion take place without the presence of some kind of literacy? The role of media literacy is not to cultivate *correct* representations but to teach individuals how to critically analyze those representations. Only then can public opinion be formed through discussion. Therefore, the key to the argument is that both Lippmann and Dewey are correct. As Carey points out, "the divorce of truth from discourse and action—the instrumentalization of communication—has...disrupted the very notion of truth, and therefore the sense by which we take our bearings in the world is

destroyed” (p. 64). For this reason, a critical analysis of news media is pivotal for media literacy in social education.

David Hesmondhalgh offers his own approaches to understanding media and culture. To do this, Hesmondhalgh first analyzes the deficiencies in common approaches to cultural studies. Economics as a discipline has played a pivotal role in generating forms of public policy. Traditionally, economics focuses on how human wants can be most efficiently satisfied. As Hesmondhalgh points out, “the equation of human happiness with the optimizing of economic satisfactions... provides a limited basis on which to proceed in assessing the cultural industries” (Hesmondhalgh, 2007, p. 30). However, it is important to recognize the importance of economic concepts in their influence on the production side of the cultural industries.

Hesmondhalgh also discusses the role of what he calls the “liberalist-pluralist” view in the cultural studies. From this point of view, media literacy has most often focused on the issues of power and social justice in regards to cultural production and the *effects* of media on audiences (p. 32). However, the liberalist-pluralist viewpoint fails to acknowledge how the cultural industries interact with the economic, political and sociocultural systems that exist in society. Media industries and the texts that they produce do not occur in a vacuum. They are part of a larger network that interacts, and responds to media. In addition, the media’s role in people’s everyday lives affects how we view the workings of democracy, engage in civic discourse, and how we interact in other aspects of our lives.

In Hesmondhalgh’s discussion on political economy approaches to cultural studies, he points out the crux of the political economy argument—that cultural industries serve the interests of the wealthy and powerful. As discussed earlier, Hesmondhalgh views the cultural industries and the texts they produce as complex, ambivalent, and contested. Therefore the political

economy approach's focus on the ownership and control of the cultural industries is problematic. Again, the false dichotomy that cultural industries are either good or bad is not productive in a media literacy framework as that dichotomy over-simplifies an incredibly complex relationship. However, an understanding of the political economy of the media industries is useful in a media literacy course. This will be further discussed below.

With this in mind, Hesmondhalgh lays out his approach to cultural studies. A cultural studies approach must involve the examination of the prominent patterns of cultural behavior and how those patterns impact the cultural industries themselves. To do this, scholars need to first realize that what we can consider everyday culture must be taken seriously. The scholarship of the likes of Adorno and Horkheimer ignores this point—more specifically, it over-simplifies the complex relationship between culture and media. Regardless of the degree of commodification, culture's impact on society cannot be ignored.

Second, an effective approach to cultural studies must refine the definition of the term culture. Culture is both a complex and simple concept. As James Carey points out, communication culture is made up of the symbols which we use to create our identities (both individually and as communities), our institutions (religious, political, social, etc.), and the practices and material objects that comprise our lives. Or as Hesmondhalgh states, it is important to view culture as a “complex space where many different influences combine and conflict” (p. 41). This simplicity in definition is, ironically, what makes the concept so complex.

Finally—and connected to the complexity of definition—cultural studies need to take into account the subjectivity, identity and discourses in relation to culture and how those issues affect those voices that are dominant in culture and those that are marginalized in culture. While Hesmondhalgh's overall approach—for the most part—is one of political economy, it is

important to note and understand that how cultural industries do business is shaped by what people want from culture.

The research of David Buckingham and Julian Sefton-Green is also useful when applying media literacy to the social studies. Using Buckingham's work *Watching Media Learning: Making Sense of Media Education* (1990) as a basis for praxis he identifies two major concerns in teaching media literacy. The first concern deals with the relationship between students' existing knowledge of the media and the academic knowledge that we make available in schools. This concern will be discussed in more detail in the next section on Vygotskian concept development. Second the relationship between theory and practice in media literacy, between students' critical analysis and their involvement in practical production (Buckingham & Sefton-Green, 1994, p. 7).

In addition, young people are inaccurately recognized as a single social group differentiated from adults when in reality, social diversity is prevalent among groups of young people and the media. As young people use media, that use functions in constructing and negotiating social relationships. Individuals socialize themselves into group membership when talking about the media they experience, and thereby construct their own cultural identities. These are important points to consider as we design a media literacy course for teacher educators.

Vygotsky's Theory of Concept Development

Building on the NCSS Statement that social studies teachers can work from the students' spontaneous uses of media in order to make them academic, I return to the tension between Kellner and Share's structuralist view and Jenkins's post-structural view on agency. The work of Lev Vygotsky is my pedagogical conduit.

In the beginning comes the formation of concepts, then the application of an already formed concept to new objects, next the use of the concept in free associations, and finally the work of concepts in the formation of judgments and new concepts. (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 105)

According to Lev Vygotsky, school instruction needed to be organized around the students' acquisition of *scientific* concepts—which can be contrasted with *spontaneous* concepts—for learning to take place (Karpov, 2003). The latter refer to the understandings that the students have at the beginning of their education—the knowledge they *bring with them*. Students have a highly evolved understanding of these spontaneous concepts, and that understanding provides the basis for scientific concept development. That is to say, as new concepts are introduced they will be cognitively attached to the existing concepts and will constantly influence each other as the move from a stasis of abstraction to concrete. These newly formed concrete concepts will be applied to new objects resulting in an internalization of the concepts. Vygotsky was “interested in the problem of internalization of symbolic psychological tools and social relations” (Vygotsky, 1986, p. xxvi). While concept development can be applied to all disciplines—Vygotsky did the bulk of his research in language development (Vygotsky, 1986)—with the exception of language, students may have a more developed understanding of media than any other concept.

Students enter the classroom with a highly evolved understanding of the media. “We might consider children’s existing understanding of the media as a body of spontaneous concepts” (Buckingham, 2003, p. 141). Using Vygotsky’s theories of concept development would develop those spontaneous concepts into scientific concepts. Scientific concepts play a significant role in the mediation of students’ thinking and problem solving in different subject

domains. However, scientific concepts play such a role only if they are supported by students mastery of relevant procedures (Karpov, 2003). Furthermore:

The aim of media education is not to merely enable children to make sense of media texts or to enable them to ‘write’ their own. It must enable them to reflect systematically on the processes of reading and writing themselves, and to understand and analyze their own experience as readers and writers. (Buckingham & Sefton-Green, 1994, p. 148)

Vygotsky’s theories of concept development provide a rich theoretical foundation for bridging the gaps between the knowledge of media that students bring into the classroom with them, and that of a more balanced knowledge of media that can be provided in the classroom—a bridge between spontaneous and scientific concepts. The true goal is to have these scientific concepts become spontaneous in their own right. That is to say, when development has come full circle, scientific concepts will meld with existing concepts to become spontaneous and learning becomes a fluid act. It is important to note here that approaching student development as fluid avoids the “encapsulation of schooling” discussed by Engestrom (2005). Engestrom’s work—influenced by Vygotsky—takes on the “issue of discontinuity between learning in school and cognition outside of school” (p. 157). Simply stated, students rarely make the connection between what is learned in school and their experiences outside of school because new concepts presented in the classroom remain at an abstract stage. For Engestrom, schools need to utilize instructional strategies that help students develop an understanding of concepts that moves from the abstract to the concrete.

However, Vygotsky’s theories are not without their limitations, primarily due to the historical context of Vygotsky’s work. After finishing his university studies in law at Moscow University in 1917—following the Russian Revolution—he began teaching in state schools.

Between this time and 1924, Vygotsky became increasingly interested in psychology and eventually “made his debut” (van der Veer & Valsiner, 1993, p. 12) in the world of psychology at the Second Psychoneurological Congress held in Leningrad on January 6, 1924 (Vygotsky & Kozulin, 1986). Vygotsky set the psychological world ‘on its ear’ by taking aim at reflexology—the dominant method of psychological study at the time—and proposed a more developmental approach (p. xvii).

Due primarily to Cold War relations, most of Vygotsky’s work was unpublished in the West until the mid 1980’s. It was around this time that students of Vygotsky—most notably Alexander Luria—made efforts to bring Vygotsky’s work to a larger audience. Vygotsky’s theories on the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) are likely the most popular of all of his educational theories. Because of the historical time period of his work, many archaic concepts and terminology that Vygotsky uses are found offensive—for example, special needs learners were given the label *defective*.

Secondly, and more important to the current discussion on media literacy, is the privileged position in which Vygotsky holds *scientific* concepts over those that are categorized spontaneous (cf. Buckingham & Sefton-Green, 1994, pp. 150-151). This would imply that the knowledge that students acquire outside of the classroom is of lesser value compared to that which is acquired within. Again this cultural bias can easily be attributed to the temporal (early 20th century) and geographic (Stalinist Soviet Union) factors of his research. As has been made clear in this research, no privilege is given to where students obtain their knowledge on media. Regardless of these limitations, Vygotsky’s theories of concept development add a needed dynamic element to media literacy and should be part of a methodology that is *historical*,

empirical, interpretive, and critical. This dynamic element will be further discussed in Chapter 4.

A Four-pronged Approach to Media Literacy in the Social Studies

“You know, Barbara, the Arabs have decided to jack up the price of oil another 20%... uh, the CIA has been caught opening Senator Humphrey's mail... there's a civil war in Angola... another one in Beirut... the, uh, New York City's still facing default... they finally caught up with Patricia Hearst... and the whole front page of the 'Daily News' is Howard Beale.”
(Lumet, 1976)

“In the paper today, tales of war and of waste; but you turn right over to the TV page.”
Crowded House, “Don’t Dream it’s Over”
(Finn, 1987)

It can be difficult for consumers of media to discern between valuable news information and what can be construed as merely entertainment. Furthermore, entertainment media in itself influences political and social discourse as do the reasons we seek out such information. The nature of a for-profit media world leads inevitably to confusion over those differences—and this confusion is intentional on the part of media. Media corporations go to great lengths to blur the distinction between news and entertainment in order to promote their biggest product—their brand. “In 2000 it (CBS) broadcast frequent ‘reports’ on its ‘reality’ program *Survivor* and loaned out a journalist to conduct a weekly interview program on another ‘reality’ show, *Big Brother*” (McChesney, 2004, p. 85). The use of news journalists to promote entertainment programming offers an air of authenticity to that programming and further attenuates the ability—or desire—of media consumers to seek out information that would otherwise inform engaged citizenship practices. As we shall see, a media literacy program that utilizes four key approaches (historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical) to media analysis holds promise for engaged citizenship.

As discussed earlier, the application of media literacy theories to social studies is inspired by the work of both James Carey (Carey, 2009) and David Hesmondhalgh (Hesmondhalgh, 2007). Carey remarks on the historical economics writings of Harold Innis as a benchmark for media studies in that Innis's work was "historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical" (Carey, 2009, p. 115). To be clear, Carey does not use these four terms to lay out a media literacy program—they merely afford him reference points for reflections on the work of Innis. That being said, the four terms provide me with a four-pronged approach to media literacy that has been absent in the literature. That is to say, these approaches have been used—there exists many authors who employ critical or historical approaches, for example—but not in the manner that I propose. As social studies teachers, employing these four approaches simultaneously simply makes sense. For example, if a news story was to be examined in a current events portion of a lesson, a historical background affords the social studies teacher to use both the historical and empirical approaches; backgrounds in other social sciences allow the social studies teacher to employ interpretive and critical approaches. Utilizing all four help the students assess the media texts and provide them a foundation to make educated decisions as engaged citizens in light of those texts. Details on the use of these four approaches in my research will be further discussed in Chapter 4.

Jeff Share (2010) identifies five common elements among the many existing versions of media literacy curricula found world-wide:

1. Recognition of the construction of media and communication as a social process as opposed to accepting texts as isolated neutral or transparent conveyors of information
2. Some type of textual analysis that explores the languages, genres, aesthetics, codes and conventions of text

3. Exploration of the role audiences play in actively negotiating meanings
4. Problematizing the process of representation to uncover and engage issues of ideology, power, pleasure
5. Examination of the production, institutions, and political economy that motivate and structure the media industries as corporate profit-seeking businesses. (p. 55)

The four approaches detailed here contain elements of the five commonalities observed by Share. Furthermore, in developing a media literacy program using the four approaches that I propose it became increasingly clear that the approaches could be used for teaching social studies in general—not just for media literacy. While their applications beyond media literacy in the social studies classroom are outside the scope of this paper, let us unpack each approach.

Using Hesmondhalgh's observations as a framework—that the media industries are ambivalent, complex and contested—the four approaches become the building materials attached to that framework (see Figure 2.1).



Figure 2.1: The four interacting approaches for media literacy

Historical thinking and its role in the four approaches.

The implementation of media literacy into the social studies curriculum may require little more than the formalization of the practices that good teachers already have in their repertoire. I believe that good teachers already use these four approaches in some combination within their curricula. However, the lack of formalization can result in a lack of consistency in regards to learning outcomes. Simply stated, teaching the use of the four approaches to students early in the school year could yield benefits by establishing a criteria for all classroom work and research. The social studies teacher's approach to teaching media literacy should mirror how we approach teaching any of the other disciplines within the field. One would be hard pressed to teach any of those disciplines without reference to historical thinking. Sam Wineburg (2001) describes historical thinking as the process in which we all are:

Called on to see human motive in the texts we read; called on to mine truths from the quicksand of innuendo, half-truth, and falsehood that seeks to engulf us each day; called on to brave the fact that certainty, at least in understanding the social world, remains elusive and beyond our grasp. ...The view of text described here is not limited to history. (p.83)

Wineburg argues that historical thinking requires us to reconcile two contradictory positions. First, our understanding of history is a product of “inheritance” gleaned from historical narratives produced by culture and school textbooks that are notorious for eliminating “metadiscourse” (p.12). Second, if we make no effort to discard this inherited understanding we are “doomed to a mind-numbing presentism that reads the present into the past” (p.12). Applying the four approaches that I propose provides a framework in which to engage that reconciliation.

It is important to note that the use of the four approaches is not a step-by-step, linear process. In fact, the four can be used simultaneously, or in various combinations. I will now discuss each approach in turn followed by an analysis of two examples—one from social studies research and the other from the documented classroom practices of a social studies teacher.

Historical.

Social studies teachers ultimately bring to the table a working understanding of historical contexts through which to apply media literacy. The current state of media—how it is produced, distributed, and received—did not occur overnight. Understanding the history of how media evolved in the United States is crucial in achieving media literacy. The relationship between the communications and media industries with government regulation and oversight adds context when analyzing, for example, discourse on internet providers and net neutrality (see Appendix A). In addition, historical accuracy is vital in understanding news events. In addition to the

historical background of media, the historical approach serves media literacy by providing background knowledge essential to understanding and for checking historical accuracy of news stories, historical film, web blogs—indeed all forms of media texts.

Empirical.

Historical understanding can be difficult to achieve without a connection to the empirical approach. The empirical approach provides us with a tool with which to work within the historical without bias—or at the least, to recognize when bias is present, why it exists, and how it impacts our understanding of media. Media effect research can be useful in this regard whether it concerns specific media uses or general trends of media and technology. For example, according to Shah, Rojas and Cho (Shah, Rojas, & Cho, 2009):

[A] new wave of research has not only found that electronic media use can have a positive effect on civic engagement, it has helped create a number of new arenas of inquiry, each one clarifying how mass media and civic life intersect. (p. 208)

Used as a solitary method of analysis, the quantitative nature of most media effects research can be problematic. Yet used in conjunction with approaches that provide context and balance (historical, interpretive, and critical), it becomes a valuable research tool. Furthermore, as Shah, et al point out, the current landscape of electronic media may hold promise for increased civic engagement.

Media effects research is also useful in identifying why, how, and where citizens engage with media—information that is useful in determining the impact of media on democracy. For example, media effects research can be useful in determining the where people find information on political candidates, and in conjunction with the historical approach, can identify bias if it exists.

Interpretive.

Within the interpretive approach, we analyze the context provided by the historical and empirical. To apply the interpretive approach we need to analyze and assess how the media industries operate as institutions and the creators of media texts—a process also necessary for the critical approach. In this realm, Stuart Hall’s work on representation provides a foothold for media literacy in the social studies, in that meanings of texts are derived from reflective, intentional, and constructionist representations. Understanding how these approaches to representation provide an access point in analyzing media texts.

Second, it is important that students create their own media texts—creating media texts provides us with a path for interpretation; interpretation helps us to understand other media texts. According to Douglas Kellner and Jeff Share (2007):

we strongly recommend a pedagogy of teaching critical media literacy project-based media production (even if it is as simple as rewriting a text or drawing pictures) for making analyses were meaningful and powering as students gain tools for responding and taking action on the social conditions and texts they are critiquing. (p. 8)

Examples of media texts that students can create include but are not limited to: video/ movie making (including video blogs), sound essays, and comics and graphic novels. As stated earlier, production of media texts needs to include an element of reflection, the theories of Vygotsky add a dynamic element to media literacy in this regard—one that moves back and forth through production and reflection.

Critical.

Critical media literacy encourages students to consider the questions of why a message was sent and where it came from. Too often, students believe the role of the media is to instantly

entertain or inform while they have little knowledge of the economic structure that supports it.

As noted by David Buckingham (2003):

Media literacy should not be conceived as an exercise in drawing attention to the shortcomings of media—whether these are defined as moral, ideological or aesthetic. On the contrary, it should encourage students to acknowledge the complexity and diversity of their pleasures in the media; and to recognize the social basis of all such judgments of taste and value, including their own. (p. 110)

David Buckingham's insight into critical discourse concerning the media sheds light on one of the pitfalls of critical analysis. To be critical implies a certain amount of arrogance in that it places undue emphasis and authority in one's own point of view and, to be clear, "rethinking extends beyond criticism" (Cherryholmes, 1988, p. 14). Again, a methodology that utilizes approaches that are historical, empirical, interpretive, *and* critical, provides balance in media literacy and affords us the ability to rethink how we approach media literacy.

Lastly, Buckingham summarizes media literacy into four areas of analysis that can be used as a guidepost with the four approaches I propose. According to Buckingham (2003), media literacy should include the following:

1. a study of media *production*; which involves analysis of the technologies used to produce and distribute texts, company ownership, circulation and distribution
2. a study of media *languages*; which includes study of the meanings, conventions, codes, and genres used in media
3. a study of media *representations*; which analyzes the use of realism, authenticity, bias and objectivity, stereotyping, and interpretations

4. the study of media *audiences*; which involves analysis of targeting practices, circulation, uses, pleasures, and social differences. (cf. Chapter 4)

These four areas can be applied across the approaches that I propose. For example, a discussion of media production can involve a historical analysis of the technologies used in production, changes in distribution technologies (such as the digital downloading of films) or a genealogy of the company's history. Likewise, a historical approach can be applied to changes in stereotypes witnessed over time in regards to media representation. To be clear, a media literacy program that addresses historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical elements would avoid the pitfall described by Buckingham.

To further clarify, a class could view a sitcom episode from the 1950's and proceed to analyze the show historically, empirically, interpretively, or critically. Historical analysis could include discussions on the historical relevance of content (women working primarily as home-makers) or the use of technologies available at the time. Critical analysis of the same episode could reveal gender or ethnic stereotypes. Empirical analysis could record the amount of times a gender reference occurred in the script. This type of overlapping analysis between the four approaches will be discussed further in Chapter 4, where discussion takes place on how the social studies methods class used the four approaches to analyze an episode of *I Love Lucy*.

Examples.

Sarah A. Matthews (2009) offers practical suggestions for utilizing popular culture in social studies classrooms. Her proposal for using episodes of the CBS reality television show, *The Amazing Race* (van Munster & Doganieri, 2001-2009) provides a valuable lens through which to apply the four approaches. Matthews reiterates that students need to develop skills to become critical consumers of media and that "In order to help foster continual participation in

the civic process, social studies educators must begin to help students develop a range of skills for participating in a multimodal society as local, national, and global citizens” (p. 247). On the surface, Matthews’ focus is on how students might develop their ability to analyze media texts critically, yet her methodology includes the use of the four approaches. Of course, she does not label these as such, but her descriptions of the pedagogy she would implement definitely contain the approaches lying under the surface. For example, she describes the process for critiquing reality television as one that requires the *interpretation* of particular texts and how they are impacted by the particular gaze one uses when interacting with those texts. Furthermore, “Students need to critically examine what social, *historical* [emphasis added], and political forces impact the particular gaze that they and others are using when they view and act on the world” (p. 254). It is not the fact that Matthews is simply using the words *interpretive* and *historical*, but her descriptions clearly refer to the same processes that I propose.

In *Teaching History with Film: Strategies for Secondary Social Studies* (Marcus, et al., 2010), the authors describe the practices of Ron Briley, a social studies teacher whose use of film in teaching history is worthy of note (p.75). Particularly of interest is how the teacher uses the film *Bonnie and Clyde* (1968) not to teach about the Depression-era bankrobbers, but to teach about the era in which the film was made, the 1960’s. Like the analysis on the pedagogical use of *The Amazing Race*, Mr. Briley does not specifically identify the use of the four approaches. However, like Sarah A. Matthews, Ron Briley’s approach to classroom practices definitely includes those four elements.

Briley’s methods are *historical* in that he “spends weeks of class time helping students discover how to ‘read’ film. This involves an exploration of the technical aspects of making movies as well as how to investigate the historical context of films as texts” (p. 75). The

students engage in *empirical* study—reading and analyzing texts other than film—and interpret the impact of those texts through discussion and the writing of their own manuscripts. Finally, the students of Mr. Briley’s class analyze the films *critically*, engaging in assessments (written, discussion, etc) probing the dominant and alternative readings of those texts at the time of the release of the film and how the film can be read in the present.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provides a framework for how classroom social studies teachers should approach media literacy. For the purpose of this research this framework was used to help student teachers develop media literacy practices in both methods courses and in their pre-service student teaching placements—a framework that was established on the pedagogical foundations for media literacy developed in other disciplines.

The goal of this framework is to provide a working platform from which to build media literacy pedagogy for the social studies. As is recommended by leading scholars of media literacy, media literacy in the social studies needs to utilize an approach where students create their own media texts. Classroom production of media should be balanced with student reflection following a dynamic framework of learning found in Vygotskyian concept development.

Furthermore, I believe media literacy in the social studies should involve the use of a framework that is based on four distinct yet overlapping approaches: historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical. These four approaches were evident in the curricular choices I made in the social studies methods course. In Chapter 3, I will establish the theoretical and methodological approaches that guided this research.

Chapter 3: Methodologies and Methods

I took several steps in order to address my main research question “how do pre-service teachers make sense of and use media literacy within the context of a social studies methods class and accompanying field experience.” In Chapters 1 and 2, I sought to make personal sense of a media literacy curriculum within a social studies teacher education program, addressing a) why media literacy is important in social studies education; b) how the media influences the nature of engaged citizenship—particularly digitized media and the role of gatekeepers of media; c) how a profit- motivated mass media affects the landscape of citizenship in regards to providing the resources necessary for a public to be informed citizens, and d) which topics of media literacy could be used in high school social studies classrooms. Through a formal study, I will provide e) insight into how young social studies teachers take up the call for media literacy within a methods class; f) evidence on how pre- service social studies teachers use media literacy in their supervised field experience; and g) plans for how pre-service teachers intend to use media literacy when they become the teacher of record in high school social studies classrooms.

This chapter establishes the philosophies, methods/approaches, and curriculum models I employed in the study. First, I discuss the philosophical and methodological influences on the study, relying on Kamberelis and Dimitriadis’ *On Qualitative Inquiry* (2005). Second, I detail the design for the study, identifying the methods for data collection and analysis, the participants, and the criteria for their selection as well as the selection of research sites. Lastly, I explain my rationale for the types of data I gathered and the methods used to analyze them and provide an overview of the course curriculum.

Philosophy and Methodology

Kamberelis and Dimitradis (2005) provide a thorough analysis regarding qualitative research through their framing of the field according to chronotopes. “Chronotopes are a lot like

what cultural studies scholars refer to as cultural formations—historically formed/informed and socially distributed modes of engagement with particular sets of practices for particular reasons” (p. 25). The authors present four chronotopes – 1) Objectivism & Representation, 2) Reading & Interpretation, 3) Skepticism, Conscientization, & Praxis, and 4) Power/Knowledge & Defamiliarization. “Each chronotope embodies a different set of assumptions about the world, knowledge, the human subject, language, and meaning. Each also embodies or indexes a particular set of approaches/methods for framing and conducting research” (p. 26). These sets are not exclusive and do not offer a historical or theoretical progression. Kamberelis and Dimitriadis make it clear that their numbering system does not connote ascending value because, “each chronotope is uniquely valuable as an epistemological location for conducting certain kinds of research” (p. 27). They graphically represent sets as overlapping (see Figure 3.1).

