EFFECTS OF MEDIA LITERACY INSTRUCTION:

RECOGNIZING AND ANALYZING RACIAL

STEREOTYPES IN MEDIA

By

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EFFECTS OF MEDIA LITERACY INSTRUCTION:

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INTRODUCTION

When will you learn to look past what you see?

-   Mary Poppins-

I need a sign to let me know you're here

My TV set just keeps it all from being clear

-Train "Calling All Angels"-

During my graduate studies, I took a course as an elective that truly affected the

way I live every day. The course was called Advanced Media Literacy, and I learned of

it through my advisor, who was, incidentally, teaching the course, for it was one of her

areas of emphasis for research. Through the course, we examined ways in which all

media are constructed, and discovered ways to help students deconstruct, analyze and

create media. We analyzed things such as the target audience, underlying messages and

who is left out of these messages. We also discussed reasons why media literacy should

be integrated into U.S. public schools' curriculum.

As part of the course, I deconstructed a popular television show called "American

Idol*,*" which is a nation-wide talent search for the next pop-singer icon, or "idol." I used

my thirteen year-old niece as a guinea pig and observed her watching the program.

Although I assumed that she knew about the media industry and how most media were

created to make a profit by selling products to a target audience, when I discussed the

program with her afterwards, I discovered that I was wrong. She, like many other American children, was not aware that shows like *American Idol* are made up of scripts, editing, sound, lighting and camera angles, and that these are all carefully plotted out by directors and producers. She, like many other American children, believed that if she saw it on TV, whether it be *American Idol*, the national news or a presidential candidate's campaign speech, it must be real. Let me summarize by saying that this experience changed my life. Today, I cannot assume a passive role and let my television just entertain me. Instead, I am the constant critic, deconstructing the message to "discover" who is behind it and what they are trying to say or sell. Instead of losing myself in the drama of *NYPD Blue* or the exciting frantic images of my son's video games, I now count racial slurs and stereotypes, gender roles and blatant hyper-sexualized images. This is the catalyst that led my search to discover more about media literacy. I wanted to know if we teach kids how to deconstruct the media, will they do it independently? In addition, if students do begin to independently analyze media as a response to media literacy instruction, will this behavior last longer than the duration of the course? Most importantly, I wanted to know if we help them discover that many images in media reinforce stereotypes of race, gender and class, will they recognize these images themselves without a teacher to prompt them? These questions and many more that I will discuss evolved into a research plan. Using the media literacy guidelines and curriculum designed by the Center for Media Literacy, I began a search for answers to these questions.

Purpose and significance of study

After the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001the *West Wing* and other television programs produced episodes that addressed terrorism, anti-Muslim sentiment and other themes that surrounded the tragedy. It is at this point that popular culture cannot be dismissed as irrelevant and insignificant fluff. Instead, popular culture becomes a tool that has the capacity to intercede in public policy and opinion.

Even more recently, on September 27, 2005, the U.S. television audience watched as a woman took the oath of office for the presidency of the United States of America. It was quite dramatic, and it was fictional. In reaction to the television dramatic series, *Commander in Chief*, popular TV chat rooms such as *The Colossus Blog*, as well as websites containing chat rooms designed specifically for Commander in Chief dialogue, (www.abc.go.com, www.tv.com, www.imbd.com) debated a common conspiracy theory. Many bloggers expressed that they saw a strong resemblance between Geena Davis's character, MacKenzie Allen, and the possible advancement of presidential candidate Hilary Clinton. In addition, some suggest Allen's Chief of Staff Jim Gardner, played by Harry J. Lennix, bears an uncanny resemblance to Illinois Senator Barack Obama. While there is no proof to confirm this conspiracy theory, the dialogue surrounding the series illustrates what Elayne Rapping (1994) describes as the fading lines between fiction and non-fiction unique to television (Rapping, 1994). The very existence of these chat rooms, and the fierce debate over the possibility of Clinton running for the highest office in the U.S. is a perfect example of what Rapping describes as T.V.'s role in public dialogue "overshadowing films as catalyst for public debate on social issues" (p.140).

The omnipresence of media

No one can argue the omnipresence of media when A.C. Nielson statistics show that the average American watches more than 4 hours of TV each day. In a 65 year old, that translates to nine years viewing television. The average American child spends 1,680 minutes per week watching TV and 54% prefer watching TV over spending time with their fathers, when asked to choose (Holmes, 2006). These statistics are not going unnoticed, as there are currently around 4000 studies examining the effect of TV on children (Holmes, 2006). Gerbner (1996) maintains that media are the storytellers of American culture, and television is but one form of storyteller. Magazines, newspapers, billboards, and radio send us messages throughout our drives to work and school. Internet access is available in the majority of American homes, schools, and even public coffee houses. Many American children's days consist of podcasts, commercial blogs, video games, and music videos. There is no commercial-free zone, as many public school classrooms are arenas of direct advertising. As Brown (2005) explains,

> Direct advertising in schools is so common that we hardly notice it
> anymore. It takes place through commercials on Channel One's mandated
> daily 12-minute TV sessions for millions of secondary students, through
> advertising on sports scoreboards sold to local business, through mandated
> textbook covers provided by local businesses, through printed
> advertisements posted on the insides and/or outsides of school buses, and
> through advertising space on school walls sold to various businesses.
> (p.122)

It would be naïve to suggest that media do not influence children as well as adults. Therefore, it is safe to assume that American children have the same difficulty as adults in distinguishing between reality and media constructions. Masterman (1985) conceives of the media as "consciousness industries which provide not simply information about the world, but ways of seeing and understanding it" (p.4). He maintains the Marxist notion that those who control the media control consumers and construct versions of reality while making them appear authentic, or *naturalized*. Through mass media such as soap operas, motion pictures, billboard and magazine advertising, values such as democracy, honesty, honor and justice are constructed and values are created forming a social hierarchy, or Gramsci's hegemony. Cultural studies scholars John Fiske (1994), Stuart Hall (1997) and Raymond Williams (2001) contend that media are not mirrors of culture but instead shape and influence dominant ideology. However, Buckingham (1991) debates this notion, claiming that this line of thought assumes children are passive recipients of media messages, and, thereby media literacy becomes an inoculative practice. He argues, as does Stuart Hall, that the relationship between media and media users is a fluid, changing process of meaning making, or constructing meaning (Jhally, 1997). So what does the process of meaning making have to do with classroom practices? If, in fact, children and adults are so influenced by media, then it is logical to assume that in order for a democratic society to operate effectively, all citizens must be able to think and make decisions autonomously. Alverman, Moon & Hagood (1999) claim media literacy is an agent in a "much larger social context" and shares print literacy's characteristics of being a political act (p. 2). That is to say, social power and persuasion are at stake in meaning making. The struggle of creating and maintaining

cultural norms and truths lies in the dialogue between message maker and message receiver and brings forth the argument for critical pedagogy.

Critical pedagogy is the practice of teachers and students struggling for some semblance of control in their lives - control that has to do with achieving a qualitatively better life for students and teachers. Achieving control forges a democratic path that begins to alleviate forms of oppression, alienation and subordination (Kanpol, 1999). Critical pedagogy, represented in the work of scholars such as Henry Giroux, Peter McLaren, Stanley Aronowitz, Michelle Fine and bell hooks, draws heavily upon cultural studies especially through inquiry based on the works of Gramsci and Horkheimer and feminist and poststructuralist theory. Williams (1989) agrees that there is an undeniable connection between cultural theory and pedagogy in that cultural theory was and is an attempt to a democratic, open-access education which draws upon life-experiences and life-situations for empowerment. Giroux and Simon (1989) develop a theory for interpretation of the pedagogical where pedagogy is not simply a teaching method, but instead, the practice of questioning and analyzing what is important to know and how it is to be known. Critical pedagogy strips down the process of schooling and illuminates how power is inextricably tied to what people know and how they come to know it. For Williams (1989), education happens both in and out of the classroom. He claims that the process of hegemony also happens through cultural education which is the transmission of ideology through a democratic culture which comes through the media. In the best case scenario, tensions between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic ideologies result in social discomfort; however, in the worst case, these tensions can result in oppression, fear

and violence. Evidence of racial tension, one type of ideological struggle is commonplace in many social institutions, one of them being public schools.