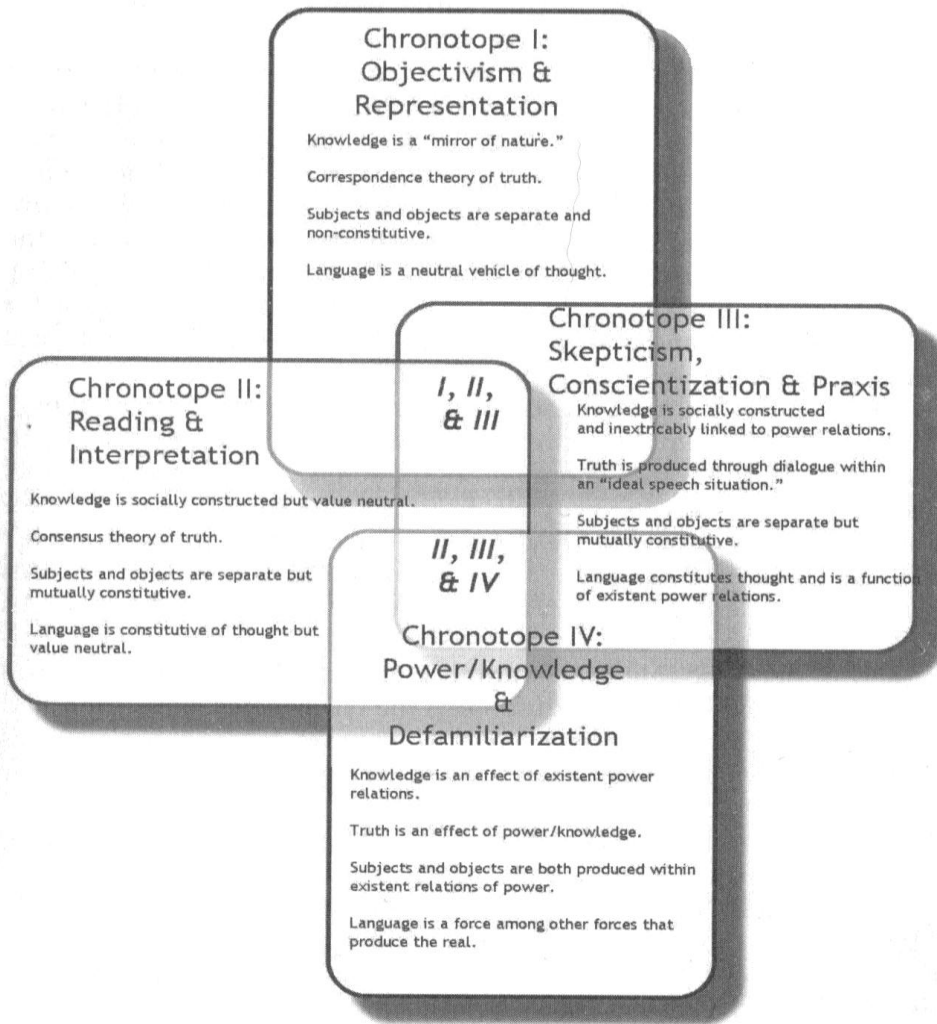


Figure 3.1 Chronotopes, reprinted from Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2005, p. 28)

Chronotope I, *Objectivism and Representation*, can also be viewed as the scientific method in which all knowledge is verifiable in nature and seeks ultimately to discover causal relationships. Derived from Descartes' dualism of mind and body, knowledge and truth are neutral entities that can be empirically observed and cannot be influenced by power or any historical or social contexts. Furthermore, adhering to objectivism, the researcher is an observer only and has no influence on the findings in this type of research. Examples of Chronotope I epistemologies are readily found in media effects research, such as a study in media priming in

which young boys' aggression was measured while playing floor hockey following their viewing of either a 30-second violent, or nonviolent cartoon (Josephson, 1987). The study concluded that those boys who viewed the violent cartoon were *primed* to act more violently during the initial sport activity (during the first period of play).

In Chronotope II, *Reading and Interpretation*, a consensus theory of truth is emphasized “which implies a human discourse community as the arbiter of knowledge and truth claims” (p. 32). Researchers operating within this chronotope view knowledge through a linguistic lens, influenced through human language practices such as storytelling, which provide context for understanding. Content analysis research fall into Chronotope II and can be observed, for example, in the promotion of consumerism that is evident in dialogue from television shows such as *The Honeymooners*, where scripts were developed to promote a consumer culture in post-WWII America that would be vital to national economic recovery (Lipsitz, 1990). Content analysis of the scripts of such shows revealed a propensity for dialogue that supported themes such as buying on credit, refurnishing apartments/homes, and other pro-consumer plotlines. Furthermore, such analysis reflected the influence of government policies on those plot developments.

The foundations of Chronotope III reflect the influence of neo-Marxism, particularly in regard to *false consciousness*. In the chronotope of *Skepticism, Conscientization, and Praxis*, structures exist that privilege some forms of knowledge over others. To challenge these structures, critical inquiry is practiced to reveal the economic and cultural ideologies that support the status quo of those structures. Furthermore, structures are maintained through language and literacy practices that “function ideologically to produce and reproduce systems of power and domination, although these systems seem neutral and ‘natural’” (p. 41). Chronotope III is best

exemplified in the work of the Frankfurt School and by the work of Paulo Freire (e.g., 1970). In both cases, understanding hegemony and oppression is a driving factor in research. A more detailed example can be found in the research of Smith, Granados, Choueiti, and Pieper (2007) that examined over 15,000 single, speaking characters across 400 top-grossing films released in North America between 1990 and 2006 revealing that 73% of all characters were male and 27% were female (cited in Smith & Granados, 2009) suggesting a lack of gender parity in popular film.

Chronotope IV, *Power/Knowledge and Defamiliarization*, is grounded in the work of Michel Foucault (e.g., 1988). For Foucault, knowledge is always related to power and while hegemonic structures of power exist, individual agents act and react upon those structures with their own power. Therefore, power cannot be controlled, nor can any agent monopolize power. Since power is also *productive*, ideologies exist as effects of power—not the converse. “Power is always a matter of both being positioned by proximal and distal social forces and responding to being positioned in unique and agentic ways” (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005, p. 47). Furthermore, “people are always complicit in the construction of asymmetrical relations of power and assigning differential value to various subject positions, even when they are attempting to challenge or subvert oppressive power relations” (p. 47).

Two prime examples of research come to mind in regard to this Chronotope. In *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (Hardt & Negri, 2004), the authors rely on Foucault’s theories of biopower (cf. Foucault, et al., 2003) in their ongoing work regarding the modern state of warfare, perceptions of warfare, and the influence of warfare on media and culture. “War has become a regime of biopower, that is, a form of rule aimed not only at controlling population but producing and reproducing all aspects of social life” (Hardt & Negri,

2004, p. 13). In *The Cherokee Indians and the Internet* (Arnold & Plymire, 2003), the authors address Foucault's observation that "the producers of knowledge have power over those who are subjects of knowledge" and the "media will typically produce relationships of power that privilege those who already hold positions of social power in capitalist societies," by recognizing that the internet has the potential to allow "marginalized individuals and groups to produce their own knowledge...and as a result, gain a greater measure of social power" (p. 717). Both examples demonstrate how Chronotope IV positions relations of power between those who produce texts and those who consumer them.

Kamberelis and Dimitriadis acknowledge the possibilities of crossover points among the chronotopes of qualitative research. The examples that I offered in each category employ hybrid chronotopes. For example, Smith et al. (2009) combine the quantitative focus of objectivism in counting characters and utterances while displaying concern for the inequitable representation of everyday life in these films. My research lies within the crossover points among Chronotopes II, III & IV. I recognize that the students within my class negotiate meanings of media, literacy, and social studies in our classroom (II), but that those negotiations have deep historical roots within the commercialization of media representations, unequal access to production, and the students' media identities (III). Through studying, understanding and using media literacy (that is historical, empirical, interpretive and critical), I assume that they increase their abilities to recognize those roots, their choices to accept the positions they afford, and students' agencies to change their production and consumption of media in and out of the social studies classroom (IV).

Phenomenography as a Specific Methodology

Phenomenography is defined as “the empirical study of the limited number of qualitatively different ways in which various phenomena in, and aspects of, the world around us are experienced, conceptualized, understood, perceived and apprehended” (Marton, 1994, p. 4424). The aim of phenomenography is to take these differing experiences, understandings and characterize them : “In terms of categories of description, logically related to each other, and forming hierarchies in relation to given criteria. Such an ordered set of categories of description is called the ‘outcome space’ of the phenomenon concept in question” (p.4424). We need to “orient ourselves towards people’s ideas about the world (or their experience of it) and we make statements about people’s ideas about the world (or about their experience of it)” (Marton, 1981, p. 177). In this sense, phenomenography is not so much about studying the world in the objectivist sense, but people’s perceptions of that world. This second-order perspective focuses on how students relate to what they are taught and how they make use of knowledge they already possess. “Learning, from this perspective, encapsulates the experience of the learner-world relationship which reflects people’s interpretation of significant aspects of the learning process” (Andretta, 2007, p. 154).

To understand how student teachers might implement media literacy practices into the social studies curriculum, it is important to understand the perceptions they hold regarding the production and influence of media. “Phenomenography is concerned with describing a phenomenon. But the description is based on the different ways people experience or think about the phenomenon” (Trigwell, 2000, p. 63). Without this context, it would be difficult to ascertain the significance of the phenomena in question—in this case the media—since these

conceptions are “epistemologically unattainable independently of context and content” (Marton, 1981, p. 194).

To be clear, this study was not designed as an intervention where I would establish concrete methodologies for implementing media literacy into the social studies curriculum, then measure how well these students addressed those methodologies. This study addressed media literacy as a phenomenon and would therefore be negotiated and represented in the students’ thoughts, words, and actions. I was therefore interested in how these pre-service teachers would make sense of the NCSS call for media literacy, my interpretations of media literacy via the four approaches by collecting data that would provide evidence of how their sense-making translated into action. Accepting the *Position Statement’s* assumption that these students would already be proficient in their use and understanding of media and media technologies, I too assumed that they would develop lesson plans concurring with those uses and understandings. Any attempt on my part to provide a more invasive approach would result in their making sense of my interpretations of media literacy, not theirs.

Bowden (2000), distinguishes between *pure* phenomenography and *developmental* phenomenography. Based on Marton’s (1986) conceptualization, pure phenomenography entails “how people conceive of various aspects of their reality, where the concepts under study are mostly phenomena confronted by subjects in everyday life rather than course material studied in school” (quoted in Bowden, 2000, p. 3). Conversely, developmental phenomenography “seeks to find out how people experience some aspect of their world, and then to enable them or others to change the way their world operates, and it usually takes place in a formal educational setting” (p. 3). For my research, I have chosen the developmental path of phenomenography due to its resemblance to socio-cultural theories espoused by Vygotsky. Since the main subject of this

research is media, how socio-cultural factors—including those experienced in the classroom setting—affect the participants' and students' perception of media and would logically be important. The phenomenographic research approach used in this study sought to analyze some of the distinctly different ways that media literacy teaching strategies can be perceived and implemented by pre-service student teachers.

Study Design

My design for the formal study was straightforward in applying the approach recommended by Maxwell (2005). 1) Identify the field and context. 2) Negotiate the authority of my positions as researcher. 3) Choose the types of evidence necessary to address my questions. 4) Develop a media literacy curriculum for my context—complete with lesson plans. 5) Offer that curriculum to students according to plans while collecting and analyzing data. 6) Follow students into the field to note their uses of media literacy, to check their sense making in a different environment, and to inquire after their future plans.

Research sites.

The study was conducted at and around a large research university in the Northeastern United States. Social Studies education is housed within the Secondary Education teacher certification program of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. Faculty members define the curricular route to certification according to the standards established within the state's department of education. Interested students apply for admission to the certification program after completing two years of general education credits, introduction to education course work, and preliminary field experiences. The specific social studies methods course work is spread over three semesters – initial methods (SSED 411), second methods (SSED 412W) with accompanying field experience (CI 495), and then the full semester of student teaching. Similar

to a teaching hospital, the program employs doctoral students as course instructors and field supervisors each semester who work under the guidance of program faculty.

The nature of this study dictated that more than one research site would be necessary. All social studies methods class meetings took place in the social studies lab on campus—a classroom that is typical for social studies. The classroom was equipped with an electronic whiteboard that was used extensively for lecture and media presentation.

In-field observations took place at three different schools, representing two school districts. One of the school districts, serving a town of approximately 7,000 people and located 70 miles from the university, hosted pre-service teachers in both its middle and senior high schools. The second, in-field site was at a charter school located in the community immediately surrounding the university. All sites offered unique challenges for the pre-service teachers, whether in daily commute—or in the case of the charter school—different approaches to education. In the case of the charter school, class size was considerably smaller than those observed in the public schools. In combination with age inclusive cohorts, i.e. the charter school class had students from grades 5 to 8 in the same class, these factors provided a much different atmosphere than those found in public school. As required by the PSU Office of Research Protections, permission to conduct the research was granted by the principals in each of the buildings. This permission is maintained on file.

Role of researcher.

I am a doctoral student who has been teaching and supervising in this context for two years. In the spring 2010 semester, I was the teacher of record for a section of SSSED 411 and in fall of 2010, the teacher of record for SSSED 412W. I was responsible for the development and delivery of methods content based on guidelines developed by the social studies faculty with the

department, and was likewise responsible for issuing and recording the students' grades. These courses have not previously considered media literacy formally, but have discussed media as social studies content and promoted the use of technology and media with social studies instruction. In order to include media literacy within the curriculum other material and pedagogical skills were adjusted.

My experience as a supervisor of student teachers, and as a host of student teachers in my own classroom, has helped guide this research. For the classroom observer in my position, the collection of field data is a process in which I became quite familiar. While behaviors either take place or they do not, making unbiased observation and easy act to accomplish, teachers have intentions behind their actions that require observers to interpret why they act in a particular way. Those interpretations are most certainly influenced by my own biases, through my own lens as a former classroom teacher, their methods instructor, and a researcher. I acknowledge these biases and have tried to alert readers to biases within the first two chapters; through the declaration of the hybrid position of my research assumptions among the chronotopes; and in my choice of using phenomenography as a methodology. According to Webb (1997):

It seems likely then that phenomenographic research will tend to report the history of a particular discipline as it is understood by the researchers and as they reconstruct it through the people they interview. Phenomenographic explanation is prone to reproduction of the discourses it studies. (p. 201)

Participants.

Social studies education students at the university are required to enroll in consecutive methods courses, SSED 411 and SSED 412W, prior to their full student teaching experience. The SSED 412W course is scheduled concurrently with a pre-service teaching experience in

which the students attend local public or private schools in the mornings of the same semester. In the spring 2010 semester, I was the teacher of record for a section of SSED 411 and in fall of 2010, the teacher of record for SSED 412W. That is to say, I was responsible for the development and delivery of methods content based on guidelines developed by the department, and was likewise responsible for issuing and recording the students' grades. Of the fifteen students in my section, nine were enrolled in my section of 411 the previous semester making the enrollment in both courses a filter for the subjects' participation. Of these nine students, five were assigned to me for their field placement, i.e. I was their direct supervisor in their pre-service teaching experiences. These five students became the subjects of my study because they had the most exposure to media literacy within social studies and were most likely to be open and candid in their reflections about the sense they made of the topic, its use, and their plans.

Of these five students, three were female, two male, and with the exception of one of the males, all were planning on completing their full student teaching field experience the following semester (spring 2011). Two of the females were assigned to the high school (grades 9-12) and one female was assigned to the middle school (grades 6-8). One male was assigned to the middle school, and the second was assigned to the charter school. Being their field supervisor for the pre-service placement afforded me the opportunity to observe their use of media literacy components—taught in both SSED 411 and with more detail in SSED 412W—in actual secondary classrooms. These students have limited teaching experience, and therefore must negotiate the many aspects of classroom teaching and learning in addition to the implementation of a media literacy curriculum.

In addition to the primary participants, in the SSED 412W course I had access to the work of the remaining students—those who did not take my section of SSED 411, and who I did

not directly supervise in the field. These students also offered insight into how the NCSS call for media literacy in the social studies would be applied in the classroom.

Data Collection

All students participated in a three-week unit on media literacy with SSED 412W. The course met on Monday evenings for three hours during which students were engaged in lecture, whole class discussion, small group projects, and homework. Multiple sources of data were established at the onset of the study in order to address possible concerns of validity through the triangulation of those data sources (Maxwell, 2005). Methods triangulation was not “the simple combination of different kinds of data, but [an] attempt to relate them so as to counteract the threats to validity identified in each” (Berg, 2009, p. 5). Within the phenomenographic approach the focus of the research is:

as much on the subjects of the study and on the nature of the data collection process which triggers their contribution, as it is on the phenomenon under study. In every sense the research is relational, and thus the full range of methodological issues becomes important. (Bowden, 2000, p. 4)

In order to probe students’ sense making, I conducted 1) interviews prior to the unit, 2) collected verbal contribution during large group discussions, 3) analyzed class time artifacts during lessons, and 4) studied students initial lesson plans for the field. Once in the field, I conducted 5) the 495 supervision protocol, 6) annotated that protocol with notes specific to the use of media literacy during lessons, 7) analyzed lesson plans across the field experience, and 8) conducted post observation interviews. A chronological order dictated how and when data would be collected. Pre-interview of participants occurred prior to coverage of media literacy as a topic in the methods course. While the pre-service field experience and methods course are designed to

run concurrently, field placements began 6 weeks into the semester while the method course met every week during the semester. The design of the study required the media literacy curriculum to be taught prior to the field placement. During the media literacy portion of the methods course, student generated artifacts and observation notes were collected. Once field placements commenced, I was able to conduct field observations to determine the application of media literacy at those sites in student- developed and executed lesson plans.

1) Initial interviews.

Prior to field placement, individual interviews were conducted to establish initial perceptions of media literacy held by students. The interview questions (see Appendix B) were developed to be as open-ended as possible in order to provide a perception of the phenomenon before the unit began. According to Bowden (2000), phenomenographic interviews usually consist of two types of questions:

(i) problem questions in the field under study and; (ii) questions of the ‘what is X?’ kind.

In the first category, the questions which focus the interview are usually open-ended so as to allow the interviewees to decide on those aspects of the question which appear most relevant to them—reveals the different ways of understanding the phenomenon within that context. (p. 8)

Bowden disregards the second type of questions due to the fact that his research focused on learning strategies of physics students. Questions concerning definitions are less relevant in a discipline where concepts are already clearly defined—terms such as terminal velocity.

However, for my purposes a concept such as media allows for different interpretations of definition therefore interview questions included how the student teachers defined media and media literacy.

2) Verbal contributions to discussions.

In addition, I recorded observational notes on the development of all classroom artifacts as well as topical classroom discussions. To accomplish this, I took simple notes on comments made by the students in our discussions—particularly on specific media that was presented in the class. For example, during class activities students answered discussion questions regarding several video clips including an episode of *I Love Lucy*, and two episodes of *Star Trek*. In all cases these contributions were from the class at large, not just the five participants of the field study.

3) *Classroom artifacts.*

A wealth of information came in the form of archival data resulting from methods course projects, pre-service teacher lesson plans, and any classroom student-generated work related to media lessons. The nature of this research was, in part, a presentation of possible teaching strategies for the implementation of media literacy into the social studies classroom. To this end, artifacts that were created in the social studies methods classroom were intended to show purpose and possibility, not quality. That is to say, the projects that were assigned in the methods course were not assigned as part of the students' grades. These projects were designed to allow the students to explore ideas of teaching strategies using media literacy; then allow for peer and teacher feedback on their possible implementation in the student teachers' future classrooms.

These in-class activities were completed in groups of four to five students, established geographically within the classroom. This usually resulted in the groups working at tables where they were seated. Unlike the notes on class verbal contributions, these artifacts were group-generated pieces that were collected by me. For example, during one of the activities, the students developed lesson plan objectives for social studies lessons that would use media or represent elements of media literacy.

4) Initial lesson plan.

The students completed lesson plans as required coursework for the methods class. These lesson plans are assessed on perceived pacing, planning, application of state standards, etc. regardless of implementation. While it is hoped that the students would have a chance to attempt these lessons in the field, it is not always feasible due to the added variables of subject and age group in the field. For example, if the student were to develop a lesson plan based on the subject

U.S. History, it is possible that the student will be assigned to a classroom that teaches World History, American Government, Economics, etc. However, these lesson plans include how and if students intended to add media components to their classrooms.

5) 495C protocol.

As prescribed by the university's Curriculum and Instruction Field Experience (CIFE) guidelines, I observed each pre-service teacher twice in their respective classrooms, once early during the field experience and once later. This accepted system allows for growth and development of selected goals identified in the first visit. For example, if it was observed that a pre-service teacher needed to further develop classroom management techniques, it would be expected that he/she would exhibit progress on those techniques by the second visit. For my purposes, no such identification took place regarding media literacy, i.e. observations concerning media literacy elements were not discussed until the post-interviews after the field placements had ended.

Observational data was gathered from observation notes when visiting pre-service teachers' classrooms. Two observations were scheduled for each student teacher and no pre-meditated criteria was expected or discussed with them. To be clear, the goal here was not to pre-supplant any notions of how media literacy *should* be taught or addressed in the classroom other than those notions that were covered in the methods course. My background knowledge of the research participants and familiarity with their work in the previous methods course led me to believe that, had I stipulated exactly how media literacy *should* be taught, they would have implemented media literacy elements to satisfy me the instructor.

6) *Media literacy overlay.*

I developed a simple observation form for use during field observations for recording the use or mention of media, media texts, production, etc., and to record classroom interactions related to those mentions (See Appendix C). My physical position during these observations was in the back of the classrooms permitting an observational view of the entire class.

7) *Lesson plans.*

Because of the logistics of travel and the scheduling of CIFE required observations, it was not always feasible to observe pre-service teachers based on their predicated use of media in their lessons. Furthermore, I did not want to give the impression that the use of media was a requirement for observation. Again, my personal relationship with these students and their willingness to aid in my research led to possible validity threats in the sense that they would use elements of media literacy to please me. The goal was not to dictate the use of media literacy, but to see how the students would engage in such activities on their own. That being said, the lesson plans from the field experience provided information about the implementation of media literacy elements—or lack thereof—whether I observed the lesson first-hand or not. Reviewing the lesson plans prior to observation offered expectations for the classroom visit.

8) *Post interviews.*

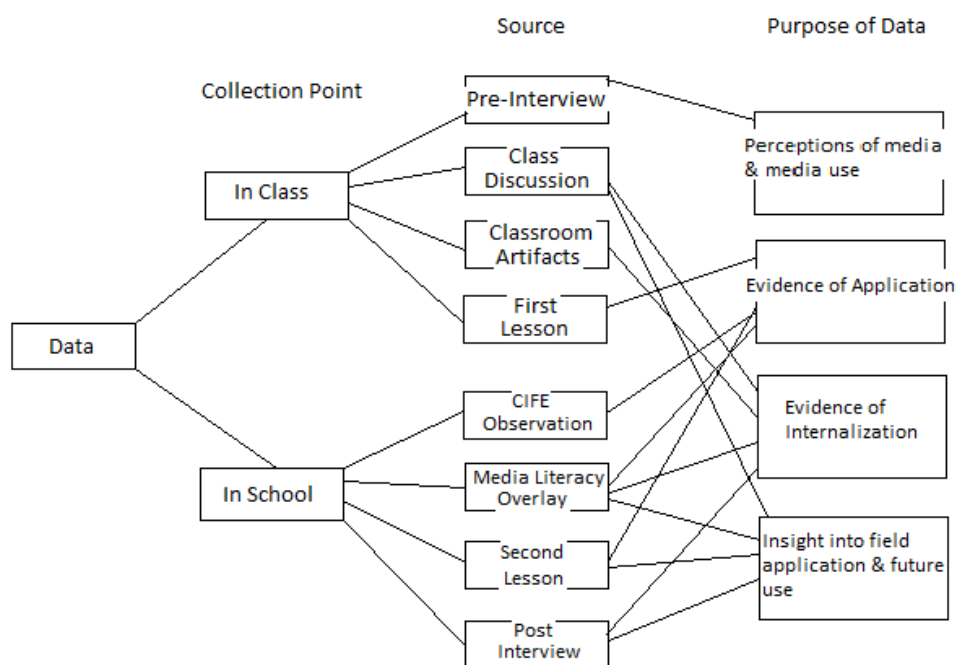
Post observation interviews were conducted with the pre-service teachers in order to glean an understanding of the mechanisms that were used in designing lesson plans for media literacy; reflections on the outcomes of those lessons; interactions with mentors and classroom students in regards to those lessons; etc. These interviews took place after the field experience had concluded and were designed to focus on the concrete details of the experience and to allow for reflection on the meaning of the experience (Seidman, 2006). No prior questionnaires were

used for this second series of interviews, my field notes and participant comments from the first interview (transcribed prior to the second interview) served as impetus for discussion on what I observed in their classrooms. The post interviews allowed for a debriefing on lessons I had observed and those I did not; their reflections on the use of media literacy during the field experience; and how they planned to use media literacy in the future.

Data Analysis

Recognizing that “any data, regardless of method, are in fact produced by the researcher” (Dey, 1993, p. 16), I established initial, exhaustive categories with the intention of reformulating the categories during the analysis. Initial data were placed into the exhaustive categories: evidence of internalization of the media literacy curriculum; perceptions of media and media use; evidence of the application of media literacy; and insight into the application and future applications of media literacy elements (see Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2 Data Analysis Network I



While organization and substantive categories were used to initially group data, following collection I analyzed the data for *connectivity* (Dey, 1993). That is to say, with the use of multiple sources of data, treatment of those disparate sources required the identification of connective themes to ensure the triangulation of that data.