Evidence of Racial Tension in Schools

In 2003-2004, two percent of all public schools reported daily or weekly occurrences of racial tensions among students, and 27 percent reported daily or weekly bullying. Of these numbers, Black and Hispanic students were more likely than white students to fear for their safety, with nine percent of Black students and ten percent of Hispanic students compared to four percent of white students (U.S. Department of Education National Center for Statistics [USDENCS], 2006). In 2004 in the Murrieta Valley Unified School District, dozens of accused white supremacists were arrested after attacks on Black students ("Racial tension," 2005). Across the nation, school districts have been forced to address racial tensions leading to violence, but meanwhile, racially motivated school violence is increasing (USDENCS, 2006). While many policy makers and citizens call for increased racial awareness and sensitivity, schools scramble to incorporate meaningful multicultural awareness and sensitivity into curriculum. Cortes (2000) establishes the need to use media as tools for incorporating meaningful multicultural education; however, there is a gap in research that established the efficacy of such instruction. Cortes (2000) describes the effect of media on individual's perceptions of racial groups and the importance of media education in dislodging racist beliefs and in increasing racial tolerance and acceptance. Cortes' (2000) work speaks directly to the influence of identity development on the way individuals perceive those

who are different from themselves, and the role identity development plays in racial tolerance.

The Influence of Identity Development Theory on a Study of Racial Stereotypes

Identity development, most simply put, is the way that groups and individuals form identity in society. From childhood, we form self-identity both in the ways that we are similar and in the ways that we are dissimilar from others. Gender, nationality, class and race are only a few of the subcategories that we use to develop identity. Whites in current U.S. society are suggested to struggle with forming a white identity that is aware of racial injustice and anti-racist (Omi & Winant, 2005). White identity development theory describes this process as stages through which white individuals may develop an anti-racist white identity (Helms, 1990/1995). Similarly, Phinney's (1992) racial identity development theory describes stages through which individuals self-identify into an ethnic group.

White identity development is especially pertinent to classroom dynamics, as less than eight percent of current classroom teachers are persons of color, yet the percentage of students of color is on the rise (Segall & Wilson, 2004). Johnson (2002) describes the process through which she and other white teachers became aware of race and racism, either through personal relationships with ethnically diverse groups, thereby "dis-identifying" with whites, or because of personal beliefs emphasizing social justice and equality (p.156). Johnson uses *Dis-identifying* to describe the choice to adopt an alternate ideology and thereby choosing not to be identified as a member of the hegemonic

institutional practices that white culture often employs. It also means questioning and illuminating institutional practices which perpetuate white privilege. However, I prefer the term "re-identifying" as a more appropriate term, for *dis-identifying* implies rejection of self, while *re-identifying* suggests creating a new racial identity over dis-identifying. McIntosh (2000) describes the process of white identity development as "unpacking the invisible knapsack" of white privilege in order to recognize all of the institutional privileges white people share that are often unseen, uncritiqued and unexamined. For example, Miller and Harris (2005) describe how white students in a university communication course developed communication patterns dealing with white privilege and conversations about race. One aspect of this process is the point at which whites identify white as a racial group.

To illustrate this point through cultural studies and educational studies literature, in U.S. culture, institutions and in mainstream media, white, middle class culture is portrayed as the norm by which all else is judged. This idea rejects simplistic Marxist notions of the ruling class controlling ideology through control of economic production. Instead, as Giroux (1992) explains,

> The basic issue is that modernist discourse in its various forms rarely
> engages how white authority is inscribed and implicated in the creation
> and reproduction of a society in which the voices of the center appear
> either invisible or unimplicated in the historical and social construction of
> racism as an integral part of their own collective identity. (p.116)

In other words, white is seldom an identified characteristic in mainstream culture, making it normalized, unquestioned and invisible in the media. This is the "invisible

privilege" to which Rothenberg (2000) refers that white people in the United States share, but often do not acknowledge. Invisible privilege is also evident in multicultural education practices that fail to critique forms of European and American culture. Oftentimes in "multicultural" history, curriculum, and media, the focus is on otherness and is written in ways that do not call into question dominating aspects of white culture (Giroux, 1992; Loewen, 1996). Failure to critique European American ideology as an identifiable culture is ever-present in one of the most pervasive ideology-makers in society, mass media.

Research Questions

As stated earlier, my initiation in media literacy left me with many questions about the ways that students use and interpret media messages. This is the catalyst that led my search to discover more about media literacy. I wanted to know if we teach kids how to deconstruct the media, will they do it independently? In addition, if students do begin to analyze media independently as a response to media literacy instruction, will this behavior last longer than the duration of the course? Most importantly, I wanted to know if we help them discover that many images in media reinforce stereotypes of race, gender and class, will they recognize these images themselves, without a teacher to prompt them? Using the media literacy guidelines and curriculum designed by the Center for Media Literacy, I began a search for answers to these questions. However, early into my study, I realized that the breadth of a study that attempts to determine how and if students analyze stereotypes of race, gender and socioeconomics was unmanageable in one study,

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so at that point I narrowed my focus to racial stereotypes and purposely chose a student population that was almost entirely white. The following anecdote explains why I made this choice.

Early in my graduate studies, I took a course in multicultural diversity which invited us to reflect upon the way that we construct race. Based on Omi and Winant's (2005) words on racial formation theory and Helm's (1990) notions of the stages of cultural awareness, readings and class discussions led us through a process of self-discovery and for me, through the painful process of recognizing whiteness as a position of privilege. In one particular discussion, an African American woman told of how she explained racism to her four year old daughter. I was struck by this statement, thinking that was way too young to explain such a complex and ugly social construction. However, her words of explanation stuck with me. She explained that with dark skin, you wear racism every day. Therefore, she could not send her young children out in a world full of racism without preparing them for what they may encounter. "You see," she said, "white people can choose whether or not to talk about racism with their kids. For me, I never had a choice. I had to." This very brief conversation shaped the way I designed this study. Therefore, I chose to examine predominantly white students in hopes of determining whether media literacy may be a way to incorporate multicultural education by using media images that surrounds us. Critically examining media may be one way of teaching multicultural awareness in a meaningful way. Although one may assume that media literacy is an encompassing term, there are many approaches to media literacy which share the vision of critically examining media, but with each having distinct foci and goals.

Models of media literacy

Kellner & Share (2005) define literacy as the "gaining of skills and knowledge to read, interpret, and produce certain types of texts and artifacts and to gain the intellectual tools and capacities to fully participate in one's culture and society" (p.369). Building upon this notion of literacy, media literacy is one form of the "multi- literacies" needed to make us aware of how media construct meanings that shape our culture (Tyner, 1998, 37). The most widely accepted definition for media literacy is "the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and produce information for specific outcomes" (Aufderheide & Firestone, 1993). In educational groups, however, there is ongoing dispute over media pedagogy. Kellner & Share (2005) describe four types of media literacy, each with different programs and agendas. The *protectionist* approach attempts to inoculate youth against the negative influences of media and encourage book literacy and high culture (Postman, 1992). An *acquisition model* conceives media literacy as an extension of print literacy and teaches students to read, analyze and decode media in a similar manner as printed text analysis (Tyner, 1998). *Media arts education* is concerned with teaching students about the asthetic qualities of media and creation of artful expression (Kellner & Share, 2005). *Critical media literacy* takes into account work done in sociology and cultural studies, as its purpose it to provide students access to understanding how print and non-print texts play a part in their constructions of meaning in their world, and how social, economic and political positions influence these constructions of meaning (Alvermann, Moon & Hagood, 1999). One of the key goals for critical media literacy is