In analyzing the data, categories of description were established based on observed and consistent patterns in the data. According to Ashworth and Lucas (2000):

The categories of description must depend upon an earlier evocation of student's very own descriptions of their relevant experience. It is therefore a paramount requirement for phenomenography to be sensitive to the individuality of conceptions of the world—it must be grounded in the lived experience of its research participants. (p. 297)

Furthermore, Bruce (1997) identified four primary characteristics in defining categories of description:

- Relational, dealing with the intentional, or subject-object relation comprising the conception.
- Experiential, that is based on the experience of participants in the study.
- Content oriented, focusing on the meaning of phenomenon being studied.
- Qualitative or descriptive. (p. 88)

Based on these criteria, observed patterns that were identified in the data were organized accordingly into categories that represented connectivity providing a more inductive analysis. This system looks for relationships that “connect statements and events within a context into a coherent whole” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 98). This analysis will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

The Media Literacy/Social Studies Curriculum

Two sets of criteria were used to develop the media literacy curriculum for social studies and to write lesson plans for its delivery during the three weeks allotted within SSSED 412W. First, the lessons move away from the common transmission model of teaching to one that is grounded in conceptual development through sociocultural processes. This emphasis was pivotal to Vygotsky's work since "psychological activity has sociocultural characteristics from the very beginning of development; children therefore, are not lone discoverers of logical rules, but individuals who master their own psychological processes through tools offered by a given culture"(Kozulin, 1998). The act of classroom discussion epitomizes this notion since the very process (discussion among peers on a given topic) utilizes a psychological tool (language) to achieve an internalization of the processes and mastery of the content. Thus, the "semiotic mediation" involved with classroom discussion gives rise to higher-order thinking and cognition (Negueruela, 2008). Vygotsky believed learning and development originate is socially mediated activities and to accomplish those activities, the student must make use of, and internalize, psychological tools. "The main task of teaching is to ensure the identification of the concept and its representation in symbolic form, indicating the formation of a corresponding abstraction" (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2002, p. 43).

Conceptual learning is pivotal in development as students internalize the information through their learning environment. Piotr Galperin believed that "conceptual change was at the heart of education" (Haenen, Schrijnemakers, & Stufkens, 2003) and that conceptual change can only occur when teachers take into account students' prior knowledge. During the lessons, students discussed the formulation and maintenance of gender and class roles through the study of popular cultural texts. Students were then involved with group and teacher mediated

discussion as activities in this lesson. With teacher mediation, students were able to explore the topics while expanding on their conceptual knowledge. “Internalization emerges from mediation, specifically mediation through psychological tools, which fosters development” (Negueruela, 2008, p. 195). When students analyze and weigh historical evidence in this manner, it aids in the development of the students’ psychological tools.

To this end, Vygotskian pedagogy weighed heavily in how the media literacy curriculum was developed. Since learning is a social endeavor, all in-class activities were group oriented. While this is certainly not the only method that could be used in a media literacy classroom, the fact that media is a social activity made group projects a natural adaptation for the topic. In this way, students could work through their perceptions of the historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical entities of media literacy. Furthermore, this practice lends itself to developing a support network of pre-service teachers for interaction on lesson plan ideas, classroom management practices, etc., that will extend into their professional careers.

Second, I designed the curriculum around the four-pronged approach of historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical approaches outlined earlier. The historical and empirical approaches were combined in week one. The process of combining these topics served a dual purpose. First, with exception, historical work as applied here is fairly empirical in its process. An empirical approach is connected to the historical in that media studies must be absent of bias whenever possible and both approaches rely on the systematic analysis of historical evidence. Observation is a key component in understanding the media industries and the texts that they create, their causes, processes of production, and their effects. Historical and empirical methods give us a context with which to work. Consequently, the interpretive approach allows us to derive meanings from the texts that are explicit or implicit. For this to take place, the audiences

need to be active in the process of making meanings. This is crucial to the ultimate goal of media literacy, the critical approach, since “audiences who are active consumers of media texts can discern between dominant readings, oppositional readings or negotiated readings” (Kellner & Share, 2007, p. 8).

The content of the curriculum was divided across four week, including my media literacy example of the Alternate Frame Lesson (a course *signature* assignment used by the college for purposes of NCATE data gathering) and then, three weeks of formal curriculum on media literacy. (Refer to Appendix D for a schematic plan for the curriculum and the four lesson plans.)

The alternate frame lesson.

Although media literacy was to be officially covered during a three-week unit, elements of media literacy were present in all of the course meetings. Prior to the units that specifically covered media literacy, the SSED 412W class were exposed to the use of the four-pronged approach during a lesson on Alternate Frame lesson design—part of their signature assignment requirements for the course. The Alternate Frame lesson provides a way to analyze a historical event or era from different points of view. How one frames an event influences how that person perceives and makes sense of the importance of the event—in a sense the Alternate Frame provides the ability to analyze an event through someone else’s eyes. My example topic for the class was 1950’s Post-war culture in America, a topic that would include analysis of data and accounts from the 1950’s (Coontz, 1997), a reading from the counter-cultural beat movement (Kerouac, 1957), and viewing of an episode of the *I Love Lucy* television show (Asher, 1952). Through these three sources, the class was able to alternately frame 1950’s culture utilizing approaches that were historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical.

Over the course of three weeks, the social studies methods course covered the necessity of media literacy in the social studies classroom—referring to the NCSS call—and theories on media literacy and how those theories could be applied to the social studies. The lessons of week one combined the historical and empirical; week two interpretive; and week three the critical. To understand the intricate causes and effects of media texts, the goal of literacy is to be critical. However, the critical cannot exist without the other three approaches. None of the approaches occur in a vacuum, i.e. they are intertwined with each other. The assigned readings for this lesson included Kellner’s overview of cultural studies (2003); The National Council of the Social Studies *Position Statement on Media Literacy* (NCSS, 2009); and James Lull’s discussion on hegemony in media (2003). These readings were selected to give the students an overview of the field of media studies and media literacy.

Media literacy in the methods classroom: week one.

*"Half of the American people have never read a newspaper.
Half never voted for President.
One hopes it is the same half."
(Gore Vidal)*

Week one’s lesson contained a history of the media industry beginning with the founding of the United States, through the rise of broadcasting, to the present world of digital and satellite technology. For our students to be able to navigate the waters of new media, and to use that navigation as a route to engaged citizenship, it is vital that they understand the events that helped the media industry evolve into its current state. A historical approach to media is an important element in media literacy. The history of media is interwoven with a history of government intervention at the federal level; “the U.S. media system—even its most ‘free market’ sectors—is the direct result of explicit government policies and in fact would not exist without those policies” (McChesney, 2004, p. 19). A brief history of media in the United States was presented

(See Appendix A for specifics). In addition, a primer on the role of media in the social studies and overview of media literacy theory were necessary. These elements were derived from Chapters 1 & 2 of this work.

The historical and empirical.

Following the lecture and subsequent discussion, the class was divided into groups who were each given two current news articles to analyze. Articles on a variety of news topics were taken from ABC News, CBS News, FOX News, CNN, Huffington Post, BBC, and Salon. Blogs were included to determine if accuracy differences could be observed between these news sources and traditional sources. News topics were from that day's top stories and were chosen at random. Groups were instructed to read the articles and analyze the content using the historical and empirical approaches. Specifically they addressed these questions:

- What background information do you need to understand the news story?
- What denotations and connotations are evident in the story?
- Lack of context leads to bias. What is the context of the story (news vs. information)?
- Is the story superficial or is there depth?
- On a scale of 1-10, rate the importance of the story to the audience.
- When we see a news story, we learn as much about the news organization as we do the events of the story. Are there any indications as to why this story was produced?
- Can you hypothesize on the news source for each story?

These questions were written to employ historical and empirical thinking: any background information needed to understand the stories lends itself to the historical and discussions on denotations and connotations satisfy the empirical, while establishing a basis for interpretive and critical understandings. According to John Fiske (1990), "When connotation and denotation

become one and the same, representation appears natural, making the historical and social construction invisible. Therefore a goal of cultivating media literacy is to help students distinguish between connotation and denotation and signifier and signified” (in Kellner & Share, 2007, p. 12). While the students were able to dissect each of the news stories according to the questions listed above, the goal of the project was to provide a template for use in their own social studies classrooms.

Media literacy in the methods classroom: week two.

*Death or glory,
Becomes just another story.*
The Clash, “Death or Glory”
(Strummer, J., Jones, M., 1980).

The interpretive approach to media literacy was introduced and used in a class project. The lecture covered how media industries operate in general, particularly the industries’ use of industrialization and commodification. Secondly, the lecture outlined methods for creating media texts in the social studies classroom as recommended by Kellner and Share (Kellner & Share, 2007). Creating our own media texts provides us with a path for interpretation, and interpretation helps us understand other media texts. While written texts are one way of creating media that allow for interpretation, they are only one way. Other suggestions included collages, sound essays, video and movie making (including video blogs), and comics/graphic novels. While the time limitations of this particular class prohibited the student creation of media texts, the practice was emphasized in each lesson.

The reading assigned for this week was Chapter 2 of David Hesmondhalgh’s work, *The Cultural Industries* (2007) because he removes the reductionist framework employed by so many media theorists that emphasize moralist intent of the producers of media texts and simplifies the

argument to the bare essentials—that producers are driven by profit only. This position affords us a lens that is focused on the true driving impetus for the creation of texts—profit.

The activity for this lesson included organizing students into three groups. Each group chose a social studies topic for a lesson plan then each idea was passed to another table. At these tables, the students developed a lesson plan with the previous table's topic in which their students would create media based on that topic. The lesson plan was then passed to another group who was responsible for developing a second, different activity. All groups then shared their ideas.

Media literacy in the methods classroom: week three.

Week three's lesson involved the critical approach to media literacy studies. I chose to primarily use science-fiction as a vehicle for the application of the critical approach. Of course, the point was made that this was only one of many possibilities. For week three's lesson, students were to read two chapters of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932). The assigned chapters contain discussions between John the Savage (the character from the story who was born and raised outside of the depicted society) and Mustapha Mond (the city's Controller). These discussions outline the pros and cons of Huxley's dystopian society—John calling for a more traditional life, Mond's denouncing of the traditional as full of misery and pain. Class began with a discussion of this text, pointing out comparisons of *Brave New World* and the present—for example Huxley's world is inhabited by people conceived and born as *test-tube* babies (a stunning prediction for 1932) and the society, like ours, is incredibly consumer-driven, preferring to “end, not mend.”

Next a video clip was shown featuring an episode of the original *Star Trek* series. The clip was from the episode, *Let That be Your Last Battlefield* (Taylor, 1969), dealing with racism

in which two alien life forms engage in an ongoing battle of racial hatred that has lasted for hundreds of years. As the episode unfolds, it is learned that the aliens (who are literally half black and half white) are the last survivors of their planet's population and that the racism is grounded in the fact that one group is black on the right side, the other is black on the left. Moving beyond the limitations of make-up effects in 1969 Hollywood, the students were able to unpack the discourse of the episode, that racism can be based on seemingly insignificant physical differences compounded by historical and cultural contexts. Direct connections can be made to real-world events, such as the 1994 Rwandan Genocide in which approximately 800,000 people were mass-murdered over, likewise, *insignificant* physical differences and *significant* historical and cultural contexts.

After viewing the video clips, the students viewed photographs from withoutasactuary.org, an internet archive of American lynching photographs. The counterpoint of a somewhat campy fictional presentation (the *Star Trek* episode) of racism and the blatant brutality of the stark photographs provided the students with a new perspective from which to garner understanding of the topic. Students also viewed portions of a second episode of *Star Trek* title *A Taste of Armageddon*, that explored what were common fears (at the time of airing) concerning global nuclear war (Pevney, 1967). In this episode, the crew engages with a planet culture that has been involved in a 500-year war with a neighboring planet. Battles take place via a computer program that determines the amount of casualties for each combatant. Those among the population that are determined to have died in the attack willingly enter a disintegration chamber, thus allowing the war to continue in what the inhabitants see as a civilized alternative to the death and destruction of property that would normally occur during a war of this magnitude. This episode

was offered as another example of a media text that reflects the historical context of the era in which it was made—the height of the Cold War.

The lesson was summarized by my commentary on the use of media, and how media may influence learning in their future classrooms. While my connection to media is admittedly rooted in a different era, there are certainly media—books, television shows, movies, etc. from their generation that can be introduced to their students.

Also discussed in week three was the use of political satire in the social studies classroom. While addressed here in regards to the critical approach, using political satire in the classroom can be viewed as part of the larger framework for media literacy in social education (Youngbauer, 2010). For example, historical examination of the political cartoon has long been a staple of social studies education therefore the use of *contemporary* forms of parody and satire in the social studies classroom is logical. As noted earlier in this work, the National Council for the Social Studies addressed the need for media literacy as “the multimedia age requires new skills for accessing, evaluating, creating, and distributing messages within a digital, global, and democratic society” (NCSS, 2009, p. 187). “It is interesting, however, that our nation’s schools still do relatively little formal teaching on and through the media, the precise means by which citizens receive nearly all of their information about political processes and elections” (Kubey, 2004, p. 70). “Understanding several media simultaneously is the best way of approaching any one of them. Any study of one medium helps us to understand all others” (McLuhan, 1964, p. 139). Synthesizing these three viewpoints, to use political satire such as *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* in the classroom in conjunction with mainstream media news would afford teachers an opportunity to critically analyze media content through the social studies lens and may offer unique opportunities for social studies educators to foster civic mindedness and active

participation in a deliberative democracy. News comedy shows “foster a kind of civic literacy, teaching viewers to ask skeptical question about core political values and the rhetorical process that embodies them” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 289).

Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined the guiding theories and approaches used in this research. Chronotopes II, III, and IV as defined by Kamberelis and Dimitriadis provided epistemological foundations for the research while my research questions dictated that a qualitative approach rooted in phenomenography best served this work. To achieve my goals, I designed and implemented a media literacy curriculum for the social studies that was based on approaches that were historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical. Discussions specifically addressing the analysis of data, specifically how the pre-service teachers engaged with the curriculum and how they used media literacy in their pre-service field experiences, will take place in Chapters 4 and 5.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis Part I

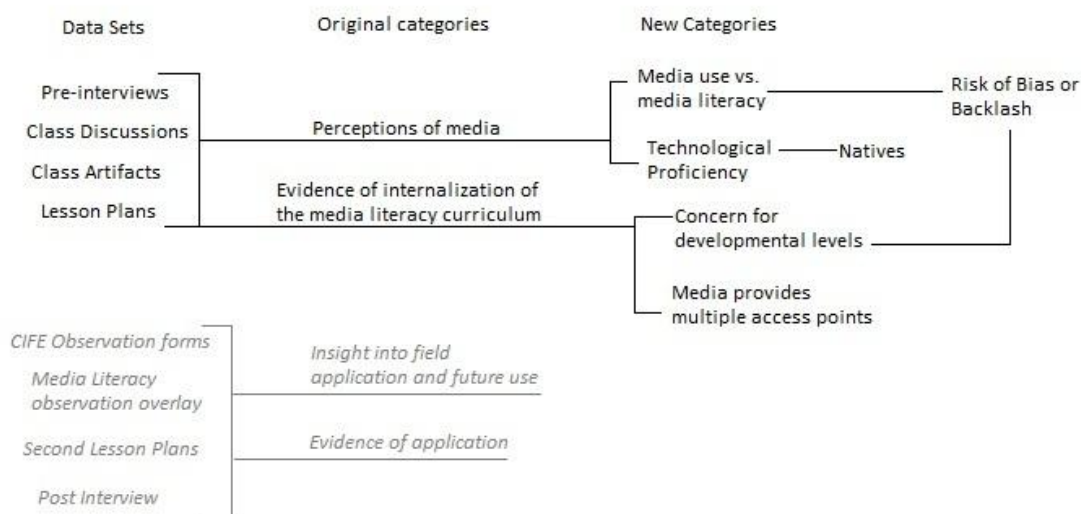
The main purposes of this paper are to use established theories of media literacy, apply them to a social studies methods course, and analyze how student teachers take up the NCSS call for media literacy in their pre-service student teaching placements. While established theories and the application of those theories were addressed in Chapter 2, evidence of how the pre-service students perceived media literacy, and evidence of their internalization of the four-pronged media literacy approach that I propose will be discussed here. Through participant interviews and the collection of data from the social studies methods course, I explore the perceptions that pre-service teachers have in regards to the use of, and definitions of, media and media literacy prior to their field experiences. How the student teachers applied what they learned in their methods classroom to their *own* teaching experiences will be reviewed at length in Chapter 5.

As discussed in Chapter 2, applying existing theories of media literacy utilized the work of both James Carey (Carey, 2009) and David Hesmondhalgh (Hesmondhalgh, 2007). It has also been established that to accomplish this goal, adapting media education to the social studies requires the use of four approaches: historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical.

As discussed in Chapter 3, data were initially placed into the following exhaustive categories: evidence of internalization of the media literacy curriculum; perceptions of media and media use; evidence of the application of media literacy; and insight into the application and future applications of media literacy elements. Following analysis, it was necessary to split and splice categories (Dey, 1993) in order to reveal connectivity between individual bits of data. This splitting and splicing created new categories necessary for triangulated analysis (see Figure 4.1). As noted in Figure 4.1, this chapter will focus on the data sets collected in the methods course (bold), and the data sets from the field placement (italicized) will be analyzed in Chapter

5. During the pre-interviews, it became clear that the students' perception of media literacy was conflated with what would more accurately be labeled media *use*. This conflation was further evident in their subsequent classroom discussions, lesson plan development, and through artifacts created in the methods courses.

Figure 4.1 Data Analysis Network II



The Media Literacy Curriculum at a Glance

The semester in which pre-service teachers conduct their field placements can arguably be their most difficult in the Secondary Education major. The field placements are time consuming and the students in a sense inhabit both the world of a school teacher and of a college student. These factors make the semester in question physically, mentally, and emotionally exhausting for the students. This section of the methods class (SSED412W) met once a week on Monday from 6-9PM—a meeting time that presented challenges and advantages. The SSED412W course is designed to run concurrent with the pre-service field placements, which

involve attendance in the field starting week 6 of the semester—Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 8AM to 12PM. Starting week 8, the pre-service teachers attended their assigned schools Monday *thru* Friday at the same times. The field placement ended week 12 of the semester to coincide with the Thanksgiving holiday break.

Other sections of the SSSED412W course met during a morning time slot, twice a week (Tuesday and Thursday) for shorter sessions, not meeting during the field placement, and resumed meeting after the placement ended. For the Monday night section, this meant that once field placements began, students were frankly tired by the end of class at 9PM. However, unlike other sections, the Monday night section was able to meet throughout the field placement allowing for a constant debriefing of their field placement experiences. Also unlike the other section, the Monday night section did not meet on Labor Day resulting in one less week to cover important topics prior to the start of the field placement.

Classroom structure.

Over the course of three weeks (weeks 7-10), the social studies methods course covered the necessity of media education in the social studies classroom—referring to the NCSS call—and theories on media literacy and how those theories could be applied to the social studies. As stated earlier, the foundation for the lessons stemmed from James Carey’s assessment that media studies should contain elements that are historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical.

All of the lectures were conducted through the use of a free presentation software program called *Prezi* (www.prezi.com). Difficult to describe in words, Prezi’s design removes the linear constriction of normal power points, allowing the presenter to zoom in and out, and rotate to show details and relationships between concepts, and embedded video or photographs. Students find the Prezi presentations mesmerizing and often learn to use it for their own presentations.

New Categories

*“We are the middle children of history,
raised by television to believe that someday we’ll be millionaires and movie stars and rock
stars, but we won’t. And we’re just learning this fact.”*
(Palahniuk, 1996) p. 166

Six new data categories were created as result of data analysis. These categories reflect a connectivity (Dey, 1993) among the bits of data that reveal pre-service teachers’ perceptions of media literacy for their social studies classrooms. These categories include: media use vs. media literacy; technological proficiency; the risk of bias and/or backlash; natives; developmental concerns; and multiple access points. Table 4.1 demonstrates which data bits support these categories. Each of these categories will be discussed in turn.

Table 4.1 Data Coding Matrix I: Categories and Occurrences

<i>Use vs. Literacy</i>	<i>Tech Proficiency</i>	<i>Bias/ Backlash</i>	<i>Multiple Access</i>	<i>Developmental Level</i>	<i>Natives</i>
CS: Pre-interview	CS: Pre-interview	JB: Pre-interview	SZ: Pre-interview	SZ: Pre-interview	SZ: Pre-interview
JB: Pre-interview	SZ: Pre-interview	AD: Pre-interview	GO: Pre-interview	GO: Pre-interview	AD: Pre-interview
JC: First Lesson Plan	SZ: Pre-interview	CS: Pre-interview	CT: First Lesson Plan	SZ: Pre-interview	SH: Classroom Memo
GO: Pre-interview			Group: Classroom Artifact		JB: Pre-interview
					SZ: Pre-interview

Definitions: media and technology use vs. media literacy.

When asked to define media, almost all of the students provided a nearly dictionary definition, i.e. that media refers to communication via television, radio, internet, etc. One student added that media is the messages one views, whether they are true or not—referring to newspaper tabloids. The same student identified technology as part of the definition—a

characterization that while absent in the answers to this question, surfaced among all participants in other questions. For example, when asked to relate a lesson from their high school or undergraduate experience that exhibited what they thought of as an “unsuccessful” use of media, two of the students mentioned the overuse of PowerPoint. This conflation between the use of media and the use of technology does not seem to be entirely problematic. That is to say, the use of media in the social studies classroom is nearly impossible to occur without the use of *newer* technologies. Computers, DVD players, electronic White Boards, etc. are all necessary to view, create and interact with media. While discussions could certainly occur concerning say, students viewing a Presidential State of the Union address the night before, having the media text available in the classroom is more likely to yield more fruitful discussion.

More important here is the perception that the simple *use* of media or technology can lead to *literacy*. As is evident in the students’ descriptions of poor uses of media from their own classroom experiences, many of these examples demonstrate the *use* vs. *literacy* dichotomy. Whether to add zest to an existing lesson plan, or to provide students a connection to lesson content, without analysis using the four approaches these uses fail short of the goals of media literacy.

The goal of media literacy education is not for students to become technologically literate—while technological literacy is an integral part of media education, as in the interpretive approach, it is merely a means to an end. Issues could arise in which the use of technology masks the goal of media literacy. That is to say, if when teachers use technology to accentuate classroom lessons (e.g. notes on a PowerPoint presentation instead of a blackboard) they see this as contributing to media literacy (see Figure 4.1), yet these students by and large view the practice as a failed attempt.

CS: I guess overemphasis on PowerPoint it gets kind of old by the time you are in 10th grade. Because it's just PowerPoint and words, and you copy down the words, I think that's how the PowerPoint structure is. More of just a copying tool. Not a teaching tool.

(Pre-interview 10/1/2010, Youngbauer, 2011a)

While the students recognize the limitations of the linear thinking exemplified in PowerPoint presentations, they themselves have trouble negotiating beyond the same linear thinking. This is evident not only in their definitions of media literacy but, as we shall see, in their views on education in general. Media education is not about applying new media technologies to hackneyed classroom practices. It is of little consequence if teachers provide lecture notes on a blackboard, overhead projector, or PowerPoint presentation—to the students they are still just simply, notes. Media education is concerned with educating young people *about* the media and only de facto *through* the media. Furthermore, “discussions of young peoples’ relationships with the media often attribute a determining power to technology. Such arguments are problematic for several reasons. Technologies do not produce social change irrespective of how they are used” (Buckingham, 2003, p. 23). Technology can only change the world through the agents that use it—by itself it is not a determining factor. Likewise, the use of technology in the classroom—by itself—does not promote media literacy.

This is not to say that technology is not important. As pointed out by one of the participants:

SZ: We should be constantly updating, keeping ahead of the game whether it's like media like newspapers and current events and things like that or technology, because if we can find better ways to use technology to get you know the messages across to students. I feel like they're really going to be able to understand it more. I mean look at kids, they are

obsessed with cell phones and computers and things like that, if we can use technology as a way to, I guess as a medium to get our message across it would definitely help and resonate better with the students.

(Pre-interview 10/1/2010, Youngbauer, 2011a)

As discussed in Chapter 2, students bring with them to the classroom knowledge about the media and an already functioning literacy in regards to the media. To use technologies and forms of media that students are already familiar with, gives the classroom teacher advantages that he or she would normally not have. However, two of the students pointed out that in regards to the unsuccessful uses of media in their high school social studies classes were the failed attempts to use technology:

SZ: I've just had experiences with older teachers who want to try to, I guess, get on our level as far as technology and being up-to-date with things, and great attempt, great try but in the classroom when your teaching is not when you should be learning to do something.

(Pre-interview 10/1/2010, Youngbauer, 2011a)

Furthermore, students' direct access to media can be restricted in schools creating an atmosphere that lacks autonomy when compared to access they may have at home. As a result, "children are now immersed in a consumer culture that frequently positions them as active and autonomous; yet in school, a great deal of their learning is passive and teacher-directed" (Buckingham, 2003, p. 176).

Some students remarked that disconnected use of media texts, i.e. video clips, readings, etc. that had no obvious connection to class topics, were the least successful uses of media that they had experienced:

JB: With my history classes this semester, where he just shows us a movie, we don't really talk about it. The movies may be somewhat entertaining in and of themselves, but when it comes to using the media as a teacher they're not that effective. We'll get some information because as college students we are really trained to try and pick up on what is most important, but there's never like a discussion following or a real place to critique information that we just absorbed.

(Pre-interview 10/1/2010, Youngbauer, 2011a)

It remains unknown why the teachers described by JB chose to use media in this way; poor planning, lack of background knowledge, etc. It should be mentioned again that the use of media in the social studies classroom should be rooted in the historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical approaches in order to avoid uses like the one described above. The example that JB provides is evidence of media *use* instead of media literacy.

Further evidence of the use vs. literacy dichotomy was revealed in the first lesson plan assignment where one student (JC) planned to use a youtube clip about the Day of the Dead celebration in Mexico:

Activity 3: Youtube video-Day of the Dead Time: 2-3 Minutes

Teacher:

- The teacher will bring up the youtube video, "Atlas Discover-Mexico's Day of the Dead"

Students:

- Students will watch the youtube video that explains Mexico's holiday Day of the Dead.