to integrate media literacy across the curriculum thereby avoiding the fragmentation of media literacy from the rest of the curriculum and instead incorporating media literacy in a meaningful way (Semali, 2000). This study is most closely aligned with the critical media literacy stance.

Integrating Media Literacy across the Curriculum

Although the necessity to integrate media literacy in U.S. school curriculum was suggested and widely accepted in the 1970's, the movement died down in post-*A Nation at Risk* years (Schwarz & Brown, 2005). More recently, with the rise of new media such as internet and digital media, media literacy is once again finding some public support (Kellner & Share, 2005). Most states currently have learning objectives including media literacy skills as desired outcomes. However, public agreement does not mean that a curriculum component is necessarily effective. Although the range of effects resulting from media literacy instruction is vast, the purpose of this study is to determine whether media literacy instruction affects students' abilities and tendencies to recognize and analyze racial stereotypes on television. More specifically, I want to know if media literacy instruction affects the way students talk about racial representation in media. However, this study does not examine whether media literacy instruction affects students' social interactions with those who are racially stereotyped. I simply want to know if the students will recognize the images as stereotypical, and if the discourse surrounding race changes as a result of media literacy instruction.

In order to examine this issue, I used theory in cultural studies, media studies, curriculum and sociology. Putting critical cultural theory at the center of this inquiry inevitably and radically influenced what emerged in the data and how it emerged there. Critical theory eliminates any semblance of open-mindedness to find emergent theory that both "critiques and changes society" (Patton, 2002, p.131). Rooted in Marxist theory, critical cultural theory applies to critical media literacy in that both seek to critically examine social systems with critical media literacy focusing solely on the influences of media on culture. Applying neo-Marxist theory to the explosion of media multi-mergers in the United States, it appears that a small group of mega-media conglomerates provide a majority of viewers with visual representations of race.

At the same time, recognizing the complex relationship between individuals, culture and meaning making (Jhally, 1997), it is necessary to examine whether curriculum movements such as critical media literacy can have an effect on young viewers' perceptions about stereotypical or racist images. The nature of this study is steeped in activism, a required element in critical inquiry, for it seeks students' reactions to media literacy instruction while upholding the critical media literacy ideals. By applying the critical media literacy ideology, this research seeks to determine if media literacy may be used as a tool to possibly challenge the hegemonic ideologies that often saturate television media. In particular, it proposes changing the mechanism which perpetuates racial stereotypes and racist ideology, not by changing the television image, but instead, by encouraging the audience to make autonomous and informed decisions about the meanings of images. Thus, given the purpose of this study, although I used

grounded theory methodology to interpret meanings, this study was done with the distinct intention to create social change.

I chose to limit this study to television for two reasons. First, recent statistics show that television is the most commonly consumed media by most Americans. According to the *U.S. Census Bureau's Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2007*, it is estimated that in 2007, Americans will spend roughly 1,555 hours in front of the TV, more than half of the total hours spent with all other forms of media. Therefore, it is safe to assume that TV represents the most commonly consumed media by Americans. Secondly, I chose TV because it is a visual medium. Although non-visual media may be equally evocative, TV provides both auditory and visual representations of our social conditions.

<center>Overview of the Study Design</center>

The purpose of this study was to determine whether media literacy instruction that encourages critical consumption of media also affects students' abilities to recognize, deconstruct and analyze racial stereotypes in media. Over two years, this study focused on the effects of media literacy instruction on students' abilities to recognize and analyze racial stereotypes in television. The participants were in 10th-12th grade and consisted of two classes (34 students), one in 2005 and one in 2006. Students participated in ten days of media literacy instruction (ten hours of class time) in a suburban Midwestern high school sociology and anthropology class. The students were primarily white and middle class, as defined by the school district's records; however, there were a few students who self-identified as mixed race or Native American. Before instruction began, the students

viewed three television clips and then answered open ended questionnaires (Appendix C) to determine feelings, interpretations and opinions about the clips. I used different clips with the two groups because this is a very small school and I didn't want to take the chance that the students may have talked about the clips to friends who took the class the following year. Examples of the clips, among many others viewed include Fox television's *Cops*, a reality television show that depicts a day in the life of police officers across the United States; *The Jeffersons, a* sitcom first released in the 1970's that follows the life of a just recently affluent African American family in New York and their struggle adjusting to moving from a working class African American community to an affluent white one, a special on Fox television titled "Border Wars" about illegal immigrants from Mexico, and clips from the sitcom *Friends,* a 1990's sitcom about six white twenty-somethings living in New York.

With both groups, I co-taught a unit on media literacy for ten days using an adaptation of the Center for Media Literacy's (CML) Media Lit Kit, a comprehensive curriculum for media literacy (Appendix B and Chapter Two). Included in our discussions of media were print, motion pictures, television, and internet. The final four days of instruction, we focused on stereotypes in media, discussing gender, socioeconomic and racial stereotypes. Specific activities included viewing student-made public service announcements produced by the Center for Media Literacy and discussing racial stereotypes that the advertisements attempt to dislodge. In addition, students chose magazine advertisements that they perceived as racially stereotypical and brainstormed for ways to change the advertisement to promote counter-hegemonic ideas. Students viewed popular television and movie clips and deconstructed the messages about race,

and also conducted "race tallies" (Appendix C) in which they counted the number of ethnic minorities in their typical evening of media consumption while noting the roles that the minority characters played. These tallies were combined to show the discrepant numbers between white and non-white characters and the roles that they play. For example, one student watched two hours of television and counted only two persons of color. Both persons of color were involved in crime. Throughout the unit I collected student reflections on media they viewed outside of school, visual media samples they chose to discuss stereotypes in media, and artifacts of students' work. After instruction, I repeated the open ended questionnaire with a new set of clips.

Data were triangulated, taking samples from students' daily work, keeping detailed field notes and collecting student questionnaires and interview questions. In addition, data coding was triangulated by using three different coders who each coded all data and searched for consistencies in emergent themes. Finally, I sent specific phrases and comments that were divided into themes to participants to conduct member checks or to make sure what I perceived was what the participants actually intended. Grounded theory analysis using triangulation of data and triangulation of coders concluded that in some instances media literacy instruction provides a gateway for meaningful multicultural education.

Using students' lived experiences and examples from media, media literacy opens up discourse that challenges racial stereotypes in media and it does so in a relatively non-threatening way. In addition, the study suggests that media literacy is a catalyst for white identity development and recognition of white privilege. However, this study also revealed student resistance to media literacy instruction as an agent to challenge racial

stereotypes. This study opens up the possibility that media literacy instruction which focuses on racial stereotyping causes discomfort and even distress in those students who do not share an anti-racist stance, and thus resistance and distrust toward the instructor and the curriculum may result.

<center>Researcher position</center>

I acknowledge my position as researcher. I am a forty year old mother, wife, daughter, sister, teacher, scholar, Christian, Oklahoman, Native American and German American; the order of these characteristics hold some importance, for family relationships come first on my list. My ethnicity does not come first, for as a white person in America, it does not need to. In America, white is the unspoken norm to which all else is compared. The reason I explain this is because the intricacies of how I construct my identity also affect my position as researcher and my interpretation of data. Because of the light color of my skin, I wear the label of whiteness; therefore, my journey examining students' perceptions of racial representation in media is steeped in issues of positionality. Whether the students in this study were similar to me ethnically, socioeconomically, or culturally, engaging in researcher reflexivity suggests that I initially perceived them to be similar to me.