Transition: Close the youtube video and ask the students what they think of the holiday.

Activity 4: Comparing Halloween/Day of the Dead Time: 6-7 Minutes

(Lesson plan collected 10/19/2010, Youngbauer, 2011b)

In this case, the student did not plan for any activity that would include the four approaches that would therefore allow for literacy to take place. For example, the activity does not call for an analysis of the video clip that would provide the cultural or historical context that would result from historical, empirical, interpretive, or critical approaches. Instead we are left with a disconnected piece of media text that the pre-service teacher's students would be forced to accept as the only source of information about the Mexican holiday indicating that JC's understanding of media literacy is conflated with media use.

Risks of media curriculum: teacher bias and possible backlash.

When asked about possible risks associated with using media in the classroom, three distinct categories were evident. First, when critically analyzing the media, particularly news sources, it was acknowledged that teachers should be careful not to inculcate students to their own political views:

JB: If you are critiquing news you end up having the idea of like presenting your own worldview, which I don't think necessarily is a bad thing, I think kind of unavoidable. But you know parents and the school board might not like that you are trying to inculcate students, which I think is, I'm writing a paper about it now, you can't be that entirely objective in the classroom. Because you're selecting curriculum yourself and your bias in that respect, so parents may not like the fact that their students are being taught how to filter through Fox and CNN and MSNBC and thinking or questioning what are the cultural standards of knowledge. So that can be a risk or problem with the culture of the school or the community. You have to be aware of the school community and not disrespect people, but I feel as a teacher that you have a responsibility to give to give critical views to things. It's a risk but I also think it's a risk worth taking.

(Pre-interview 10/1/2010, Youngbauer, 2011a)

On this issue, J.B. exhibits concerns about the gate-keeping role that classroom teachers have. As the primary source of their classroom social studies education, teachers must recognize the risks that come with such a role. More troubling is JB's perception that classroom activities involving critical analysis would automatically lead to a biased presentation of the material, or that such analysis would automatically inculcate his students to a biased position.

This assumed risk was further commented on by another student, who points out concerns over exposing her own bias as a teacher and with concerns for backlash from parents:

AD: [You have to refrain from] swaying them to your opinion. I feel like that's a big thing with me, but not even with movie clips or anything, if you showed Jon Stewart [*The Daily Show*], I don't want my students' opinions to become what my opinions are. So, I just think you have to be really careful of what you show them, also there are the parents that are kind of whiny, so you have to make sure you don't overstep boundaries.

VY: Whiny parents? Meaning as far as age level appropriateness?

AD: Yes, I'm sure if your kid is 17 he's heard the f-word a couple of times.

VY: So, the risk might be you have to be careful not to offend parents or the local community?

AD: Yes.

(Pre-interview 10/1/2010, Youngbauer, 2011a)

The use of controversial topics in the classroom *can* be a double-edged sword. As Diana Hess (2008) points out, "the most frequently articulated reason for including controversial issues in the curriculum is the connection between learning to deliberate controversial issues... and participating effectively in a democratic society" (p. 124). The well-conducted classroom

discussion can possibly be one of the few times a teacher can witness true academic passion with students in regards to the social studies. Conversely, maintaining the “controversial classroom” can be a risky endeavor for teachers both professionally—there is always the risk of upsetting members of the local community, school administrators, and other teachers—and pedagogically, where teachers risk offending, marginalizing or *othering* those students who are uncomfortable with the nature of the topics, the methods, or both.

As alluded to earlier, risk was also associated with the improper use of media, whether from lack of functional knowledge (e.g. how to operate a projector), to the use of media that is perceived by students to be disconnected from the topic:

GO: You can run the risk of it not being effective and it not relating to what you're teaching and just using media for the sake of using media when really, that lesson you could have just done a good lecture when that's what is appropriate.

(Pre-interview 10/1/2010, Youngbauer, 2011a)

Coinciding with this sentiment was concern for the general over-use of media:

CS: using it too much is not good at all because you might not be getting the point across. If you if you need to get a better explanation, maybe a video can help, but using a video for everything you teach is not good.

(Pre-interview 10/1/2010, Youngbauer, 2011a)

The students failed to understand that a media literacy curriculum that utilizes elements that are historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical in nature—as covered in the methods class—would alleviate such concerns. In fact, their perception of risk is one that is affected by a view of learning that is linear or two-dimensional. That is to say, they hold the misconception that students are capable of making their own decisions in regard to bias or controversial topics or

controversial images, whether the teacher influences those decisions or not. This is not to say that these are not valid concerns. The point here is that the learning process is considerably more complicated than they realize.

The third person effect and concerns for developmental levels.

Students also acknowledged the risk of using media that was inappropriate for certain age groups, or that which might be considered inappropriate in the community at large. Ironically, each student mentioned that they had seen *Saving Private Ryan* (Spielberg, et al., 1998) in their high school social studies classes:

GO: the main thing that sticks out from my high school is watching *Amistad* and *Saving Private Ryan* and *Schindler's List*.

SZ: We watched the beach landing in *Saving Private Ryan*, that was huge. We watched parts of *Full Metal Jacket*.

(Pre-interview 10/1/2010, Youngbauer, 2011a)

This could be attributed to common protectionist beliefs concerning the media in which we need to protect others from—in the case of *Saving Private Ryan*, graphic depictions of war violence—while the same protections are not necessary for ourselves. As SZ pointed out:

[you have to be careful with] the appropriateness, depending on the age group...they [parents] may not be okay with their kids seeing people dying onscreen. Or they may not be okay with graphic images. But I remember in 10th grade we watched the Kennedy assassination over and over and over again.

(Pre-interview 10/1/2010, Youngbauer, 2011a)

This stands as an example of what is known as the third-person effect, “an individual’s perception that a message will exert a stronger impact on others than on the self” (Perloff, 2009,

p. 253). The third-person effect offers a fascinating study of media effects in that “instead of looking at media effects on beliefs, it examines beliefs about media effects” (p. 252). In this case, students believe they must exercise caution when showing graphic films like *Saving Private Ryan* in their classrooms because they are aware that the film could be too mature for younger audiences. Yet they see themselves as outside the influence of this same effect when they themselves viewed the film in their high school classrooms. What the pre-service teachers failed to recognize was how the historical, empirical, interpretive and critical approaches could be used to address these concerns.

Media and the creation of multiple access points.

As outlined by NCSS, the teaching of media literacy must be expanded to include multiple forms of texts and to help deepen students’ “questioning of the relationships between information, knowledge, and power” (NCSS, 2009, p. 188). “Media literacy is a pedagogical approach promoting the use of diverse types of media and information communication technology (from crayons to webcams) to question the roles of media and society and the multiple meanings of all types of messages” (p. 188). Multiple forms of texts create multiple access points for students to deepen their understanding of concepts traditionally offered in social studies classrooms. These access points also provide anchors for scientific concept development since they allow for the use of texts of which students may already hold spontaneous knowledge. It is clear from the collected data that all students accept this position. That is to say, these pre-service teachers have internalized—prior to this study—that the term *text* includes media beyond traditional print.

One student (GO) reflected on one of the benefits of using media in the classroom and how such use would benefit disadvantaged learners. “Well in the classroom you have all kinds

of different learners, and some people may benefit from different ways of being taught a certain subject and also it's good to relate to your students” (Pre-interview 10/1/2010, Youngbauer, 2011a). This corresponds to Jeff Share’s analysis that the experiences of classroom teachers using media “make a strong argument that students in special education can benefit greatly from media literacy for many reasons” (Share, 2010, p. 64). The multimodal and experiential characteristics of media education transcend the typical limitations of print-based pedagogy, and help attenuate the physical, mental, or social barriers that students with special needs may have. Said simply, it would seem that the teachers in Share’s research found that media education levels the playing field for special needs students when they are included in the regular education classroom. It is important that future teachers recognize this added benefit in apply media literacy to the social studies classroom. Media can allow for multiple access points for other students as well. Recall from NCSS:

If we hope to make learning relevant and meaningful for students in the 21st century, social studies classrooms need to reflect this digital world so as to better enable young people to interact with ideas, information, and other people for academic and civic purposes. (NCSS, 2009, p. 187)

According to her first lesson plan assignment, CT planned to use a video clip *I’m Just a Bill*, produced by *Schoolhouse Rock*, for her 12th grade students (Lesson plan collected 10/19/2010, Youngbauer, 2011b). CT used the video as a springboard for a mock-congress activity she planned for teaching in her field placement. The use of a cartoon, even for high school students, can help generate discussion on lesson topics:

GO: It changes things for students. I know that when I was in high school, things would get mundane if you would just lecture everyday and [media] gives another approach to

teaching a subject that is useful to them but at the same time it makes it more enjoyable for some students.

(Pre-interview 10/1/2010, Youngbauer, 2011a)

The use of media as a creator of multiple access points was also observed during in-class assignments from the social studies methods course. In one assignment, students were to develop lesson plan ideas using media for use with what could be considered traditional social studies topics. “Create a song parody of Jay-Z’s *99 Problems* (clean version!) with lyrics relevant to the Protestant Reformation, [Luther’s] 95 Theses. Example, ‘I got 95 theses but the Pope ain’t one’” (In-class assignment collected 10/11/2010, Youngbauer, 2011c). This type of exercise “forces students to acknowledge consciously what they already know unconsciously; yet it also forces them to question *how* they know what they know and *where* that knowledge comes from” (Buckingham & Sefton-Green, 1994, p. 149).

That being said, it is important to acknowledge that students may not have the same fondness for media endorsed and used by the teachers:

While media teachers clearly do not need to keep pace with the enthusiasms of their students, they cannot hope to know more than they do—nor should they. Indeed, in my experience, personal preferences and investments in aspects of media can easily be a liability in the classroom: students are very likely to reject what you enjoy, particularly if you make that clear to them. (Buckingham, 2003, p. 159)

However, this particular concern seems to be more a matter of classroom management than one of teaching theory and practice. If a teacher has generated a climate of mutual respect and is enthusiastic towards the topic and professional, it has been my experience that students are willing to indulge the teacher on this topic. This is particularly true if the media used provides a

respite from the traditional fare. As noted earlier the National Council for the Social Studies addressed the need for media literacy as “the multimedia age requires new skills for accessing, evaluating, creating, and distributing messages within a digital, global, and democratic society” (NCSS, 2009, p. 187). Using the Jay-Z song as suggested above would afford teachers an opportunity to critically analyze media content through the social studies lens. Furthermore, when using media that students *have* already experienced, the critical approach provides a new lens through which to analyze these media.

While this lesson idea demonstrates how the pre-service teachers foresee using media as an access point, it remains to be seen if the teachers would apply the four approaches to that lesson. Simple use of media as an access point does not by itself lead to media literacy—a conflation that the pre-service teachers seem to have.

Natives: exceptions or the rule.

All students agreed that media education was important to the social studies generally speaking, for reasons elucidated earlier in this work. The fact that these students had an introduction to media education and its importance to the social studies classroom while enrolled in my section of SSED 411 is not lost here. Likewise, all students responded that their views on the importance of media literacy in social education coincided with their peers, i.e. when asked “How do you think your attitude toward the use of media compares with other educators, i.e., to what extent do you think social studies teachers use media?” all students responded that other educators held the same views as they do. This is a promising development for the use of media education in the social studies classroom. Of course, it is not a stretch of the imagination to foresee the ongoing use of media in the classroom for embellishing of learning activities, e.g.

historical films. However, for the participants of this study, it seems that they see their role as one that is more important than the simple use of film:

AD: I really think my generation is the one that is going to make this thing pop. At least with my friends, it's like I watch how many people use a clip for this or that, it's something that really interests us. And I think it's really going to be huge.

JB: I don't think that passing down the same knowledge I've been passed down is necessarily the best way to go. So I think that's where I differ, when it comes to media I think I might be different when it comes to using this media to show these are injustices, or these are great things that humans have done, this is how we can keep doing these things, or avoid those things.

SZ: I feel like there's two different comparisons, one with my peers, one with other social studies teachers who are already out there. I feel that with that group who are already out there, I think that they would agree you can make use of media but maybe they don't make as much use of it as they should. Or they don't use it in the right way. Or as effectively as they should.

(Pre-interview 10/1/2010, Youngbauer, 2011a)

These students acknowledge the importance of media literacy, approach how teachers have used media with a critical eye, and foresee taking the use of media and media education to another level.

The pre-service teachers held the perception that the use of media in the social studies classroom is *natural*. That is to say, by and large these students viewed this research and the use of media in social studies at large to be a normal occurrence of sorts and that they of course planned on using media in their classroom. These students also view the use of new media

technologies as natural to their generation, as implied in discussions earlier in this chapter when recalling the difficulties of using technology by their former high school teachers.

This perception is rooted in what Lave and Wenger (1991) described as “Communities of Practice” (Davies, 2006, p. 212), in which young people learn the concepts, terms, and values of—in this case—media technologies through interaction with other members of the group. These pre-service teachers see themselves as the best teachers of media literacy because they have grown up in an environment saturated with new media. Early in their pre-service placements some of the students commented that they were teaching their mentors how to use new presentation software like Prezi. “The principal wanted me to teach it [Prezi] to the whole staff” (SH, 10/18/2011, Youngbauer, 2011d). The pre-service teachers held the perception that their generation would be able to use media more effectively simply because they grew up using it and were therefore at an advantage in comparison to older teachers. The pre-service teachers also held the perception that this type of acculturation was normal in relationships with their mentors, i.e. that the pre-service teachers would be a source of new knowledge and technology and the mentors would be a source of experience and wisdom.

Early Conclusions

Review of the evidence thus far would indicate that a disconnect exists between what has been covered in the initial data collection point and the goals of the study. According to pre-interviews and the data collected from the social studies methods course, the pre-service teachers held the perception that media literacy was important in the social studies, that they could define what literacy is and how to achieve it, and that they, because they see themselves as part of a digital media generation, are best suited for the task. However, these perceptions are contradicted by the data that shows that their definitions of media literacy are conflated by what

can be considered simple media use, and by what is better labeled technological literacy. Furthermore, while the pre-service teachers recognize both the benefits of media literacy to provide multiple access points and the possible risks associated with using certain media texts (e.g. R-rated movies), the data does not provide evidence that they have fully internalized the material covered in the course. It seems that most of these students have not internalized the benefits of applying the original approaches outlined in the media literacy/social studies course, i.e. a media literacy curriculum that includes historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical elements.

The *NCSS Position Statement on Media Literacy* focused on critical analysis of media as a key goal. Yet, these pre-service teachers held the perception that critical analysis in media education was risky business in regards to upsetting parents, the community-at-large, and the threat of inculcating their students with biased views. This perception is mired in their understanding of how learning takes place in general, i.e. their perception is linear, or two-dimensional. Regardless of topic—in this case media literacy—the pre-service teachers view learning as a transmission process where teacher-presented information is automatically collected and archived for future recall by their students. This is evident in their discussions of risk bias, where they perceive that any bias present would automatically be taken up by their students thus offending parents, community, etc. These concerns are not addressed by NCSS in their simplified vision for media literacy in the social studies.

This two-dimensional perception of learning is further evident in how the pre-service teachers conflate media use and media literacy. While they state that their own high school educations were full of missed opportunities in regards to media—the use of disconnected video clips, or lack of analysis in lessons that involved historical film, etc.—the data does not indicate

that they currently use media any differently. This contradiction seems to be rooted in their perception that as members of a media-saturated generation, they are best suited and highly qualified to use media in such a way as to lead to literacy. That is to say, they lack an intimate understanding of the process that takes place in the “communities of practice” (Davies, 2006) they themselves have been part of.

For example, being physically able to text-message via a cell phone—speed, accuracy, etc.—is only one part of the intricate nature of being literate in regards to texting. Some who text may abbreviate more so than others; some may use emoticons more so than others, and so on. One must be aware of all the possible ways to communicate ideas if one is to be literate in texting. It can also be argued that those who text, regardless of age, also have an understanding of the economic processes that take place in cell-phone usage—an understanding that may not be associated with young users. A personal example serves this point. In the early days of cell phone payment plans that included text-messaging, my wife and I enrolled in a texting plan for our teenage children that included a finite amount of texts for a fixed fee (one of the more affordable routes at the time provided that no one went over the maximum). My daughters, and their friends, could keep track of how many texts they had left in a given month knowing that going over the maximum would lead to higher cell phone bills for their parents and subsequently falling out of favor with said parents. How they got around this restriction is an example of the depth of their literacy.

When one text-messages, the receiver can look at their phone and see the first few words of the text without opening the message (opening the message counts toward the maximum). My daughters and their friends knew how many words of the message would be visible to the receiver and would send sequential messages that allowed the receiver to see the whole intended

message in the title lines without the receiver having to open any of the messages. This understanding of cell phone technology—a result of their community of practice—is much deeper than that associated with the physicality of texting.

Again, the point here is the two-dimensional lens through which pre-service teachers view learning. Further evidence of this can be seen in the pre-service teachers' perceptions on the use of different media texts that allow for multiple access points. For these students, the use of a *School House Rock* cartoon, the use of Jay-Z lyrics, or the use of Prezi bring a *coolness* factor that would pique their students' interests in the lesson topic. Again, this is only a two-dimensional view of the use of media texts—one that emphasizes content over form and does not automatically lead to media literacy. In fact, these perceptions lead more so to an ambivalence towards media literacy than an understanding of it.

However, is the linear, two-dimensional understanding of learning exhibited by these students unique? I could relate many faculty lounge conversations from my own experience demonstrating that many experienced teachers hold these same views. Furthermore, I could include myself in that discussion. After all, I presented a media literacy curriculum to the students that went beyond the transmission model choosing instead to use socio-cultural practices; I checked for understanding and administered activities that provided evidence of that understanding—yet most did not take up the call to implement media literacy as I predicted. It is evident that a *community of practice* has not yet been established in this regard. In fact, the teaching profession may be the epitome of a community of practice. While evidence indicates that the pre-service teachers have the foundations available for building media literacy practices, they have not had time to engage with other members of their community on the development of those practices—nor have they had time to practice in classrooms.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided evidence of the perceptions held by pre-service social studies teachers prior to their field experiences. These perceptions were formed by previous exposure to media usage in social studies classrooms when they were students. These pre-service teachers view the use of media as a natural tool in the social studies classroom—one that should be developed in order to help students make connections between their existing knowledge of both media and the social studies, and the knowledge acquired in the classroom. The pre-service teachers also demonstrate an awareness of the common benefits and risks associated with using media in the classroom. Some of the participants conflate the use of teaching technologies (electronic whiteboards, computers, etc.) with the types of media texts available.

Secondly, there exists among the participants a conflation between media use for its own sake versus media use that can lead to media literacy. Even though these students have negative opinions of the former when they recall examples from their own experiences, their perceptions on how to best use media in their own classrooms is no different. In other words, they foresee using media in much the same way and assume that their students will be able to make obvious connections between the media content and the lesson plan goals.

In Chapter 5, I will analyze how these students used this information in their own classrooms during their field placements and whether or not changes in their perceptions of media education changed because of those placements. Secondly, data from post-interviews provides evidence of how their linear, two-dimensional perceptions of media literacy evolved during the field experience, particularly in being called-out on their contradictions between how they intended to implement media literacy and how they actually put it into practice.

Chapter 5: Data Analysis Part II

"Luke, you're going to find that many of the truths we cling to depend greatly on our own point of view." Obi-Wan Kenobi (Marquand, 1983)

I began this work relating a conversation between myself and my friend Evan regarding his inability to find news sources that he could trust. This predicament was further complicated by Evan's self-admitted lack of social studies knowledge because of his failure to pay attention in high school social studies classes. My concern was that I could not answer his question and therefore failed him somehow as a friend and in other ways, may have failed the social studies teaching profession. In hindsight, the issue was less about my inability to answer his question and more about "where would I begin?" With the benefit of that hindsight and this paper nearly behind me, I feel that I can dissect this problem more accurately than I could before.

The short answer to Evan's dilemma is not to narrow the field of news sources to one he can trust, but to engage with more of them. I can argue that even the most ardent consumer of news information does not always feel 100% informed on every issue relative to his or her life. This is not a byproduct of dishonesty in news reporting, it is a byproduct of the nature of journalism. In addition, "truth" in regards to journalism—as pointed out in the quote above—may always depend on points of view, which can be fallible. My advice to Evan is to quit sitting on the sidelines worrying about who in the world of journalism may be more trustworthy and get in the game.

Changes aren't permanent, but change is.

Rush, "Tom Sawyer"

(Lee, G., Lifeson, A. & Peart, N., 1981)

In my first years as a public high school teacher I had numerous conversations with numerous tenured faculty members on what to expect in my career as a teacher. As a newly hired teacher excited to start my career, my mind was reeling with the newest theories on

education and how I would apply those theories in the classroom. Time and time again, the perception these veteran teachers held was one of ambivalence toward new teaching strategies. That perception is efficiently summarized in the lyrics above, i.e. that teachers are expected to adapt their teaching strategies to the topic du jour. When I started teaching in the years prior to *No Child Left Behind*, the faculty room buzz was already focused on the dangers of standardized accountability testing—dangers that were inevitably waiting on the horizon. Reflecting back on those conversations twelve years later, I realize that I am now proposing a new strategy that may meet with the same ambivalence that was present in those early conversations. That being said, I am proposing a more efficient way to execute strategies that are already being used in the social studies classroom. The use of media in the social studies is not new. What is new is how I propose we adapt these uses to a media education curriculum for the social studies that aids in how citizens engage media—an adaptation that utilizes historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical approaches.

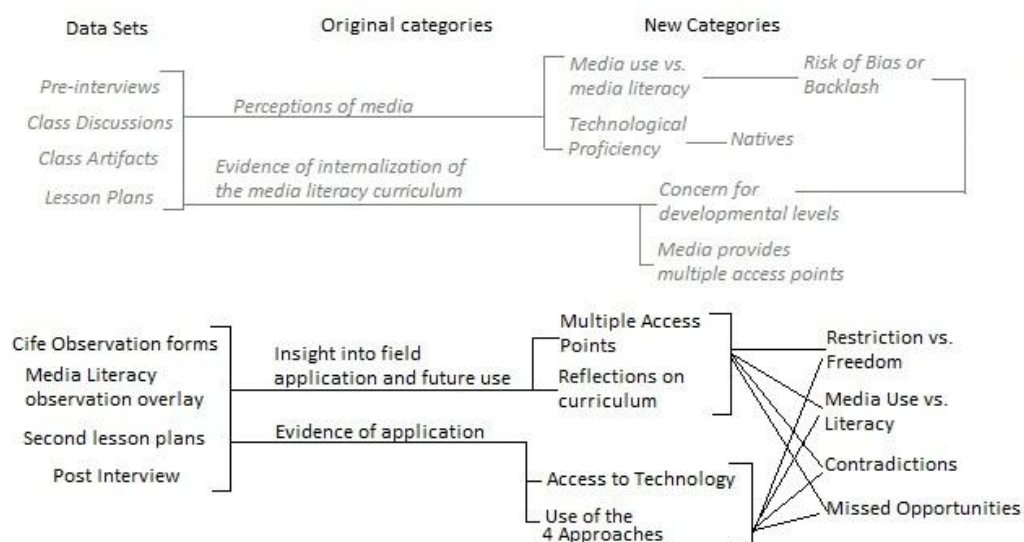
The participants of this study received instruction on the development and use of media education through the social studies methods class (SSED412W). These students were then observed in their field placements in local middle and high schools. The goal of these observations was to ascertain how these young social studies teachers would apply what they learned in the classroom to their field experiences. Prior to the observations the participants were not given any instruction on the role that media would play in the lessons that I observed. That is to say, while it was clear to the participants that my observations would play a role in my research, no criteria were given to the student teachers as to what it was I expected to witness. There were two reasons for this particular approach. First, due to the logistics of the field placement, pre-service teachers can be overwhelmed with required tasks that are expected to be

completed within the constraints of the host teacher, building, and school district. For example, due to the implications of standardized testing, one of the school districts involved in this study required all teachers of all disciplines to assign summary point writing (SPW) to help aid in the development of writing skills that would lead to an increase in standardized testing scores. It would have been unreasonable to establish a set of criteria for the use of media that would meet my expectations during an observation. In addition, my establishing criteria would have resulted in an undesirable influence on how these students perceived the use of media in their classrooms. This study was not about how I would implement media education per se, but how the pre-service teachers would adapt the strategies in their own classrooms. Second, as became evident in the participant interviews discussed in Chapter 4, these students held perceptions that were evident in the data referring to six themes: media use vs. literacy; technological proficiency; the risk of bias/backlash; that media created multiple access points; that developmental levels played a role in the use of media; and that the pre-service teachers saw themselves as native users of media. These students all assumed that they would be using some sort of media, to some extent. Whether these assumptions materialized or not will be discussed below.

New Categories/Themes

Data bits collected during the field placement portion of the study included: the Curriculum and Instruction Field Experience (CIFE) supervisor observation forms—which can include a myriad of data on classroom management, lesson plan design, pacing of lessons, etc); a specific media literacy observation sheet overlay for my classroom visitations; a second lesson plan assignment that the students were required to complete; and a post interview occurring after the field placements had ended.

Figure 5.1 Data Analysis Network III



A review of this data revealed connectivity grounded in eight new categories: Reflection on the Media Literacy Curriculum; Contradictions from the Field; Restriction vs. Freedom; Access to Technology; the use of the four approaches; Media Use vs. Media Literacy; Multiple Access Points; and Missed Opportunities (See Data Network 5.1). These categories of description fall within the characteristics identified by Bruce (1997) and discussed in Chapter 3 in that they are “relational, experiential, content oriented, and qualitative” (p. 88). Data Coding Matrix II (see, Table 5.2) establishes where each of these themes occurs in the data. I discuss each of these categories in turn.

Table 5.1 Data Coding Matrix II: Categories and Occurrences

<i>Contradictions</i>	<i>Restriction vs. Freedom</i>	<i>Technology Access</i>	<i>Use of 4 approaches</i>	<i>Use vs. Literacy</i>	<i>Reflection on Curriculum</i>	<i>Multiple Access Points</i>	<i>Missed opportunities</i>
AD: Post Interview	AD: Post Interview	CS: Post Interview	JB: Post Interview	CS: Post Interview	CS: Post Interview	SZ: Overlay and Post Interview	CS: Post Interview
GO: Post Interview	CT: Post Interview	GO: Post Interview	CT: Post Interview	JB: Overlay	JB: Post Interview	CS: Overlay and Post Interview	CS: CIFE
SZ: Overlay	SZ: Post Interview and Overlay	JB: CIFE Form	CT: 2 nd LP	JC: 2 nd LP	SZ: Post Interview	GO: Post Interview	GO: CIFE Form
SZ: Post Interview		SZ: Post Interview	JB: 2 nd LP				

Reflection on the media literacy curriculum.

The social studies methods class contained three weeks of lessons that addressed the use of media in the social studies classroom. While media education was the focus for three weeks, media was used throughout the semester regardless of the lesson topic. It is clear from the post-interview transcripts in particular that the use of media texts left an impression on the pre-service student teachers—both in regards to their own education and how similar uses of texts could be applied in their own classrooms:

VY: let's switch to our classroom. Let's talk about the activities we did. Do any of those stand out?

CS: I will always remember the *Star Trek* episode, the one where they were killing people but they weren't killing people [*A Taste of Armageddon*]. I don't know why I liked that one so much.

VY: so that stuck with you?

CS: yeah the lynching photos too. These things help us make connections.

SZ: I *loved* (her emphasis) the *Star Trek* episode we watched...

VY: which one?

SZ: the one where they were at war with people but they weren't really at war—the computer was choosing who died

VY: *A Taste of Armageddon*

SZ: yeah, I had never seen that before and it really showed me that... I have an uncle that watches *Star Trek* like it's his job—he really showed me how you could go back and find these things. It has such a great message. It really opened my eyes to how there are so many interesting ways to take concepts in media and relate them to what we're learning about.

VY: it's funny that I thought the black and white episode on race was more interesting to tear apart and discuss. But you're the third person to bring up the other episode.

Anything else?

SZ: I just love *Brave New World*, I thought that discussion was great. And I've said this before that last year I really like the lesson where you took the documents and switch the words.

VY: the Hitler speech? [referring to a lesson I had taught for her previous methods course in which I substituted dates and locations in a speech made by Adolf Hitler to give the impression it was written in post-9/11 America]

SZ: I really like that and I actually used it for lesson plan last year. Those are the types of things that really make kids think.

JB: the *Star Trek* lesson is something that I enjoyed most it was really cool to see science fiction as a way to make a really valid point. And I'm really into dystopian novels so the *Brave New World* lesson, that stood out. I read *1984* in high school and it completely altered my worldview on politics and how government could possibly be run. The lynching photos really stood out, just because you could really investigate the social aspect of it.

(Post-interview 11/19/2010, Youngbauer, 2011e)

These students made initial connections to these texts because they enjoyed viewing them. However, their reflections seemingly provided evidence that the pre-service teachers had internalized the media literacy curriculum beyond their viewing enjoyment. These students had made connections to how similar texts could be applied in their own classrooms even though they were unfamiliar with some of the texts—particularly the episodes of the original *Star Trek* series.

One student held particular interest in the classroom activity that focused on applying the four approaches to news stories:

CS: the news thing-- I always hear people who say, well Fox news said this, I'm like well don't you know that Fox news is completely Republican? Or NBC said this, NBC's mostly Democrat.

VY: and how do you know those things?

CS: how do I know? I don't know. Well, if you watch the shows like *The O'Reilly Factor* and stuff like that, O'Reilly is Fox right? If he's trashing Obama or anything, you know. But then you have Keith Olbermann who trashes Republicans, you can see it, you feel it, you know what I mean?

VY: so what is the “so what” there, if you're the teacher?

CS: you have to check your sources, I think you need to find a... Like if we want to talk about current events or stuff like that, we need to find a source that talks just the facts.

And maybe someone who is not one-sided. Maybe CNN? Even though they use narratives it seems to be more fact-based.

(Post-interview 11/19/2010, Youngbauer, 2011e)

This student revealed the necessity of implementing media education strategies that would encourage the thought processes that he describes. However, he had a difficult time realizing that those goals could be accomplished using the four approaches. What is further interesting is that all of the students who mentioned this activity could only recall or comment on only one part of the activity—hypothesizing on the source of the story. Recall from Chapter 4 the complete assignment:

- What background information do you need to understand the news story?
- What denotations and connotations are evident in the story?
- Lack of context leads to bias. What is the context of the story (news vs. information)?
- Is the story superficial or is there depth?
- On a scale of 1-10, rate the importance of the story to the audience.
- When we see a news story, we learn as much about the news organization as we do the events of the story. Are there any indications as to why this story was produced?
- Can you hypothesize on the news source for each story?

Perhaps, as CS pointed out above, since the media is flush with accusations of political leanings and bias, it is only natural that the students would tighten their focus on that particular part of the assignment. What is important here is that these future teachers are reminded that critical

analysis is not the only goal of media education further emphasizing the need for a balanced approach that is historical, empirical, interpretive, *and* critical.

Contradictions from the field.

These reflections are even more fascinating when considering how media texts were used in the field experience. In classrooms where technology was present, the use of media was limited to brief interjections within broader lessons that followed practices that are more traditional. For example, a lecture I observed on the importance of the Valley Forge encampment during the American Revolution was supplemented by an internet video created by the bureau of tourism for the site. These types of usages can be viewed as afterthoughts, garnish for the more meat and potatoes lecture portion of the lesson that—without analysis that is historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical—are cast aside in the student memory. During the pre-interviews discussed in the Chapter 4, the pre-service teachers viewed these types of usages as ineffective. The lesson that used the Valley Forge historical site video clip revealed a contradiction on how one pre-service teacher perceived the use of media. For the student teacher that taught this lesson, time constraints and the lack of teaching experience affected her ability to present the video clip in a way that would have more fruitful in satisfying lesson plan goals:

AD: I showed a different video on Valley Forge, I think it's the day after you came, I remembered watching it and thinking well that's kind of biased.

VY: how so?

AD: the way they focused on Washington's troops and how hard it was, it was played up on how hard it was. I guess I didn't do a good job telling them that before hand, and tell them look at this, or, how do I explain this, whether we use video or the textbook, I need

to find a way to tell them what to look at. Which is why when I asked them questions they would give me the right answer, but that's not what I was looking for.

VY: you grew up near Valley Forge, right?

AD: less than a mile from my house.

VY: we can look at the video as a tourist ad in some ways?

AD: basically that's what it was.

VY: it's not much different than “come to Disney”

AD: it really was. They didn't see that this was the “pretty” picture. I wanted them to see a different side.

VY: is this something that happens with historical locations in general?

AD: yeah. I don't think I really realized it until this semester, because when I would do my own research before hand and I would go in and talk with K- [the mentor] about what I was going to say or use and she would say “well, that's not really what happened.” She has a lot more background knowledge than I have. I think an important part of understanding history, you need to put yourself back in the time period.

(Post-interview 11/19/2010, Youngbauer, 2011e)

For this student teacher, her reflections on the lesson helped her realize that the use of media in the classroom requires a systematic process that aids in the successful implementation of the media in question. By her own admission, she did not utilize the historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical approaches presented in the methods class—approaches that would have certainly aided in a more constructive use of the media. Ironically, this student teacher mentioned in her first interview that, when asked to recall poor uses of media from her high

school experiences, criticized the disconnected use of brief YouTube clips the past social studies teachers had used. Yet this student teacher was now guilty of the same infraction.

SZ experienced a similar situation as recorded in my observation notes (Youngbauer, 2011f) in that she did not permit student discussion on a video clip used in her lesson in the field:

VY: the first time I came to see you, I wrote down that you did a video timeline of religion.

SZ: there was an animation of the spread of religion.

VY: it wasn't very long.

SZ: no, it was only a couple of minutes. It was pretty straightforward. In hindsight I feel that I could have stopped it at certain points to explain what was going on so that it wouldn't be completely lost on the students. I guess because it moved so fast?

(Post-interview 11/19/2010, Youngbauer, 2011e)

This pre-service teacher expressed that time constraints, and the constraints imposed by her mentor affected her approach to using media literacy—a point further discussed in the next section.

In a post-interview with another participant, a contradiction was revealed concerning comments she made in the pre-interview regarding the use of media to enrich the learning experience for lower-level students:

VY: so, when using media, did you use the four approaches? The historical, interpretive, empirical and critical?

GO: Not with my *seventh* (her emphasis) graders, no.

VY: and why not?

GO: I don't know. I had a lot of lower-level students, so that's not the approach that I took with them. I don't know how I could have implemented that with them. I guess I should've thought about more. I could've used it but I didn't.

VY.: now that's interesting, if I remember correctly you were the one person who thought that media could help lower-level students.

GO: it could. I think it's more of my planning style, I just didn't refer to that, I just kind of used the curriculum—because J- (the mentor) likes things a certain way. She gave me freedom of how I could do things, but she wanted me to follow a set, she wanted me to include certain things in a lesson.

VY: so in the pre-interview I asked you what would be the benefits of using media in the classroom. You answered “well in the classroom you have different learners and some people might benefit from different ways of being taught a certain subject, and it's also good to relate to your students in our society since there are so many different things available. The more you could implement to that.” Then I asked you what kinds of things? You said, “YouTube and new things are coming out from our generation, I guess.” You haven't done anything wrong. You are a new teacher. The point is I want you to think of these things. So, you said first of all you were restricted in how you could use media. Whether your mentor’s format allowed you to do this or not, is aside from that. I understand that’s a big part of it. So I want to tear apart this comment, whether you could do critical, interpretive, etc. with them because they were lower level students. You had a predisposition thinking that that would be perfect for them. So why the disconnect?

GO: I think because, like you said I'm a new teacher, I hadn't been in the classroom yet so, I guess being in there and seeing—I'm not putting my students down at all by any means—but they are also young, seventh graders, plus they're lower-level. Sometimes, it was hard to get them to have a discussion on their own and kind of analyze things. When you came into the class; that was pretty surprising in how well they did, to talk about it (the discussion in lesson). It kind of took them a while...

VY: what I think I hear you saying is that, you still stand by the statement that this could be a tool to help differentiated learners, but *you* may lack the skills. It's not so much that they can't handle it, you're still getting your feet...

GO: I think that's fair. If I had more time with them or maybe more resources to use, or maybe just practice. I think it's fair to say. I think it's something to learn as I teach more.

(Post-interview 11/19/2010, Youngbauer, 2011e)

This revelation is crucial in understanding how student teachers implement theory into practice—or fail to. Student teachers must constantly reflect on their classroom performances all the while satisfying the criteria established by the College of Education, the student teaching supervisor, and the mentor. These influences—while established to aid the development of the student teachers—affect what Argyris and Schon labeled “theories of action” (1996, p. p 13). According to their initial interviews, the student teachers held perceptions that can be characterized as espoused theories—theories that they had every intention on putting into practice in the classroom. Due to the demands and constraints of pre-service teaching—primarily those constraints placed by the mentor in regards to planning—resulted in theories-in-use that were much different.

Restriction vs. freedom.

In addition to CIFE requirements, many factors affect the success of pre-service teachers in the field placement. Most notable of those factors are constraints and/or freedoms imposed by the host/mentor teacher. To be fair, these host teachers volunteer to mentor the pre-service teachers for a small percentage of the total school year—at the end of that placement, the classroom must resort to a business-as-usual format. For these mentors, the only compensation is the satisfaction of doing for a new teacher what has been done for them, so to speak. For some experienced mentors, giving the pre-service teacher full reign to experiment in the development and implementation of teaching strategies is not a big deal. These mentors are confident in their ability to aid the student teacher in that process and in their ability to correct any alterations to the pacing and planning that may take place after the experience has ended. With other mentors, the pre-service teacher may be required to work more closely within the mentor's curriculum plan, adapting lesson plans to the style and format the mentor and classroom students are most comfortable with. For these mentors, any major alteration of classroom practice may lead to pacing and planning complications after the pre-service experience has ended.

This restriction/freedom continuum can complicate the field experience as pre-service teachers struggle to learn the many skills associated with the profession. How much—or how little—freedom given by the mentor has considerable impact on how young teachers learn their craft. The implementation of media literacy curriculum is likewise affected. AD commented on the pressure to teach within the pacing schedule of the mentor—as referenced in the comment about the mentor's previous experience with a pre-service teacher and how that experienced left her behind in the curriculum—is worthy of further analysis:

VY: switching to the constraints of working in the pre-service classroom, what kind of constraints did you encounter?

AD: I know I'm not really a teacher yet, but I just feel if I was just left alone in my little corner of the school and no one came to see me, I would do a much better job.

VY: there's some truth in that.

AD: one of the first things she [the mentor] told me when I first met her, was that her last 495C student left her so far behind, that stuck in my head.

(Post-interview 11/19/2010, Youngbauer, 2011e)

Comments like these were commonplace among the student teachers, and it became quite clear that some mentors allowed the freedom to experiment with teaching ideas and strategies more so than others were:

SZ: I wanted to do a project and I didn't decide on a medium yet, I was thinking posters or videos, I was actually thinking about letting kids do a rap or something like that, but my mentor teacher said "just do a PowerPoint slideshow because you only have this many days to do it [project]."

(Post-interview 11/19/2010, Youngbauer, 2011e)

SZ's comments demonstrate that the restrictions imposed by her mentor inhibited her ability to implement classroom-teaching strategies beyond those associated with media literacy. SZ often made comments in post-observation debriefing sessions that her mentor's classroom management approaches and policies were a source of ongoing frustration for her. It would seem that the implications of this restriction/freedom continuum have ramifications far beyond this media literacy study.

At the other end of the continuum, CT experienced more freedom to explore and experiment during her field experience than most of her cohort:

VY: one of the key things that you said earlier was that your mentor told you that you could do anything you wanted.

CT: yeah pretty much.

VY: was that all the time?

CT: I was so happy that she was very “anything you want to do within the syllabus, just let me know and we’ll fit it in somehow.” For the most part I went along with whatever she was doing, and I would look ahead and say I want to do this or that.

(Post-interview 11/19/2010, Youngbauer, 2011e)

By no coincidence, this freedom influenced how CT was able to apply media literacy activities using the four approaches. CT’s application of media literacy is discussed below. It would seem logical that the freedom or lack thereof within the pre-service field experience may be the most understated variable in the pre-service teaching experience. This situation holds ramifications for teaching practices beyond this research for it is logical that pre-service teachers would have difficulty implementing *any* type of teaching strategy in a classroom where they are forced to follow the mentor’s curriculum lock-step.

Access to technology.

Two of the participants assigned to a building undergoing renovation experienced further complications in using media. Because of the renovations, the use of media technologies—including computers for internet or email—was nonexistent for most of the field experience. When no technology is present, media text usage is limited to textbooks and other forms of printed media.

VY: you didn't have access to technology in your building because of construction/renovation. It wasn't until I came and saw you a second time and the Promethean board was installed the day before. And you used maps of South America.

CS: I would have liked to use Google maps and Google Earth. It's better than holding a globe.

VY: you admittedly said that you didn't use media in the classroom?

GO: I did to a degree. I used newspaper articles and documents, and I used a textbook whole lot and resources like that. But as far as technological things, I was kind of limited because we didn't have an overhead, or a computer to hook up to—we used movies and stuff.

VY: right, the school was under renovation so you had restrictions because CS went through the same thing. There wasn't even e-mail capability for the first few weeks you were there.

GO: yea the first two weeks. I really wish I could have done more, there were a lot of times when I thought I can really use this but I don't have a projector. Or I want to show them this YouTube clip but there isn't a computer hookup, things like that. I'm excited to get into my new classroom. I'm familiar with that school district so I am sure they have that stuff (technology).

(Post-interview 11/19/2010, Youngbauer, 2011e)

The lack of technological capability in this building provided challenges the students had not foreseen. Seeing themselves as the natural purveyors of new media, they saw themselves

handcuffed in this role to the extent that their lessons were flawed in some way because they could not use texts beyond traditional print.

In addition to the disadvantages associated with a school trying to upgrade its technological capabilities, it is easy to forget that students may face the same challenges at home. Even as Internet use expanded dramatically during the 1990s, disadvantaged groups—blacks, Hispanics, the poor, the elderly, the undereducated, and those in rural areas—continued to lag behind in their access to and use of the Internet (Hindman, 2009). This concern was echoed by the pre-service teachers:

VY: one thing I want to point out or ask you, you told me before that all of the students had jump drives given by the school. Yet the talk from other student teachers has been that the district was worried that not every house had computers.

SZ: yeah, I remember talking to a substitute teacher, she said to me “we still have people in the school district that don't have a computer at their house or if they do half of them have dial up.” And that's interesting because these kids are great on computers. I had kids who came up to me, since we were running out of time, but they were not going to be able to work on the project at home because they don't have a computer at home. And I had to make adjustments for that, it made it so much more difficult.

CS: It was tough because some of them didn't have computers. Because they have, you can track your kid's progress online, but my mentor had a lot of papers collected from the students that said there are computers at home or Internet. You have to mail this to them.

VY: so what kind of problems does this lead to if you want to use media?

CS: you would have to make sure the students did group work you couldn't have them do things by themselves that has to do with the Internet. Couldn't have them go home and make a PowerPoint, or Prezi project or whatever, or make a picture on your computer. Or collage.

VY: were there labs at the middle school? Could you've gone to the computer lab?

CS: they were still under renovation, the library was still pretty much nothing like a library.

(Post-interview 11/19/2010, Youngbauer, 2011e)

Classroom use of media and media technologies are complicated by the *digital divide* (Hindman, 2009, p. 6) experienced by the pre-service teachers. Student lack of technology access can hamper even the most well planned lesson on media literacy. However, this predicament further supports why media literacy should be included in classrooms—to provide students with literacy regardless of their access.

Use of the four approaches.

The pre-service teachers had difficulty implanting media education strategies into their lesson plans for reasons already addressed. For those who were able to successfully attempt using the four approaches, it became apparent that the student teachers may have naturally synthesized the approaches:

JB: I did those [four approaches] without really doing them consciously. Because I think to evaluate media effectively you have to use these things whether or not you are stipulating “this is empirical,” or whatever. The beer and wine lesson was about why is wine elite and why is beer the commoners' drink? Why is it perceived to be that way? So that had critical, it had historical background of why wine is a more expensive drink.

So it did have all those elements but I did not organize it in such a way that it would fit those elements. I think it fits in there automatically.

(Post-interview 11/19/2010, Youngbauer, 2011e)

JB's lesson analyzed the perceptions of wine and beer drinkers in the media. This lesson was situated within a larger world history unit on the age of exploration which also touched on trade goods that included coffee, tea, and slavery. His use of media to help students connect the past to current advertising campaigns for beverages was anchored in the four approaches:

JB: I always think of media as using news, using video, but that's not always true. It's just the way I perceived it before I met you, I learned about using textbooks as a media and primary documents even. But I felt that using, using video footage and I used commercials, the kids are so saturated with that already then again a new perspective to critique from and to understand commercials, the purpose of commercials. And the students came up with the notion that they're just really just a way to get you to buy things. And then we talk about the techniques to get you to buy things.

(Post-interview 11/19/2010, Youngbauer, 2011e)

JB's lesson taught media literacy techniques and how those techniques can be translated to other media texts. Consider this example from his second lesson plan:

This lesson encourages students to evaluate and critique the media messages they are exposed to every day. Specifically, the lesson will identify how advertisements, commercials, and other media use, reinforce, and satire cultural beliefs to sell a product. Concurrently, this lesson will aim to present the notion that some commodities relate to cultural status by investigating the history and current perception of beer and wine drinkers.

(Youngbauer, 2011g)

While JB does not specifically mention the four approaches in the lesson plan, his lesson plan shows evidence of internalizing a concept for media literacy that is historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical.

CT (who was not one of my supervisees) implemented the most elaborate analysis of media. While this student was a participant enrolled in the methods class, I was unable to observe her lesson in the field first-hand. Since the field experience coincided with the 2010 mid-term election, she saw campaign advertising this as a way to effectively use media in her social studies classroom. Her lesson plan goals were stated as: to have students analyze how the evolution of media has affected political campaigns and the people's perception of the candidates; students were to analyze and interpret various political ads, and decide whether the media's role in politics is good or bad; students will understand the effect media has on their impressions of candidates and develop skills to help them become informed citizens. Her lesson activities included the students viewing video clips of the Nixon/Kennedy debate from 1960; analyzing the history of media influence on elections that included election banners for Abraham Lincoln from 1860, a magazine ad for the 1904 elections between Theodore Roosevelt and Alton Parker, and campaign ads for the Eisenhower/Stevenson campaigns from 1952; analysis of campaign ads from the 2010 midterm elections (Youngbauer, 2011g).

For this student teacher, the approaches to media education discussed in the methods class were an impetus for her lesson:

CT: she [mentor] said I could do whatever I wanted whenever I wanted. And because it was election week I decided to do that because the kids were complaining about the political ads and everything.

VY: so this was all your idea?

CT: right.

VY: so what was your goal?

CT: I guess to have them, instead of them looking at the ads as being annoying, look at them as being... just to have them be informed. Like they look at something and decide if it's true or not.

VY: did you get the ads off of YouTube?

CT: yeah I got a lot of them off of YouTube, I have a Prezi online, so I had Eisenhower ads, I even had really old ones from Roosevelt/Parker, those were print ads. I wanted to show that ads didn't have to be on TV, they could be blogs...

VY: I thought that was what was really cool, you put political advertising into context by showing older ones. You didn't just say here are these new ads and there's all this money spent. You actually put it in context. Here's the point, I presented in the methods class these four approaches and it seems that you just went and did them all. I asked you about this before and you said you didn't tell the students that you were using them, you said that they were melded in there. Did you take my advice? Or did this just seem like the best way to do it?

CT: I did take your advice.

VY: you're not going to hurt my feelings!

CT: no, it was after your lesson. I had always wanted to... I was reading through the book [textbook from the field experience], I really wanted to do something with the Nixon-Kennedy debates, I used that as a springboard, then your lesson came up [on media literacy]. And I thought about how I could work everything into the lesson with

the debates and all of the ads and how the students were going to look at them. I was thinking about having them analyze, and after talking about it in our class I thought that I could have them do it themselves.

(Post-interview 11/19/2010, Youngbauer, 2011e)

While the lesson was successful in regards to the student engagement and subsequent discussion, CT felt that the lesson was lacking in the level of analysis she sought to achieve.

CT: Overall, I wish the analyzing could have been more engaging and active. To achieve this I could have had them do the worksheets on their own. We had time left, one idea I had after the lesson, was to have them pick an ad to really pick apart and even have us check the facts as they would if they were really trying to be an informed citizen.

(Post-interview 11/19/2010, Youngbauer, 2011e)

She also recognized the importance of using a systematic approach that could be applied to any type of media text:

CT: I had problems connecting the lesson to the big idea and the closure. To convey the main point/big idea to them actively is difficult. I want them to understand the big idea through their own thinking. A couple ideas I have to try and do this for the next lesson is to throw in a commercial at the end, about some product of interest to them. This can show them that these media literacy techniques can be used not just for political ads, but for anything. The first class really liked the “I like Ike” thing. And that was the best part when we went back to watch it again, they were like, all these hands shot up, and they were like “there are all these subliminal messages.” And I told him how even commercials [use these techniques]. This could be applied to anything.

(Post-interview 11/19/2010, Youngbauer, 2011e)

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, a key component affecting CT's use of media literacy was the freedom given to her by her mentor. My coverage of the four approaches luckily corresponded with her need to create lesson plans on election coverage. To be clear, she would have written and taught lessons on election coverage whether or not I had included media literacy in the methods course. My lessons gave her the foundation to build a lesson that her mentor could further build upon.

Recalling the four approaches.

JB was able to internalize the historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical approaches to media education since he found their rationale logically connected to his own position on classroom learning. His approach to using media contained elements of the four approaches even though his intentions were not presented to his students, nor were they explicit in his lesson plan design (Youngbauer, 2011g). For the remaining four student teachers, interviews revealed that they had little understanding of the four approaches and therefore naturally did not apply them to what little media use they had implemented in their lessons. In the aforementioned discussion with CS concerning the accuracy of news sources, the following exchange represented the norm in regards to student teacher understanding of the four approaches:

VY: so what I'm getting at is, I laid out a plan for media education—here is how I think you should do this. Do you remember what that was? This addresses your point. You think that there is common knowledge that Fox represents a certain viewpoint, MSNBC represents a certain viewpoint. So how do we get around that? I gave you a way to do that. There are four things that you could follow...

CS: I don't remember.

VY: you don't remember, so if we look at things historically, empirically,

CS: yeah, critically now I remember.

VY: so the issue is, if you have these perceptions of the news sources, other people have them too, for whatever reason. Students bring these in to the classroom with them, just like they bring in this knowledge of *Pirates of the Caribbean* or other movies like you said. They also have these other perceptions too. Different age groups will have different levels of that. They get that somewhere, from their parents, their friends, their friend's parents. I am saying a way around that if we always follow those four things.

CS: look at it historically, critically, empirically, interpretively.

(Post-interview 11/19/2010, Youngbauer, 2011e)

CS was not alone in failing to utilize the four approaches or for even remembering what they were. This was evident in another post interview during a discussion on the use of a short video clip on world religions used as an introduction for a student project in which they would make PowerPoint presentations:

VY: the issue with this clip is since it wasn't very long, there wasn't a whole lot to tear apart and interpret. Then there was a project the students were going to do, where they were going to make a PowerPoint, and the last thing I wrote here [in field observations] was that there was a media clip of the five major religions. So with all that in mind, I introduced in our methods courses these four approaches to use. Remember what they were?

SZ: was that the empirical and all that stuff?

VY: the empirical and *all that stuff*, that's exactly right (laughs)!

SZ: I don't remember what the other ones were off the top of my head (laughs).

VY: historical, interpretive, and critical.

SZ: yeah

VY: so the question is, did you have a chance to do those, did you go into the approaches when using media?

SZ: I'm trying to think, can you give me a quick review what they were?

(Post-interview 11/19/2010, Youngbauer, 2011e)

I made a conscious decision study to leave out any media education criteria prior to my in-field observations. If I had made media literacy criteria mandatory, the students would have undoubtedly implemented the approaches if given the opportunity by their mentors. I am able to base this conclusion on the caliber of work that each of the student teachers exhibited in regards to the criteria established for the pre-service experience. That is to say, these student teachers completed all assignments for the experience and each demonstrated considerable growth as future teachers. For this research, it was important to not provide a lock step how-to manual for media literacy in the social studies. The goal was to see how student teachers would answer this call given the information that I had presented to them in the methods class. While their use of the four approaches was, for the most part, nonexistent, there were indications that their future classrooms would implement these strategies.

Media use vs. media literacy.

The student teachers continue to see the use of media education in the social studies classroom as both necessary and natural. However, the data suggests that these students conflate media use with media literacy at this stage of their development. Still, discussions with the student teachers regarding their future use of media education strategies were promising. To this end, the student teachers were able to reflect on how they may use media in their future classrooms:

VY: we talked about lesson ideas that use media, like sound essays, or making videos.

Let me put you on the spot, was there anything you could have done in school where the students could have created media?

CS: I tried that with the civilization lesson, I was trying to get them towards that. I try to make it so they had to find information about their civilization. But they didn't explore beyond what they were comfortable with—they all had civilizations like ours.

VY: could they've created some kind of media?

CS: poster boards count right? They could've done that.

(Post-interview 11/19/2010, Youngbauer, 2011e)

CS's refers to his lesson activity in which the students—arranged in groups—would establish criteria for a new civilization. The students' inexperience with other civilizations led to their developing civilizations that were not unlike our own. CS's goal was to have the students analyze their own culture by designing a new one. His goal was hampered by the students' lack of historical context from which to build upon.

My observation of JB's classroom revealed how he interpreted the four approaches and how he negotiated between media literacy and media use in that lesson. This particular lesson involved the creation of the cultural image of Santa Claus and how the Coca Cola Company influenced that image. The lesson addressed the use of advertising to create a brand and characters to sell a product. Students studied images of Saint Nicholas and Santa Claus to evaluate the evolution of the Santa Claus character as influenced by stories, poetry, and advertising. Students then explained how Coca Cola's advertisements created various aspects of their perception of the image and story of Santa Claus (Youngbauer, 2011f).

Evidence of use vs. literacy can also be seen in JC's second lesson plan, where she chose to use a DVD: *Global Issues "Africa: Challenges in the 21st Century"* by Sclessinger Media in her field experience. JC provided a worksheet study guide for her students that included simple fact-based questions, i.e. students answered lower-level order thinking questions on facts from the DVD while viewing. For example, "Besides the weather, what are people blaming for the onset of famine?" (Youngbauer, 2011g). JC's lesson did not contain true elements of media literacy. This reflects the misunderstanding that the use of media constitutes media literacy and also reflects JC's failure to internalize the media literacy curriculum present in the methods class.

Some students were successful in applying principles of media literacy to their lesson plans more so than others. Regardless, these pre-service student teachers envision a use of media education strategies that is promising:

JB: As for the future, I'm planning on incorporating current events, and using media, I still really believe that advertising and being able to critique your new sources and trying to filter through what is actually valid and unbiased information if there is such a thing. This would be the most effective thing for students. It's a way to almost liberate them from a bunch of skewed thoughts that are taken as being objective facts. So it is to make someone a critical thinker, I feel that you should be critical about everything even if that means being critical of the teacher. Or evaluating what the role of the teacher is. I think it would be great to use literature, I learned that in M-'s class, he believes his class is about... you probably say something about literacies, but a lot of times they read a book then incorporate the book into society and the significance of the books.

VY: he attaches them to context?

JB: yeah, I think that that would be very helpful to explore a certain piece of literature. I wanted to incorporate art into the media aspect of my class because there has always been art throughout history and to incorporate what kind of art movement was going on in the period can give a new perception of what the attitudes were by different people. Because even the role of the artist has changed throughout history. It's just like with literacy if you look at a piece of art and you don't know the context that you might not understand the significance of it.

(Post-interview 11/19/2010, Youngbauer, 2011e)

Multiple access points.

The pre-service teachers demonstrated that a media literacy curriculum can provide multiple access points for students to connect to the social studies curriculum. Crucial to these access points is the acceptance of multiple texts as viable learning tools.

GO: well I think for me, this goes to what I said before about relating to things, I like the *Star Trek* ones, I remembered that the most. I tend to be a big sci-fi fan. Although I'm not a *Star Trek* fan, I thought that was pretty interesting. Those things engage me the most. It's like I said before. For example one kid in my class wouldn't ever participate, and I heard the new call of duty game came out. So I went up to him and asked him to point out something on the map, and he said no. Which is what he did every day. And then after that yes we something about call of duty because I was talking to another student about it. He said, "you play *Call of Duty*?" I said I'll answer you if you point out Zimbabwe on the map. He got up, pointed to it, then said "do you?" I said "yes I play sometimes." So I think it's important to get things that students can relate to.

SZ: There was one lesson we did about the Protestant Reformation and I showed a clip of *The Simpsons*, the Henry VIII clip. And after I told them to write down ways that this clip was not true, what things actually didn't happen the way of *The Simpsons* show said it happened. It didn't end up being as great a part of the lesson I thought it would, but I was trying to make the point that you can't take what you see in the media at face value. But you have to interpret it, be critical or whatever.

(Post-interview 11/19/2010, Youngbauer, 2011e)

Both GO and SZ demonstrated to their students that they had experience with the same media texts that the students enjoy. GO did not actually use the *Call of Duty* game in a classroom activity, yet her knowledge of the game afforded her a certain legitimacy with her student. SZ's use of *The Simpsons* revealed to her students that school content and popular media content are not necessarily as isolated as students may believe. This understanding can have long-range implications especially in regard to teaching historical concepts.

While observing CS teach a lesson on Central and South America, his students made several pop-culture references that he disregarded (Youngbauer, 2011f). These references exhibited an understanding of spontaneous concepts on the part of the students as they negotiated the lesson content. Faced with pacing concerns, CS pushed forward with the delivery of content at the sacrifice of losing an access point in which to help students make a connection the content. This instance also provided connectivity to a missed opportunity discussed in the next section.

Missed opportunities.

As one might expect the pre-service teachers encountered several missed opportunities regarding the use of media in the social studies classroom. It is easy to maintain the point of view that these student teachers can easily be overwhelmed in the pre-service field experience. As is usually the case, the student teachers were required to teach using lesson plans developed by their mentors. These student teachers can also be put in the difficult position of teaching a subject that is not their strength. As the student teachers progressed throughout the placement, they would implement their own lesson plans. In addition, there is the obvious pressure of being officially observed by their supervisor.

One of these missed opportunities occurred while I observed a middle school geography lesson on the topic of Latin America (Youngbauer, 2011h). During a discussion on land forms, middle school students made comments about waterfalls in South America and whether or not they resembled the waterfall from the Walt Disney film *Up* (Doctor & Peterson, 2009). In a discussion on the Caribbean Islands, students made comments about another Disney film, *The Pirates of the Caribbean* film (Verbinski, 2003). In both cases, the student teacher made quick comments and moved on with his lecture—in the case of the film *Up*, mentioning that he had not seen the film. In his post-interview, the student teacher realized that he could have used the student's connections to the films to further their understanding of the lesson topic. For example, a discussion could have taken place regarding the historical accuracy of the film, or a critical analysis could have taken place on the perception of piracy portrayed in the film.

VY: So even though you weren't showing those [films], there was a connection they had.

So after that experience can you see ways to use those connections?

CS: like popular movies? Yeah I feel that staying up to date with the culture in teaching you have to. So that you can use these connections because kids remember those connections, I think. Anyway I can connect a movie or a song or a philosopher to some, maybe a philosopher doing a rap, something like that. It's a good tool. Every day they're around movies and music—they can quote movies all day, but they can't remember what we teach them. If you have a way to connect their movies to what they study it would work.

(Post-interview 11/19/2010, Youngbauer, 2011e)

The student teacher recognizes the concept of encapsulation (Engestrom, 2005) discussed in Chapter 2, and understands that learning takes place when scientific concepts are built on the everyday concepts that students bring into the classroom with them—in this case their knowledge of popular culture media texts.

My field notes revealed another missed opportunity while observing GO teach a lesson on the resources of Africa. “A student asks about the BP oil spill, you give quick answer then ‘let’s move on’” (Youngbauer, 2011h). GO’s hesitancy, like CS, was rooted in concerns for maintaining the pace of the lesson—a common concern for new and veteran teachers alike. Allowing student discussions to take place that are relevant to the lesson topic, threaten the teachers long range pacing planning of the curriculum. However, what is gained is an opportunity to expand the depth of understanding on a topic and connecting the topic to what the students already know.

Chapter Summary

The most obvious pattern in my observation notes was, sadly, the *lack* of media usage in the classroom—when usage did take place, there was little or no analysis of the media. While all

of the participants view media education and media literacy as necessary and natural additions to the social studies curriculum, with exception, the student teachers had difficulty implementing media education strategies in their pre-service field placements. Furthermore, out of the five student teachers in the field whom I observed, only one could recall the four approaches in a post interview, and that teacher used a hybrid version. Another, whom I did not observe first-hand, did use the four approaches in designing her lesson plan but did not share the approaches with the students. That is to say, her students were not specifically aware that they were using approaches that were historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical. The consequences of this specific may be minimal depending on age group or academic level. Regardless, it seems that the level of freedom that student teachers may or may not have in the pre-service classroom is the biggest influence on how they turn theory into practice for all topics not just media literacy.

This project sought to establish a media education plan for the social studies utilizing predominant theories on media literacy; present that plan to Penn State University pre-service teachers via the social studies methods course; and analyze how those pre-service teachers answered the call for media literacy in the social studies as espoused by the National Council of the Social Studies. I suggested media education strategies that were constructed from existing media literacy strategies and that utilized approaches that were historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical in nature. While the use of these approaches was varied among the pre-service teachers, the potential for their future use in their social studies classrooms held promise. This belief is partially due to the fact that the participants viewed the use of media in the social studies classroom as both natural and necessary.

The most dominant variable in the use of media in the pre-service classroom experiences was the amount of freedom allowed to the student teachers by their respective mentors. These

freedoms could be characterized by the freedom to experiment with teaching strategies within the mentors' existing curriculum. Those student teachers who had more freedom were more likely to experiment with the implementation of media education strategies, albeit in varying ways. This observation has further implications in that any and all attempts—to use any and all practices—introduced in methods classes (lesson planning, classroom management, etc.) are influenced by how much classroom freedom, or little freedom the student teachers have.

Chapter 6: Discussion

***“Democracy is not just a counting up of votes;
it is a counting up of actions.”***

(Zinn, 1968, p. 25)

My first goal for this project was to make sense of a media literacy curriculum within a social studies teacher education program by explaining why media literacy is important in social studies education; how the media influences the nature of engaged citizenship—particularly digitized media and the role of gatekeepers of media; how a profit-motivated mass media affects the landscape of citizenship in regards to providing the resources necessary for a public to be informed citizens; and which topics of media literacy could be used in high school social studies classrooms. I developed four approaches to media literacy using the strengths and weaknesses of the NCSS *Media Literacy Position Statement* as a springboard, and adding background knowledge stemming from my own experiences as a classroom social studies teacher, and from practices and theories experienced in my doctoral program. In my opinion, it is logical and natural to approach social studies education in this manner, and the idea of media literacy in social studies is long over-due.

I have dedicated a good deal of space in this paper discussing my views on media literacy compared with those of the National Council for the Social Studies, *why* media literacy should be included in the social studies, and *how* media literacy could be included in the social studies curriculum. Influencing the second goal is the increasing dominance of a handful of corporations who act as content providers and carriers, and how that dominance can affect how citizens engage in democratic practices. As indicated in the quote above, democratic practice is not only measured by voter turnout, but by how citizens engage democratically in their local communities and with their fellow citizens as well. I have argued that it is difficult to engage in these actions if one is not media literate.

My second goal was to provide insight into how young social studies teachers take up the call for media literacy; provide evidence on how future social studies teachers are using media literacy in their pre-service teaching experiences; and gain evidence plans for how the pre-service teachers intend to use media literacy in their future classrooms.

In this chapter, I will summarize the most salient connections found in the data; how those connections provide insight into future study on the topic; and provide considerations on how my media literacy curriculum could be implemented more successfully.

Revisiting Categories

Methods classroom.

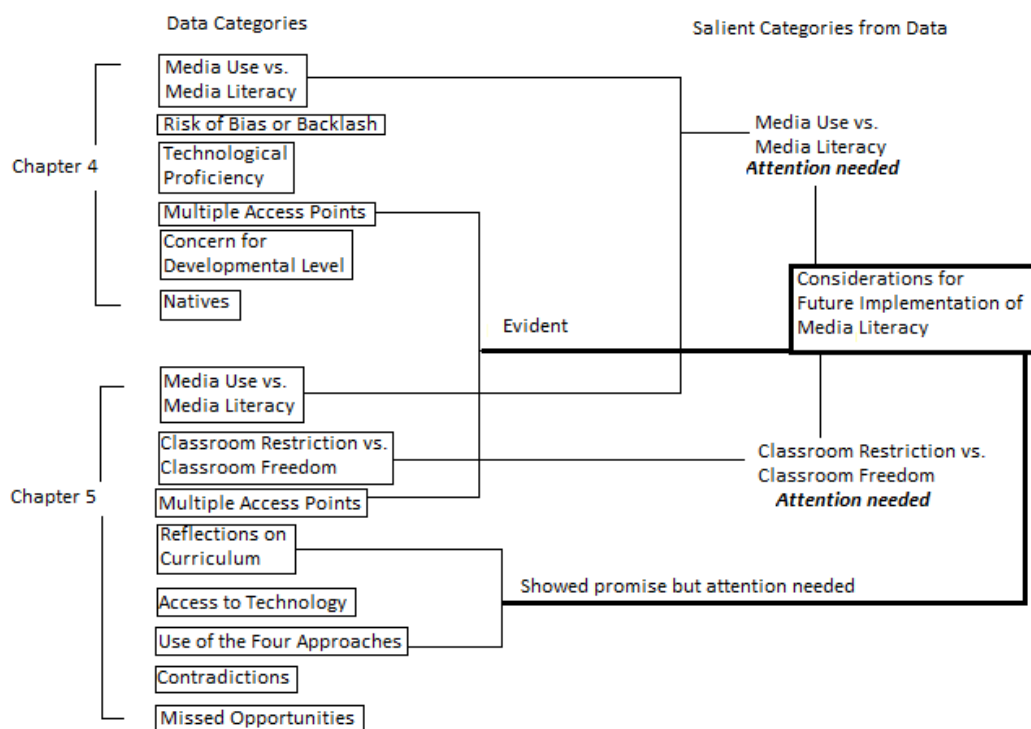
Chapter 4 discussed data collected in the methods classroom that revealed the coded categories Media Use vs. Media Literacy; Risk of Bias/Backlash; Technological Proficiency; Concern for Developmental Levels; Multiple Access Points; and how the students saw themselves as natives in regards to the use of media. The data suggests that some of the pre-service teachers did not take up the media literacy curriculum, and conflated media use vs. media literacy and technological literacy. In addition, the pre-service teachers were concerned that the use of certain media content would jeopardize their relationships with administrators, parents, and the community at large. While many of the participants viewed the Risk of Bias/Backlash as a major concern, no evidence of this concern was found in lesson plans, in classroom observation, or in the post interviews i.e. there was no evidence of these this concern in the second data set.

There was no carry-over of the categories of Technological Proficiency, Concern for Developmental Levels, and Natives. While the pre-service teachers held the perception that their

mastery of media technologies would afford them natural use of texts and would subsequently aid in media education, data regarding this proclivity was astonishingly absent.

Of the categories defined in Chapter 4, two were observed in the field and discussed in Chapter 5—Media Use vs. Media Literacy, and Multiple Access Points (see Figure 6.1). The NCSS *Media Position Statement* argued that teachers must expand their definition of texts beyond printed text if media literacy is to take place. It is evident in the data from both collection points that the pre-service teachers do hold an expanded definition of media texts (e.g. to include digital media), and recognize the importance of that expanded definition in creating multiple access points for student learning. This understanding holds promise for the future implementation of media literacy in social studies classrooms.

Figure 6.1 Data Analysis Network IV



The field experience.

The coded categories from the field placement, and discussed in Chapter 5, included Media Use vs. Media Literacy; Multiple Access Points; Access to Technology; Restriction vs. Freedom; Reflections on the Media Literacy Curriculum; Use of the Four Approaches; Contradictions; and Missed Opportunities. The latter two serve as evidence of inconsistent teaching practice, not teaching philosophy, since teachers do at times miss opportunities and contradict their expressed assumptions with classroom actions. That is to say, the data suggests that where contradictions or missed opportunities occurred, they were the result of the subjects being inexperienced teachers and not the result of the subjects' change in philosophy towards the use of media literacy.

The Access to Technology category also failed to materialize as an issue. While educators should be cognizant of their students' access to technology, the *access* category existed because the school district in question was increasing access through renovation. Some participants mentioned concerns for their students' home access to technology and while there was no indication that access impeded learning during their field placement, concern for student access did affect how the teachers approached lesson planning.

Data in Chapter 5 revealed that while two of the pre-service teachers developed lessons that included evidence of media literacy and the four approaches, four did not use media in their lessons, or when they did, the use of media did not include elements of literacy or the four approaches. However, there was evidence—primarily in the post interviews—that indicate promise for future use of media literacy and the four approaches. During post interviews, the student teachers gave responses indicating that they were likely to include media literacy elements in their future classrooms.

Also established in Chapter 5 was the importance of the mentor's role with regard to the inclusion of media literacy. Pre-service teachers given more freedom in the classroom were more likely to include media literacy than those who were not. These mentors did not restrict the inclusion of media literacy per se, but their concern for time and curriculum pacing influenced the inclusion second hand.

As Figure 6.1 indicates, the data from both collection points can be compressed into what I consider the most salient—what conditions need to be considered for the implementation of media literacy to take place in future classrooms? Two categories were distilled from the data that influence the future implementation of media literacy: the conflation of media use and media literacy; and the level of freedom pre-service teachers have in their respective classrooms. Both categories must be addressed if media literacy is to be successfully implemented in the social studies classroom.

NCSS offered an over-simplified plan for implementing media literacy based on assumptions that media is ubiquitous, (our students already engage in media practices); that there are accepted common theories concerning media literacy; and that teachers will be able to media literacy practices if they expand their definition of media texts and deepen their understanding of information, knowledge, and power. I in turn expanded on the latter in forming a media literacy curriculum for teachers, and subsequently taught that curriculum hoping to observe evidence of media literacy practices in pre-service field placements. Based on the NCSS assumption that this would be sufficient, I purposely avoided direct feedback with the pre-service teachers during the field placement. My observations indicate that both NCSS and I were mistaken on the simplified way that the call for media literacy would be taken up by teachers. Like any other teaching strategy in which the pre-service teachers *practice*, the implementation of media

literacy requires feedback and continued supervised practice if inexperienced teachers are to be successful in its implementation.

Implications for Further Study

This project revealed larger issues concerning teacher training. It is evident from the data that, regardless of topic (media literacy, classroom management, differentiated instruction, etc.), other variables affect the success of teacher education programs. As mentioned above, most notable of these variables is the role of the classroom mentor.

My pre-service teachers did not have necessarily *bad* relationships with their mentors. From my observations, I can safely say that the pre-service teachers were treated professionally. While some may have learned more from their mentors than others, each was able to experience the classroom in a nurturing environment. The noticeable difference was found in the amount of freedom that different mentors allowed for their respective student teachers. This freedom was linked to the mentors' desire to stay on pace with the curriculum, or to some extent, their honest desire to have the pre-service teachers benefit from their own experience resulting in a *do what I do* approach. Mentors receive no compensation in any way for their service—they volunteer because they feel that they have wisdom to pass on to future generations of teachers. The significance of these observations go beyond my media literacy project, for if I were doing a project on say, the increased use of primary documents in social studies education, the ability of the pre-service teacher to implement this approach would also be influenced, or constricted, by the classroom freedom permitted by the mentor.

As for my role in this process, I presented the concepts and approaches for a media literacy curriculum in hope that my students would internalize these concepts and approaches. This would result in my observing evidence of this internalization in the field. Internalization

can be viewed as a process of transformation of external actions into internal psychological functions. Vygotsky was “interested in the problem of internalization of symbolic psychological tools and social relations” (Vygotsky, 1986, p. xxvi). To some extent, I did observe internalization, but that internalization was varied and in some cases inconsequential. Like any experienced teacher, I reflect on the quality of my instruction based on the assessments I made in the field. Could I have approached the teaching of these concepts differently to achieve better results? This question is not easily answered, nor is it ever, regardless of the teaching environment, i.e. public school, university level, etc.

Post-interviews revealed that there exists a better chance to observe the pre-service teachers’ use of media literacy in future classrooms than the ones I observed. This would support the assumption that learning is an ongoing process, that one instance in a learning environment does not automatically result in learning taking place. In a sense, my study reinforces the teach/assess/re-teach paradigm. I presented the material in the methods course, observed how the teachers took up the call (or did not), and through post-interviews determine how I could better teach the topic in the future. Furthermore, when I discussed these concerns with the subjects of the study, they all gave insight into how they themselves would improve upon their use of media literacy. The interviews also demonstrated an understanding of the relationships between information, knowledge, and power as prescribed by NCSS.

VY: well let's talk about the future. Now that you have some experience in the classroom how do you foresee using media. Let's put it this way, let's say if there were lessons you were restricted in how you taught—you're also restricted on time (short class periods), that was probably the bigger factor. How would you do it differently in your classroom?

JB: Okay, well I'm definitely going to use media, it would be nice to have 45 minutes instead of 30 minutes, I realized going in, not going in but leaving the experience, I should have made some of my lessons two days or three days rather than trying to get a whole lesson into one.

But as for the future, I'm planning on incorporating current events, and using media, I still really believe that advertising and being able to critique your new sources and trying to filter through what is actually valid and unbiased information if there is such a thing. This would be the most effective thing for students. It's a way to almost liberate them from a bunch of skewed thoughts that are taken as being objective facts. So it is to make someone a critical thinker, I feel that you should be critical about everything even if that means being critical of the teacher. Or evaluating what the role of the teacher is. I think it would be great to use literature, I learned that in [my mentor's] class, he believes his class is about... you probably say something about literacies, but a lot of times they read a book then incorporate the book into society and the significance of the books.

(Youngbauer, 2011e)

Following these students through their full student teaching placement—an idea that I considered—would have provided evidence of more successful uses of the media literacy approaches. With the exception of one student who was completing the full student teaching experience in the same school, the student teachers were conducting student teaching in the Philadelphia area making a longitudinal design impossible.

The four approaches revisited through data.

*“Growing up it all seems so one-sided
Opinions all provided
The future pre-decided
Detached and subdivided
In the mass production zone”*

Rush, “Subdivisions”

(Lee, G., Lifeson, A. & Peart, N. 1982).

My proposed approaches to media use in the classroom provide a framework for literacy to take place. In many cases that I observed in my research, modest use of the historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical approaches would have sufficed to increased students analysis of the media texts used by the pre-service teachers. Media culture is a “mass production zone” where the newest gadgets (e.g. cell phones, video game consoles, etc.) provide access to the newest texts (films, games, etc.), and desire for the possession of and access to these items are created by a marketing machine. These items perform—for the most part—as advertised or they would not exist in the market regardless of advertising. Students enter the classroom with a working knowledge, albeit varied, of these media texts and technologies. The goal of media literacy, as suggested here, is not to promote some Luddite agenda nor is it to promote increased use of media technology. The goal of media literacy is to provide students with the skills and knowledge to negotiate the intent of media texts, how their use of technology affects their daily lives, and how their roles as citizens is affected by said technologies and texts. This goal allows for the continued enjoyment of media, while being able to engage with media texts with a critical eye.

For example, in a 7th grade geography lesson taught by CS on the Caribbean, students raised questions about the film *Pirates of the Caribbean* (Youngbauer, 2011f). CS mentioned later in his post interview that he missed an opportunity to help students make a connection

between a well-known popular culture text, and the concepts he was trying to teach. A simple discussion on how the film's portrayal of history—or in this, the case lack of, since the film is based on a theme park ride and not on any actual historical event—would have lead to increased understanding of the region and subsequently, media. This is not to say that the film is not entertaining—but that it should be viewed *as* entertainment, not a representation of a historic event(s).

In a World History class, SZ presented a short video on world religions and then assigned a project that involved her students making a PowerPoint presentation comparing the world religions. Restricted by time and on the advice of her mentor, she could neither allow for the analysis of the video she used, nor entertain other ideas her students may have had for the project. For example, the students could have made their own films depicting their interpretation of the different religions, or there could have been class discussion on the manner in which the religions were portrayed in the video that she used. As a result, her students created PowerPoint presentations that essentially copied the presentations she used in the class—presentations that failed to demonstrate any depth of understanding on the topic. This was not a problem associated with PowerPoint alone, but a problem associated with a lack of depth in regards to media in general. For example, the students could have made films that simply copied the video they saw. If the teacher approached media usage with the four approaches as foundation, it would not have mattered if the students created PowerPoint presentations, imovies, etc.—their presentations would have reflected greater understanding of the lesson topic and media literacy.

In both cases, the pre-service teachers exhibited the frustrations of working in a classroom that was not their own. Both mentors were concerned with the risk of finding themselves off the curriculum pace that they usually follow, resulting in their having to *play*

catch-up after the pre-service experience ended. Therefore, the mentors expected that the pre-service teachers would conform to the curriculum pacing that the mentors established. This concern is not without merit, since all teachers are expected to follow district pacing guidelines. Failure to do so is actually grounds for dismissal in this state as established by the Pennsylvania School Code (cf. Chapter 235, 1949). Teaching media literacy using the four approaches would be cumbersome if used as a stand-alone procedure for one lesson. During the media literacy portion of the social studies method class, I recommended that the students teach the four approaches at the beginning of the school year. In the first weeks of the school year, I (not unlike other experienced teachers) would spend considerable time establishing classroom procedures, expectations for work quality and classroom behavior, introducing the goals of the course, etc. These early class meetings would be the ideal time to introduce the four approaches not just for media literacy, but also as guidelines for the social studies in general. This would save time later in the curriculum when the using media texts—a scenario that was not afforded to the pre-service teachers.

One of the student teachers (CT) commented on how her mentor felt that CT's media literacy lesson on political advertising would actually save time for the mentor later in the semester in similar projects:

VY: So, your mentor liked that lesson?

CT: Yeah, she kept the Prezi to use for herself because they're [the students] going to make their own political ads [later in the year] so that lesson worked for her as an introduction.

(Youngbauer, 2011e)

The crux of this argument is that lessons involving media need not be huge productions for media literacy to take place. Simple modifications using the four approaches are enough to increase student understanding of both media texts and lesson content and the connections between each.

Finally, through revisiting the four approaches in the post interview, the student teachers made connections to media literacy. That is to say, when the approaches were further emphasized, they realized that simple media use was not media literacy. Let us revisit AD's experiences and perceptions:

AD: I showed a different video on Valley Forge, I think it was the day after you came, I remembered watching it and thinking, "well that's kind of biased."

VY: How so?

AD: The way they focused on Washington's troops and how hard it was, it was played up on how hard it was. I guess I didn't do a good job telling them that before hand, and tell them look at this, or, how do I explain this, whether we use video or the textbook, I need to find a way to tell them what to look at. Which is why when I asked them questions they would give me the right answer, but that's not what I was looking for.

I don't think I really realized it until this semester, because when I would do my own research before hand and I would go in and talk with [the mentor] about what I was going to say or use and she would say "well, that's not really what happened." She has a lot more background knowledge than I have. I think an important part of understanding history, you need to put yourself back in the time period.

(Post-interview 11/19/2010, Youngbauer, 2011e)

This pre-service teacher realized that she used media in much the same way her own teachers did when she was in high school—a point she made during the pre-interview:

VY: Describe any media examples from your past experiences (as a student) that you feel were not successful. Why weren't they successful?

AD: YouTube clips that are overused (laughs), the thirty second YouTube clips need to go away.

VY: but why?

AD: I think sometimes...okay, I was in Econ class today, and we were talking about productivity, efficiency, or something. And she went off on Ford, great example Ford, but then she showed this clip, that talked about how Ford raised productivity but it was kind of completely unrelated. I see where she was trying to go with it, but that was a waste of time.

(Youngbauer, 2011a)

This pre-service teacher realized she had gained insight and experience into what would be a more useful engagement with media that would foster media literacy. This realization occurred in her reflections on her Valley Forge lesson in which her lack of teaching experience in lesson planning and background knowledge resulted in her using a video clip in much the same way as her previous teachers. Reflections like these indicate that the pre-service teacher is more likely to engage in media literacy practices in the future.

The media literacy curriculum revisited.

“The amount, type, and quality of learning that occurs in a classroom, especially when there is interaction among students, are only in small part predictable.”
(Eisner, 2009, p. 109)

Like any experienced teacher, I find myself reflecting on the successes and failures of my teaching and see those reflections as a tool for improvement. With my data collection behind

me, it easy to criticize how I taught the media literacy curriculum. Did I allow for enough practical application in the classroom? Should I have emphasized certain aspects of the curriculum over others? I felt strongly about including a social element to the lessons, allowing for student interaction with me and between the students. Media is, for the most part, a social endeavor. For even in those instances where we engage in media privately, we tend to engage socially to relate our experiences. We recommend films, books, etc. to friends; we recommend some technologies over others (Play Station over X-Box, iphones over Motorola phones). Likewise, learning is also a social endeavor—particularly in the *social* studies. As I have always told my students, we spend a third of our lives sleeping and a third working. The rest is social studies—how we deal with our communities, friends, and family; our concern for crime-rates, the economy, and politics; and where we fit into a bigger picture historically, geographically, and philosophically.

I have a perception of media and experience dealing with various media texts and technologies; my student teachers have their own experiences, and the same is true for *their* students. As teachers, we negotiate through these experiences—some shared, some differing—and in the process, we all *learn*. These existing experiences are spontaneous—concepts learned through our separate communities of practice. What we try to establish in the classroom is a new community of practice in which we all build upon those spontaneous concepts.

The media literacy curriculum, as I presented it focused on social interaction as a process for understanding. This was a goal for two reasons. First, learning is best served when it is a social process that involves the concepts that students already possess while engaging new concepts presented in the classroom. “The two processes—the development of spontaneous and nonspontaneous concepts—are related and constantly influence each other” (Vygotsky, 1986, p.

157). Developing media literacy involves recognizing the understanding of media texts that students bring with them into the classroom and building upon that understanding. As we negotiate the learning process through social means, individual learning follows; “concept formation evolves from the social/interpsychological level to the individual/intrapsychological level” (C. D. Lee, 2005, p. 281). Secondly, teachers serve as the best resources of knowledge and practice for other teachers whether new or experienced. I wanted to plant this seed with my students, i.e. that they could rely on other teachers as resources and classroom. Activities were conducted as group projects for this reason.

***“The control of our being is not unlike the combination of a safe.
One turn of the knob rarely unlocks the safe;
each advance and retreat is a step toward one’s final achievement.”***
(B. Lee, 1975, p. 207)

As a pre-service student teacher supervisor in the CIFE department, I was responsible for identifying areas of possible development and recommending strategies for improving those areas. If I were to observe a pre-service teacher who, during a lesson, routinely called on the same handful of students, or say was oblivious to off-task student behaviors in certain parts of the classroom—I would point out these actions as areas for improvement. I would expect that during my next visit I would observe improvement in these areas. I purposely did not do this for their use of media literacy. Had I done this, it is logical that I would have observed a more involved usage of the four approaches presented in the methods class. This holds implications for two reasons.

First, learning to teach is a matter of learning the *practice* of teaching. Teachers are not created in universities, they are born in classrooms. Teacher education programs provide discipline-relevant background knowledge; the foundational knowledge of educational psychology; theories on teaching strategies, lesson planning, and curriculum design; and,

eventually, provide field experiences in which to practice. Likewise, learning to teach media literacy is a matter of practice in which feedback and support are as necessary as in any other aspect of teaching. While media literacy elements were present throughout the course, only three weeks were set aside specifically for the media literacy curriculum. This time restriction affected the types and quality of classroom artifacts I collected and likewise affected what the students took away from the lessons. Ironically, time was a contributing factor in how they approached media literacy in the field, i.e. the freedom given by their mentors. Had I provided feedback in the field—as opposed to the feedback provide in the post interview following the field experience—it is more likely that the pre-service teachers would have implemented media literacy elements more successfully than they did. This is a point from the NCSS *Media Literacy Statement* that needs to be addressed. NCSS oversimplifies how media literacy can be implemented in social studies classrooms. While my media literacy curriculum was certainly more involved than what NCSS suggests, it is clear from my study that simply *opening the door* on media literacy will not insure that the practices will be taken up by classroom teachers.

Second, these pre-service teachers went into the field experience with *my* expectations for media literacy but without the feedback and support of the mentors or the CIFE department on the subject. There was neither requirement from the CIFE department to implement media literacy, nor expectations from the mentors in this regard—and there should be. As I have argued throughout this paper, media literacy needs to hold the same position within the social studies curriculum as any of the other skills and knowledge sets associated with the discipline. Without this status, media literacy is a simple add-on, i.e. one more thing that teachers must try to fit into an already crowded curriculum, when, in truth, it can easily be woven into existing curricula.

In addition to those reasons, we must also take into consideration how the variable of *content knowledge* affects the social studies student teaching experience regardless of the addition of media literacy. While it is true that teachers of other disciplines must have knowledge beyond their specialty areas, the social studies teacher faces unique challenges in this regard. For example, in Pennsylvania, secondary science teachers must hold certification in their respective specialty areas—those certified in biology cannot teach physics, or chemistry, etc. On the other hand, social studies teachers—who may predominantly be teachers of history—may be called upon to teach political science, economics, psychology, anthropology, or geography. Furthermore, the breadth and depth involved with teaching history (Ancient History vs. American History pre or post Civil War, for example) creates its own challenges as well. Hypothetically, a student teacher could have a strong background in Ancient History and could be placed with a mentor who teaches only economics. This added pressure to play *catch-up* on content knowledge would logically play a role in how student teachers not only implement media literacy, but also how they handle the routine requirements of pre-service placement. Sam Wineburg (2001) emphasizes this point:

No one who prepares to become a social studies teacher can know all of the subjects he or she may be called on to teach. No single undergraduate major corresponds to the demands of the typical social studies curriculum. (p.149)

In light of these complications, it is foolish to view the study results as a failed attempt on my part, or that these students had failed in some way to achieve an understanding of media literacy. Or for that matter, that the mentor teachers should be held to blame for not allowing more space in which the student teachers could grow.

As it presently exists, my media literacy curriculum is only one part of the puzzle. For media literacy to be successfully implemented in social studies classrooms, four conditions need to be present. Those conditions include—in addition to my curriculum for future teachers—professional development (PDS) for existing teachers; inclusion of media literacy elements in field experience programs (CIFE); and an expectation for the role that mentors play in the process, i.e. mentors must recognize the importance of media literacy. Mentors could be exposed to media literacy curriculum through professional development essentially tackling two of the conditions at once. Experienced teachers regularly attend workshops or continuing education programs as a condition of tenured employment and to satisfy the criteria of the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001. Field experience programs already account for discipline-specific elements to accommodate national and state accreditation requirements for colleges and universities offering teacher education. For example, PSU teacher education students develop signature assignments in their methods classes (such as high quality lesson plans) and are expected to be observed teaching those lessons during the field experience. During their field experiences, pre-service teachers are expected to exhibit proficiency in creating and adapting instructional technologies (which includes media) and to effectively engage all learners. The latter's relationship to media is a point discussed extensively in this work.

Based on my observations of the data, the following changes would need to be present in a future study and to better serve the implementation of media literacy in social studies classrooms. First, the four approaches to media literacy (historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical) must be included in both levels of the social studies methods course and be ever-present. The four approaches can serve as a foundation for teaching social studies in general and to do so

would alleviate concerns for media literacy curriculum as an add-on, i.e. that media literacy would be yet one more thing to add to the curriculum.

Second, the curriculum must include time allocation for the development of hands-on projects for the pre-service teachers. During my curriculum, the students developed *ideas* for projects that could be used in their classrooms but due to time constraints the students did not actually engage in creating the projects. This adaptation would address two concerns. First, it would affect the quality of artifacts collected for the study—artifacts that would better indentify internalization of media literacy. Second, it would provide insight into how the pre-service teachers perceive their native status in regard to their use and understanding of media texts and technologies. The pre-service teachers in this study commented on their understanding of new media and media technologies, specifically on how their generation held a certain proclivity in the use of media and technology. Yet in practice, their native status did not yield evidence of that perceived understanding.

The third change in study design addresses the field experiences. Requirements for the implementation of media literacy must be explicit and feedback on this topic must be immediate as in the case of classroom management or lesson design, etc. In addition, media literacy must be added to field office requirements as part of the expectations for the implementation of instructional technologies and strategies in student engagement. Pre-service teachers would be expected to implement media literacy elements into their field experiences through lesson design and provide evidence of implementation in their teaching portfolios.

These changes fill the gaps left by the NCSS *Media Literacy Position Statement*. NCSS stipulates that teaching media literacy involves movement in two directions: a horizontal expansion and vertical deepening. These requirements were present in my curriculum, but as this

study has proven, the identification and discussion of these requirements will not provide a workable framework for media literacy by themselves. NCSS points a finger at what should happen for media literacy to take place, but offers little in *how* it will take place.

Epilogue

With these conditions in place, media literacy education in the social studies has a chance to take root. While bold to say, the need for media literacy may arguably be one of the most important issues facing educators today and its relevance can be witnessed in news headlines. As of this writing, AT&T has sought the approval of the FCC in the purchase of T-Mobile—a merger that would leave only three major cell phone carriers (Verizon and Sprint being the other two) and little competition within the industry (Wyatt, 2011). The Walt Disney Corporation has broken ground on a new \$4.4 billion theme park in Shanghai, China to gain access to China's 1.3 billion residents as not only a market for the park, but also for Disney's films and toys (Barnes & Barboza, 2011). The Federal Government is on the verge of a shutdown as Republicans and Democrats argue over the financing of Planned Parenthood and the power of the Environmental Protection Agency to enforce the Clean Air Act (Hulse, 2011). While I cannot safely say how these actions will affect our students, I do know that it is important for them to be educated on the possible implications on their own lives. Media literacy needs to be viewed as a part of the social studies as much as history, economics, geography, civics, etc. if we are to help students develop into engaged, democratic citizens.

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APPENDIX A: A HISTORY OF MEDIA IN THE UNITED STATES AND HOW IT AFFECTS THE SOCIAL STUDIES

For our students to be able to navigate the waters of new media, and to use that navigation as a route to engaged citizenship, it is vital that they understand the events that helped the media industry evolve into its current state. A historical approach to media is an important element in media. The history of media is interwoven with a history of government intervention at the federal level; “the U.S. media system—even its most ‘free market’ sectors—is the direct result of explicit government policies and in fact would not exist without those policies” (McChesney, 2004, p. 19). A brief history of the ongoing relationship between media and government intervention would seem pertinent to any social studies application of media literacy. It also further demonstrates the social studies connection to media literacy, “we sometimes treat the information industries as if they were like any other enterprise, but they are not, for their structure determines who gets heard” (Wu, 2010, p. 13).

According to Robert McChesney (2004; 2010), three distinct critical junctures exist in the history of U.S. media: from the founding to roughly the Civil War Period; the rise of radio broadcasting; and the neoliberal period in the final two decades of the twentieth century. During the revolutionary and constitutional era, media concerns permeated the political discourse. Three constitutional provisions in particular establish a blueprint for the construction of a media system. First, Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution gives to Congress the power to establish copyright “to promote the Progress of Science and the useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to Distribute Writings and Discoveries.” The founders believed if anyone could publish a book without the permission of the author—and thereby bypassing paying compensation to the author, there would be little incentive for authors

to write books. “Copyright was an explicit government intervention to give authors (or publishers) a legal monopoly over their books for a “limited” time period to ensure the incentive to produce books” (McChesney, 2004, p. 25).

Article I Section 8 of the Constitution also gave Congress the power “to establish Post Offices and Post Roads.” The importance of this power in relation to media is that the post office was primarily a medium of mass communication. “In 1794 newspapers made up 70 percent of post office traffic; by 1832 the figure had risen to well over 90 percent” (p. 33). Debate in Congress in 1792 over the amount of postage to charge newspapers resulted in newspapers being mailed at a price well below the actual cost. This postal subsidy of newspapers would become one of the largest single expenditures of the federal government. As John C. Calhoun put it, “Let us conquer space. It is thus that...a citizen of the West will read the news of Boston still moist from the press. The mail and the press are the nerves of the body politic” (Pool, 1983, p. 77).

Of course, the most important media element of the Constitution is the Bill of Right’s First Amendment:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

There has been no lack of interpretations of the First Amendment in regards to the media. As Robert McChesney points out:

A core problem that plagues much contemporary thinking about the free press clause is that the terms *free speech* and *free press* are used interchangeably. However, both are

separate concerns, otherwise there would have been no need for both to be included in the First Amendment. (2004, p. 33)

In the early days of the republic, the press was a highly partisan entity and natural part of the political process. The nation's partisan newspapers were subsidized by federal and state governments via government printing contracts for decades. The newspapers and media were not viewed as full-blown capitalist ventures but as a necessary instrument of democracy with almost every political viewpoint being represented in the press. It was not until the establishment of the U.S. Government Printing Office in 1860 that the practice of subsidizing ended.

With the advent of the telegraph in the 1840s and 1850s, the post office model was challenged as the primary delivery system for news. Telegraphy would eventually dominate the industry by the end of the Civil War, primarily because of the impact of the monopoly controlled by Western Union. "Economic historians regard the growth of Western Union as a major factor in the dominance of big business in American life until telegraphy faded in importance with the rise of radio, and especially, telephony in the early twentieth century" (p. 34 & 35). Due to Western Union's monopoly control and its collaboration in the development of the Associated Press, the company single-handedly revolutionized journalism, the media system, and the broader political economy. Because of its exclusive access to Western Union's wires, AP became the only wire news service in the nation. Ironically, this monopolistic position resulted in a journalistic style that was seemingly nonpartisan. This rise of journalistic *objectivity* was a result of Western Union and AP's concern for upsetting their clients.

One other crucial legislation—and one that affects this research—was the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. This law pushed for a crucial policy that was common among state constitution and supported by statesmen such as Thomas Jefferson and John Adams: public

education. “The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 provided the sentiment, even the wording, for many state constitutions concerning state-funded public education: Being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged” (p. 36).

It is also important to acknowledge that the communication industry in the late 19th century became divided into two categories: content providers and content carriers. When newsprint ruled the information kingdom, newspapers served as both content providers and carriers. Western Union’s monopoly as a content carrier (with the Associated Press in the role of content provider) would be inevitably challenged by AT&T when the telephone company was founded in 1877. Like Western Union, AT&T would enjoy monopoly status with a nod from the U.S. government until the company’s forced break-up in 1984 (cf. Wu, 2010). AT&T held favored monopoly status due to its dedication to *common carriage*, i.e. providing access to its infrastructure of phone lines to all.

The story thus far has been characterized by foresight on the part of the founders—in providing the legal means for the support of a partisan press necessary for a healthy republic; and one of concern for journalistic objectivity on the part of Western Union and the AP press—even if it was a thinly veiled attempt to maintain a client base. The next historical era was one in which we can observe the transition to a corporate-controlled, advertising supported media system. This transition was ignited and fueled by the emergence of radio broadcasting. Of the factors that complicated media policy making, the most important was the limited number of frequencies available—in what has always been considered to be *public* domain. Because of the public nature of the frequencies, the government determined who would be able to secure monopoly rights and who would not.

The rise of broadcasting led to the passage of the Communications Act of 1934 which established the Federal Communication Commission as a permanent regulatory body. Since its inception the FCC has had moments of positive effect on the industry, but it has had its incidents of collusion as well as many chairmen of the commission have gone on to work in the very industry they were in charge of regulating. While this sort of collusion is not uncommon in other branches of government—many former elected and appointed officials gone on to work in the private sector and vice versa—it is especially troubling in regards to the media industry, since the opportunity exists to control the news coverage of what happens behind the closed doors of the FCC. A prime example can be witnessed in the discussion of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 below. In spite of this collusion, the FCC has had its regulatory moments: for example, in 1975 the FCC prohibited a single firm from owning both a daily newspaper and a broadcast station in the same market; also, foreign ownership of U.S. broadcast stations is also prohibited on national security grounds—the prime reason why Australian-born media mogul Rupert Murdoch of News Corporation became an American citizen in 1985.

In addition to the creation of the FCC, the Communications Act of 1934 stipulated that monopoly rights were granted with the condition that the recipient serve the public interest. Broadcasters were required to include programming they would have normally avoided because of commercial viability. This requirement resulted in broadcasters setting aside programming for public service.

With the passing of the Communications Act of 1934, interest groups who prior to the enactment were all for government intervention began to change their tune. Once the Act was passed and the system entrenched, the media lobbyists began to characterize any government regulation as a violation of broadcaster's First Amendment rights. "Commercial broadcasters,

who received what would eventually total in the hundreds of billions of dollars in value through the grant of monopoly broadcast licenses at no charge, went from statists to libertarians almost overnight” (p. 41). The National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), the trade association of the broadcast industry, began an elaborate public relations campaign to promote commercial broadcasting as an inherently democratic and American system.

The final two decades of the twentieth century ushered in a period of increased domination of business interests in regards to media policy making. This period has seen the largest upheaval of U.S. media regulation than in any other period—a period that saw a relentless push for deregulation based upon a neoliberal philosophy that markets and profit-making should regulate every aspect of social life. While this neoliberal trend commenced with the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980, it was also hegemonic in the Democratic Party represented by Bill Clinton, Al Gore, and Joseph Lieberman.

One bump in the road for the media industries at this time was the break-up of AT&T in 1984. As Bell engineer-managers Raymond Kraus and Al Duerig would state in their 1988 book *The Rape of Ma Bell*, “the nation’s largest and most socially minded corporation was defiled and destroyed” (cited in Wu, 2010, p. 161), and—hyperbole aside—in some sense they were right. The federal government was willing to look the other way in regards to AT&T’s monopoly due to the company’s dedication to universal service—and thereby vital to the nation’s infrastructure—and because the company’s subsidiary, Bell Labs, contributed many patents for the defense industry including those involved with nuclear weapons. However, the same company that would collect seven Nobel prizes and invent the transistor, was also notorious for suppressing any technology that would compete with AT&T’s bread and butter service—

telephony (e.g. answering machines). The break-up in 1984 resulted in an amazing outpouring of innovation in computing, telephony, networking, etc (pp. 104-107).

The touchstone of this period in regards to advancing the power of the media industries was the passage of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, a law that rewrote the regulatory rules for radio, television, telephony, cable television, and satellite communications—essentially a law that included all of electronic communication including the Internet. The impetus for this law was the premise that new communication technologies combined with market theory would make former regulatory practices obsolete. “The solution therefore was to lift regulations and ownership restrictions from commercial media and communication companies, allow competition in the marketplace to develop, and reduce the government’s role to that of protecting private property” (p. 51). The bill moved easily through both houses of Congress contested by neither party, and signed into law by President Clinton in February 1996.

While lobbying and collusion is a sad artifact of our form of republican government, the drafting of this particular bill serves as reminder of how bad this practice can be when unchecked as the media world’s powerful lobbies met secretly to agree on the best concessions. Regardless of the ballyhoo over free-market philosophy, this was an unapologetic push to obtain government support for big business:

In a dramatic instance of collusion between media sectors, there was almost no press coverage—except in the business and trade press. Not surprisingly, Americans were uninformed on the law’s consequences. One survey has found, for example, that only three Americans in ten understand that the public owns the airwaves, and only one American in ten knows that commercial broadcasters use the airwaves at no charge from

the government. (Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, June, 2002, quoted in McChesney, 2004, p. 52)

Complicit in this lack of public understanding is a federal government that allows for the concentration of the media industries for what it deems the public good.

Since 1996, the media industry has arguably been defined by two innovations—the personal computer and the internet connectivity that supports it. Indeed, the digital world of computers may hold the biggest potential for the advancement of democracy than any of the other forms of communication that existed before it. The single characteristic that affects this potential may be the ability for what were formerly end-users to be *generative*, i.e. to create and distribute their own media texts (cf. Zittrain, 2008). With that potential come inevitable concerns for net neutrality (as was with its synonym common carriage) in that guaranteed freedom of access to Internet content and communication is threatened by the profit-driven industries that control it. Initially, providers of internet access “were considered telecommunications providers subject to common carriage duties and were prohibited from discriminating against content. Since 2002, however, the FCC has embarked on a path of gradually removing such obligations from Internet speech conduits” (Nunziato, 2009, p. xiv). This is further complicated by the introduction of popular products that restrict access to content or that have no generative capabilities such as Apple’s iPhone and iPad (Wu, 2010, p. 291).

As it stands, the current state of the media industry is defined by three major content carriers (AT&T, Verizon, and Comcast) and five major content providers (News Corporation, General Electric, Disney, Time-Warner, and Viacom). In addition, on January 18, 2011, the FCC approved the merger of Comcast and NBC—a subsidiary of General Electric (Hamill,

2011) allowing for the further blurring of lines between content carriers and providers (satellite TV provider DirectTV is already under the umbrella of News Corporation).

It should be obvious that this history of media is an essential background in achieving media literacy in the social studies. Without this backdrop, there is no context for which to make educated decisions regarding the information available to the general public and how that information can influence participatory democracy.

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Vincent Youngbauer
Research Questionnaire
Media Literacy in Social Studies

**Follow-up questions will probe for attitudes and perceptions of the student teacher toward media literacy and the role of gate-keeping in regards to information and knowledge. “Questions should be as open-ended as possible in order to let the subjects choose dimensions of the question they want to answer. The dimensions they choose are an important source of data because they reveal an aspect of the individual’s relevance structure.” (Bowden, 2000).

1. How do you define media?
2. How do you define media literacy?
3. Lists examples of media that you foresee using in the classroom (both as student teacher and in your future classroom).
4. How important is the use of media in the social studies classroom (methodologically, theoretically, etc). Explain your rating.
5. Think back to your favorite social studies classrooms as a student. How much was media used in the classroom (films, computers, texts, etc)?
6. Describe the best use of media from your past experiences as a student. What made those examples memorable or effective?
7. Describe any media examples from your past experiences (as a student) that you feel were not successful. Why weren’t they successful?
8. Imagine your future classroom. What reasons might play a factor in your use of particular media (e.g. new history film releases).
9. Describe what you feel might be the benefits of using media in the classroom.
10. Describe what you feel might be the risks of using media in the classroom.
11. Describe the role of the educator in the use of media in the classroom.
12. How do you think your attitude toward the use of media compares with other educators, i.e., to what extent do you think social studies teachers use media?

APPENDIX C: MEDIA LITERACY OVERLAY/OBSERVATION SHEET

Vincent Youngbauer
Observation sheet
Media Literacy in Social Studies

Student teacher reference name: _____

Date: _____

Grade/ subject: _____

Number of students in class: _____

Lesson Topic: _____

Teacher Statements/ actions

Student Statements/Actions

APPENDIX D: MEDIA LITERACY CURRICULUM

Goal: to present a media literacy framework for use in the social studies curriculum.

Objectives: Students will define media; media literacy. Students will explain the rationale for implementation of media literacy in the social studies. Students will identify and apply the historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical approaches in class projects. Students will identify key turning points in the timeline of media production in the United States.

Instructional Materials: Readings (as listed) posted on ANGEL; “Job Switching” episode of *I Love Lucy* television show (YouTube); “A Taste of Armageddon” and “Let that be Your Last Battlefield” episodes of *Star Trek* (YouTube); lynching photos.

SSSED412W Course objectives related to media literacy:

- Engage in discourses on the importance of media literacy in the social studies and include media literacy practices in curriculum design.
- Frame issues in history/social studies from alternate viewpoints.

Syllabus Excerpt: Media Literacy Focus

Week #6: 9/27 (Field placements begin M W F only)

- Systematic reasoning—alternate framing; evaluating evidence and decision-making
- Alternate framing of issues in history: 1950s Culture
- Reading: Coontz, *The Way We Really Are*, CH 2; Kerouac, *On the Road*, CH 1
- I. Prezi Presentation on Alternate Framing and 1950’s culture.
 http://prezi.com/prz2a_lg43am/alternate-framing-1950s-post-war-culture/
- II. Discussion on readings.
- III. *I Love Lucy* episode
- IV. Students work on questions in groups; present for class discussion.

Week #7: 10/4 (Field placements M W F only)

- Media Literacy in the social studies—the historical and empirical.
- In-class lesson plan writing workshop #4
- Reading: Kellner, *Cultural Studies, Multiculturalism and Media Culture*; NCSS *Media Literacy Position Statement*; Lull, *Hegemony*
- I. Prezi Presentation on the historical and empirical approaches of media literacy.
 <http://prezi.com/j7yiajkbqq19/overview-media-literacy/>
- II. Group project: news articles and sources

Week #8: 10/11 (Field placements M-F)

- LP 1 due 10/15
- Media Literacy in the social studies—the interpretive.
- Reading: Hesmondhalgh, CH 2;
- I. Prezi Presentation on the interpretive approach to media literacy.
<http://prezi.com/ulons71eeg-4/media-literacy-ii-the-interpretive/>
- II. Examples of interpretive projects

Week #9: 10/18 (In school M-F)

- Media Literacy in the social studies—the critical.
- Reading: Huxley, *Brave New World* CH 16 & 17; Jenkins, *Convergence Culture*; Selections from *The Onion*.
- I. Prezi Presentation on the critical approach to media literacy.
<http://prezi.com/kcnjns1qzbfq/media-literacy-in-social-studies/>
- II. Students view episode clips of *Star Trek*.
- III. Students view lynching photos
<http://withoutsanctuary.org/>
- IV. Group and class discussion.

The Media literacy/Social Studies Curriculum: Rationale

The media literacy model I employ was designed around the four-pronged approach of historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical approaches outlined earlier. These approaches were introduced over a four week unit specifically focused on media literacy in social studies education. The goal was to introduce the pre-service teachers to a working model of media literacy that they could use in their field experiences and future classrooms.

The Alternate Frame Lesson

While media literacy was to be officially covered during a three week unit, elements of media literacy were present in all of the course meetings. Prior to the units that specifically covered media literacy, the SSED 412W class were exposed to the use of the four-pronged

approach during a lesson on Alternate Frame lesson design—part of their signature assignment requirements for the course. The Alternate Frame lesson provides a way to analyze a historical event or era from different points of view. How one frames an event influences how that person perceives and makes sense of the importance of the event—in a sense the Alternate Frame provides the ability to analyze an event through someone else’s eyes. My example topic for the class was 1950’s Post-war culture in America, a topic that would include analysis of data and accounts from the 1950’s (Coontz, 1997), a reading from the counter-cultural beat movement (Kerouac, 1957), and viewing of an episode of the *I Love Lucy* television show (Asher, 1952). Through these three sources, the class was able to alternately frame 1950’s culture utilizing approaches that were historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical.

The readings.

People who are nostalgic for the 50s believe that the era provided a more family-friendly economic and social environment that created a greater feeling of hope for a family’s long term future. These beliefs are supported by a 1996 poll by the Knight-Ridder news agency in which more Americans chose the 1950s than any other single decade as the best time for children to grow up. Real wages grew more in a single year than in the entire 10 years of the 1980s combined, a median-priced home could be bought on 15-18% of your salary (Coontz, 1997, p. 33).

At the time their airing, everyone knew that shows such as *Donna Reed*, *Ozzie and Harriet*, *Leave it to Beaver*, and *Father Knows Best* were not a snapshot of the way real families lived and interacted. People did not watch those shows to see their own lives reflected back at them, they watched them to get a sense of how families were supposed to live—albeit a perception vastly influenced by networks and government entities. The depression of the 1930s and World War II in the early 1940s resulted in consumer resistance to spending—spending that

was necessary to jump-start the economy in post-WWII America (Lipsitz, 1990). To overcome this resistance, government agencies and corporations used the medium of television to encourage the public to consume. According to Ernest Dichter in his book *The Strategy of Desire* (1960), to overcome the barrier of consumer reluctance was to have advertisers “train the average citizen to accept growth of his country and its economy as his growth rather than as a strange and frightening event” (quoted in Lipsitz, 1990, p. 47). To this end, television plotlines often featured the characters engaged in consumer practices such as buying on credit.

Today, these shows are often viewed through the lens of presentism and are easily mistaken for historically accurate accounts of the period. These shows were simultaneously advertisements, etiquette manuals, and how-to lessons for a new way of organizing marriage and child-raising and while they were no more historic than shows we watch today, they still serve as a cultural media text worthy of study.

During the 1950s and 1960s, many families found it possible to achieve the way of life represented in the televisions of the eras. Even when marriages were deeply unhappy, the new stability, economic security, and educational advantages parents were able to offer their kids influenced people’s assessment of their life satisfaction. And in some matters, ignorance could be bliss—the lack of media coverage of problems such as abuse or incest was terribly hard on the casualties, but it protected more fortunate families from knowledge and fear of many social ills.

Teenage birthrates were almost twice as high in 1957 as in the 1990s, but most teen births were to married couples, and the effect of teen pregnancy in reducing further schooling for young people did not hurt their life prospects in the way that it threatens today. High school graduation rates were lower in the 1950s, but there were jobs for people who dropped out of high school that held promising futures.

During these time periods, there existed a much different set of economic conditions than we have today. A major cause of the social mobility of young families in the 1950s was that federal assistance programs were much more generous and widespread than today. Forty percent of young men were eligible for veterans' benefits, and those benefits were much more extensive than those available to Vietnam-era vets. Financed in part by a federal income tax on the rich that went up to 87 percent and a corporate tax rate of 52 percent, such benefits provided quite a jump-start for a generation of young families. The minimum wage may have only been \$1.40 as late as 1968, but a person who worked for that amount full-time, year-round, earned 118 percent of the poverty figure for a family of three. By 1995, a full time minimum wage worker could only earn 72 percent of the poverty level. In 1952, it took a factory worker one day to earn enough money to pay the closing costs on a new Levittown house then selling for \$10,000. By 1991, such a home was selling for \$100,000 or more and it took a factory worker eighteen weeks to earn enough money for just the closing costs. Women were unable to take out loans or credit cards in their own names and they were excluded from juries in many states. A lack of options outside of marriage led some women to remain in desperately unhappy unions that were often not in the best interests of their children or themselves (Coontz, 1997, p. 41).

To achieve the balance of an alternate frame students were also assigned Chapter I of Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* (1957). Kerouac's book is not so much about a particular event of the 1950s as it is about the interaction between characters. More specifically, through the characters of *On the Road* we get a sense of the counterculture movement—a movement that is an oppositional reading of the popular cultural texts of the 1950s. Kerouac's stream of consciousness writing is much like the jazz music of the era that his protagonist, Sal Paradise, is fond of. The writing rambles on in bursts, changing direction and mood depending on the topic

or character that is being written about. Indeed, the characters are what this story is about as Kerouac introduces them one by one in the opening chapter then emphasizes their importance in this passage:

I shambled after (people) as I've been doing all my life after people who interest me, because the only people for me are the mad ones, the ones who are mad to live, mad to talk, mad to be saved, desirous of everything at the same time, the ones who never yawn or say a commonplace thing, but burn, burn, burn like fabulous yellow roman candles exploding like spiders across the stars and in the middle you see the blue centerlight pop and everybody goes "Awww!" (p. 5)

The world of Sal Paradise is one in conflict with the accepted values and ideals of the 1950s, and a read of *On the Road* is still *uncomfortable* even today. While the characters enjoy each others' company for no other reason than to experience life with one another, there exist many contradictions in regards to race and gender issues. Women move in and out of the storyline as objects that inhibit the male characters' freedom, and are often left behind in the story, figuratively and sometimes literally as happens to the wife of one of Sal's friends. There are plenty of examples where Sal and friends enjoy the company of what Sal terms "Negroes," which in itself is a revolutionary occurrence for the time period. However, like the women of the story, minorities seem to exist only for the enjoyment of the Sal and his friends, such as creators of the jazz music that Sal loves so much. While the constraint of time only allowed for the reading of one chapter of *On the Road*, the chapter presented some of the issues that the class would discuss in activities.

“I Love Lucy.”

I Love Lucy aired on the CBS network, Monday nights at 9:00pm from 1951-1957. The show’s plot situations centered around a married couple—Ricky and Lucy—living in a New York apartment, and their neighbors—Fred and Ethel Mertz. The show starred real-life married couple Desi Arnez (Ricky) and Lucille Ball (Lucy). By using episodes of the show in the classroom it is possible to generate discussion on gender roles, social class issues, and multiculturalism—although for this lesson we focused primarily on gender roles. While other media certainly exists, I believe that the use of comedy aids in creating student interest. It is also important that students will be viewing an actual cultural text from the time period as opposed to, say, a documentary made recently about the time period. The result is media text that was written and performed during the era in question.

Additional historical element exists when using *I Love Lucy*, in that we can use the historical approach in two ways—a point that should be made for studies of all media. While we can obviously analyze the historical context of the show (for example how it reflects the time period in which it was created and aired), we can also analyze the historical context of the technology of the media. For example as husband and wife, Desi Arnez and Lucille Ball formed Desilu studios because their idea for the show was turned down by other production companies. In addition, due to their connections to Hollywood filmmaking they were able to revolutionize television by hiring cinematographers and use a multi-camera production set—a practice still in use today.

In the plot-lines of *I Love Lucy*, comedy is often found with Desi Arnez’s stereotypical accent (Cuban) and in the many situations that Lucy finds herself in—often after disobeying her husband, a concept that conflicts with gender roles of the era (Landay, 2005). When considering

that Lucy and Ricky's marriage is an inter-ethnic one; Ricky owns and performs in a bar/nightclub—an occupation much different from the traditional sitcom husband; and that many episodes have an underlying theme of traditional 1950's gender roles; we can both appreciate and learn from the impact this television show made when it aired in the 1950s.

The *I Love Lucy* episode titled *Job Switching* (Asher, 1952), may arguably be the most familiar of the Desilu catalog. This episode, famous for the scene in which the main character Lucy starts a job on a candy factory assembly line, provided an opportunity to explore 1950's popular culture representations of gender, social class, and ethnicity. While many episodes reference cultural differences between the main characters (Desi Arnez was of Cuban descent), the main focus of this episode's plot was that men are and should be the family breadwinners while women should accept their role as housekeepers. Thus, an experiment is conducted in which the women enter the job market and the men clean and cook dinner.

“Let's face it Rick, when it comes to money there are two types of people—the earners and the spenders. Or as they are more popularly known—husbands and wives.”

(Fred Mertz, Ibid)

While this particular episode is most known for the candy factory assembly line scene with the character Lucy—as she tries to keep up with the assembly line by eating the candies and stuffing them in her blouse—it is often overlooked that the men have an equally difficult time performing the assigned household duties. Both portrayals seemingly provide a perception that men are best suited for work outside the home while women are best suited for roles within the home—at least to the point that serves these characters in this situation comedy. As the episode concludes, it is decided by the characters that the status quo should be maintained, i.e. that men are better suited to be breadwinners and that women remain in their roles as housewives.

After viewing the episode, the students were given the task of analyzing the texts using the following questions as a guide:

- Does the episode reinforce stereotypes (ethnicity, gender) or was the show ahead of its time in breaking down those stereotypes?
- How do we situate *I Love Lucy* when we take into account the Coontz and Kerouac readings?
- What kinds of messages do these media texts convey about history, society, and culture, and by what means?

After discussing the material within their groups, the students then shared their views with the entire class. Among the comments made, students agreed that the messages portrayed in the episode were more complex than they had originally thought they would be. For example, while the episode on the surface reinforced gender stereotypes—both the women and the men had their moments of comic mishaps in their attempts at their new roles—further analysis provided new insights. For example, while at a glance it would appear that women were not well-suited for the workplace, Lucy and Ethel worked side-by-side with other women at the candy factory who were indeed aptly suited for the work. In fact, the line manager at the candy factory was a woman. However, the students pointed out that the female manager exhibited male-like qualities in her role (e.g. her tough, no nonsense approach to management) which seem to imply that women can be successful in the workplace provided that they adapt male qualities.

The goal of this lesson was to have the students negotiate the three texts, and situate those texts within the larger historical perception of 1950's America. Secondly, the use of the three texts in this lesson provided a cognitive anchor from which to secure further practices of media literacy in the weeks to come. Finally, the students were able to utilize the four approaches to media literacy—historical, empirical, interpretive, and critical—introduced in this lesson.

Media literacy in the methods classroom: week one.

Week one's lesson contained a history of the media industry (as outlined in Chapter 1, detailed in Appendix A) beginning with the founding of the United States, through the rise of broadcasting, to the present world of digital and satellite technology. In addition, a primer on the role of media in the social studies and overview of media literacy theory were necessary. These elements were derived from Chapters 1 & 2 of this work. Following the lecture, the class was divided into groups who were each given two current news articles to analyze. Articles on a variety of news topics were taken from ABC News, CBS News, FOX News, CNN, Huffington Post, BBC, and Salon. Blogs were included to determine if accuracy differences could be observed between these news sources and traditional sources. News topics were from that day's top stories and were chosen at random. Groups were instructed to read the articles and analyze the content using the historical and interpretive approaches. Specifically they addressed these questions:

- What background information do you need to understand the news story?
- What denotations and connotations are evident in the story?
- Lack of context leads to bias. What is the context of the story (news vs. information)?
- Is the story superficial or is there depth?
- On a scale of 1-10, rate the importance of the story to the audience.
- When we see a news story, we learn as much about the news organization as we do the events of the story. Are there any indications as to why this story was produced?
- Can you hypothesize on the news source for each story?

These questions were chosen for their historical and empirical foundations: any background information needed to understand the stories lends itself to the historical and discussions on

denotations and connotations satisfy the empirical, while establishing a basis for interpretive and critical understandings. According to John Fiske (1990), “When connotation and denotation become one and the same, representation appears natural, making the historical and social construction invisible. Therefore a goal of cultivating media literacy is to help students distinguish between connotation and denotation and signifier and signified” (in Kellner & Share, 2007, p. 12). While the students were able to dissect each of the news stories according to the questions listed above, the goal of the project was to provide a template for use in their own social studies classrooms.

Media literacy in the methods classroom: week two.

In week two’s lesson, the interpretive approach to media literacy was introduced and used in a class project. The lecture covered how media industries operate in general, particularly the industries’ use of industrialization and commodification. Secondly, the lecture outlined methods for creating media texts in the social studies classroom as recommended by Kellner and Share (Kellner & Share, 2007) and discussed in Chapter 2. Creating our own media texts provides us with a path for interpretation, and interpretation helps us understand other media texts. While written texts are one way of creating media that allow for interpretation, they are only one way. Other suggestions included collages, sound essays, video and movie making (including video blogs), and comics/graphic novels. While the time limitations of this particular class prohibited the student creation of media texts, the practice was emphasized in each lesson.

The reading assigned for this week was Chapter 2 of David Hesmondhalgh’s work, *The Cultural Industries* (2007). As discussed earlier, Hesmondhalgh’s work removes the reductionist framework employed by so many media theorists that emphasize moralist intent of the producers of media texts and simplifies the argument to the bare essentials—that producers are driven by

profit only. This position affords us a lens that is focused on the true driving impetus for the creation of texts—profit.

The activity for this lesson included organizing students into three groups. Each group chose a social studies topic for a lesson plan then each idea was passed to another table. At these tables, the students developed a lesson plan with the previous table's topic in which their students would create media based on that topic. The lesson plan was then passed to another group who was responsible for developing a second, different activity. All groups then shared their ideas.

One of the lesson plan ideas included students developing sound essays using audio clips from the McCarthy hearings set to music. An activity such as this would provide student interpretation of the events of the McCarthy hearings by attaching to those audio clips music with which they have a familiar understanding. This type of exercise “forces students to acknowledge consciously what they already know unconsciously; yet it also forces them to question *how* they know what they know and *where* that knowledge comes from” (Buckingham & Sefton-Green, 1994, p. 149). Therefore, applying music to the audio clips allow for increased understanding of historical events since that understanding is required to allow for the interpretation and application of the genre of music used.

Media literacy in the methods classroom: week three.

Week three's lesson involved the critical approach to media literacy studies. I chose to primarily use science-fiction as a vehicle for the application of the critical approach. Of course, the point was made that this was only one of many possibilities. For week three's lesson, students were to read two chapters of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932). The assigned chapters contain discussions between John the Savage (the character from the story who was

born and raised outside of the depicted society) and Mustapha Mond (the city's Controller). These discussions outline the pros and cons of Huxley's dystopian society—John calling for a more traditional life, Mond's denouncing of the traditional as full of misery and pain. Class began with a discussion of this text, pointing out comparisons of *Brave New World* and the present—for example Huxley's world is inhabited by people conceived and born as *test-tube* babies (a stunning prediction for 1932) and the society, like ours, is incredibly consumer-driven, preferring to “end, not mend.”

Next a video clip was shown featuring an episode of the original *Star Trek* series. The clip was from the episode, *Let That be Your Last Battlefield* (Taylor, 1969), dealing with racism in which two alien life forms engage in an ongoing battle of racial hatred that has lasted for hundreds of years. As the episode unfolds, it is learned that the aliens (who are literally half black and half white) are the last survivors of their planet's population and that the racism is grounded in the fact that one group is black on the right side, the other is black on the left. Moving beyond the limitations of make-up effects in 1969 Hollywood, the students were able to unpack the discourse of the episode, that racism can be based on seemingly insignificant physical differences compounded by historical and cultural contexts. Direct connections can be made to real-world events, such as the 1994 Rwandan Genocide in which approximately 800,000 people were mass-murdered over, likewise, *insignificant* physical differences and *significant* historical and cultural contexts.

After viewing the video clips, the students viewed photographs from withoutasactuary.org, an internet archive of lynching photographs. The counterpoint of a somewhat campy fictional presentation (the *Star Trek* episode) of racism and the blatant brutality of the stark photographs provided the students with a new perspective from which to garner understanding of the topic.

Ironically, some of these social studies education students—who as a side-effect of the PSU SSSED program will earn history minors—were stunned that many of the photographs were from the early decades of the 20th Century. These students had the perception that lynchings were a product of the U.S. Civil War, even though they were aware that the Civil Rights movement contained many acts of similar brutalities such as the murder of 14 year-old Emmet Till in 1955. This would further support Tom Fenton’s analysis that Americans are “suffering from a news gap” (2005, p. 2), and that this news gap is complicated by a historical knowledge gap.

Students also viewed portions of a second episode of *Star Trek* title *A Taste of Armageddon*, that explored what were common fears (at the time of airing) concerning global nuclear war (Pevney, 1967). In this episode, the crew engages with a planet culture that has been involved in 500 years war with a neighboring planet. Battles take place via a computer program that determines the amount of casualties for each combatant. Those among the population that are determined to have died in the attack willingly enter a disintegration chamber, thus allowing the war to continue in what the inhabitants see as a civilized alternative to the death and destruction of property that would normally occur during a war of this magnitude. This episode was offered as another example of a media text that reflects the historical context of the era in which it was made—the height of the Cold War.

The lesson was summarized by my commentary on the use of media, and how media may influence learning in their future classrooms. While my connection to media is admittedly rooted in a different era, there are certainly media—books, television shows, movies, etc. from their generation that can be introduced to their students. What made the discussion on racism interesting for them is that they had never seen the *Star Trek* episode or the website. This perception of newness permitted a climate for learning that was void of misconceptions that may

accompany presentations of media students are familiar with. That being said, it is important to acknowledge that students may not have the same fondness for media endorsed and used by the teachers:

While media teachers clearly do not need to keep pace with the enthusiasms of their students, they cannot hope to know more than they do—nor should they. Indeed, in my experience, personal preferences and investments in aspects of media can easily be a liability in the classroom: students are very likely to reject what you enjoy, particularly if you make that clear to them. (Buckingham, 2003, p. 159)

However, this particular concern seems to be more a matter of classroom management than one of teaching theory and practice. If a teacher has generated a climate of mutual respect and is enthusiastic towards the topic and professional, it has been my experience that students are willing to indulge the teacher on this topic. This is particularly true if the media used provides a respite from the traditional fare. Furthermore, when using media that students *have* already experienced, the critical approach provides a new lens through which to analyze these media. In keeping with suggestions of Kellner and Share (2007) discussed earlier in this chapter, it was recommended that they should have students create their own media on the topics in question.

Also discussed in week three was the use of political satire in the social studies classroom. While addressed here in regards to the critical approach, using political satire in the classroom can be viewed as part of the larger framework for media literacy in social education (Youngbauer, 2010). For example, historical examination of the political cartoon has long been a staple of social studies education therefore the use of *contemporary* forms of parody and satire in the social studies classroom is logical. As noted earlier in this work, the National Council for the Social Studies addressed the need for media literacy as “the multimedia age requires new

skills for accessing, evaluating, creating, and distributing messages within a digital, global, and democratic society” (NCSS, 2009, p. 187). “It is interesting, however, that our nation’s schools still do relatively little formal teaching on and through the media, the precise means by which citizens receive nearly all of their information about political processes and elections” (Kubey, 2004, p. 70). “Understanding several media simultaneously is the best way of approaching any one of them. Any study of one medium helps us to understand all others” (McLuhan, 1964, p. 139). Synthesizing these three viewpoints, to use political satire such as *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* in the classroom in conjunction with mainstream media news would afford teachers an opportunity to critically analyze media content through the social studies lens. *The Daily Show* models the qualities of competent and responsible citizenship as outlined by the Civic Mission of Schools; it helps viewers stay informed and negates the effects of political spin that is rife in the current 24 hour news cycle; models civil debate and discourse on issues; and pushes for substance over form. Used in conjunction with mainstream media news sources, political satire as seen on *The Daily Show* may offer unique opportunities for social studies educators to foster civic mindedness and active participation in a deliberative democracy. News comedy shows “foster a kind of civic literacy, teaching viewers to ask skeptical question about core political values and the rhetorical process that embodies them” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 289).

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Summer School Teacher (Tuscarora Intermediate Unit: Lewistown Adult Education and Job Training Program, 1998-2001)

PUBLICATIONS AND PAPERS

Youngbauer, V. W. (2009, October). *A Textual Analysis of Social Studies Textbooks: How Vygotskian Pedagogy Could Change the Way Social Studies Teachers Develop Curriculum with Textbooks*. Presented at the *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing Bergamo Conference*, Dayton, Ohio.

Youngbauer, V. W. (2009, October). *Media Literacy and Political Satire in the Social Studies Classroom: Promoting Active Citizenship Through Humor and Collective Memory*. Presented at the *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing Bergamo Conference*, Dayton, Ohio.

Youngbauer, V.W. (2010, April). *Cynicism, Political Satire, and Their Effects on Civic Engagement*. Presented at the Penn State Social Thought Program's Spring Conference, *What do Citizens and States Owe Each Other?* PSU, University Park, PA.

Youngbauer, V.W. (2010, October). *Romancing Democracy: How the promise of digital democracy is threatened by nostalgia*. Presented at the *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing Bergamo Conference*, Dayton, Ohio.

MEMBERSHIPS

Pennsylvania Licensed Teacher, Level II: Professional

National Council for the Social Studies

College and University Faculty Assembly

American Educational Research Association

The Chronicle of Higher Education