While it would be easier to ignore instances when my own researcher subjectivity surfaced, for then I would not have to acknowledge the inevitability that my identity is part of the study, it is of utmost importance that I not only describe these incidents, but

also expose the process of my meaning-making in order to elucidate how my position may have shaped the study and the findings. As Gordon (2005) explains,

> Reflexivity holds the potential to undermine the notion that reality has been "captured" by situating the account within the partial and positioned perspective of a particular researcher. Reflexivity offers an invitation to readers to challenge the accounts offered to them and reminds both readers and researchers alike that these accounts, as textual creations, are, at best, insightful. (p. 294)

Reflexivity is the process of examining the way a researcher analyzes the data in order reveal how researcher position may influence the gathering, interpretation and findings of a study. Peter Reason (1988) describes this as "critical subjectivity," a state in which we do not stifle our primary experience, nor do we allow it to overwhelm, but rather we acknowledge it and use it as part of the inquiry process (p.12).

Critics might suggest that it is my whiteness itself that taints a study about racial stereotypes in the media. How can a middle class white woman possibly talk about racial stereotypes? My answer is: how can I not? As Julie Landsman (2001) explains, in *A White Teacher Talks about Race*,

> All of us dealing with issues of race and culture in America today, be we teachers or day-care providers, lawyers or corporate executives, mechanics or computer programmers, need to be honest; honest about ourselves and what we carry with us into our places of work. I am finally getting to the point where I can listen without defensiveness or guilt when friends or students of color point out my mistakes, question my understanding of

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their experience, or describe something I did as offensive. It is never

going to be easy. Yet I believe it is the most important thing I can do. (p.

xi)

In a society where many of our neighborhoods, schools and churches are racially

segregated, how are white students ever going to learn about racism and white privilege?

Is it any wonder that so many whites are colorblind when all they see is white? In a mass

media system that perpetuates racial stereotypes and practices symbolic annihilation, how

will white students learn otherwise? Examining issues of race and representation in

media and seeking to make social change position this research clearly in critical theory

and pedagogical approach.

Limitations of the study

This is a study of a particular group of students and is not intended to suggest

generalizability in any way. Instead, it is simply a first step in trying to understand how

media literacy instruction may affect students' perceptions of media messages.

Therefore, any conclusions I reach in this study are conclusions about this group only,

and these conclusions are a starting point for additional research in this area.

Conclusions can be generative, however, and suggest general meanings.

In addition, as is the case in any social research, students may not always be

honest in their classroom reactions and responses. Classroom dynamics, or the ways that

students and teachers react to the curriculum and one another, is fluid. Given this,

students may alter reactions to fit in socially, to antagonize others or simply to

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experiment and "try on" another standpoint. In Chapter III, I will describe measures

taken to reduce the possibility that conclusions were based on dishonest or altered

classroom responses.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chapter I established the need for media literacy in our media-saturated society and connected this need to a functioning democracy while identifying the question: How does media literacy instruction that encourages critical consumption of media affect students' abilities to recognize, deconstruct and analyze racial stereotypes in media? In addition, this study interrogates the possibility for meaningful multicultural instruction and classroom discourse about racism and discrimination. Chapter II will review relevant literature that traces the roots of media literacy to critical theory and clarifies the function of social stereotypes. In addition, Chapter II will review relevant literature regarding the use of racial stereotypes in television. Also, the concepts and providers of media literacy curriculum will be situated in curriculum theory literature. Finally, Chapter II will establish the need for media literacy assessment and evaluation.

Connecting Media Literacy and Critical Theory

This study focuses on race while recognizing there are numerous other ways that society classifies itself into groups and subgroups; however, I chose to focus on race for two reasons. First, when I initially began this study, I intended to examine the way media literacy students perceive stereotypes of race, gender and class; but I quickly realized that

such a broad scope was unmanageable for a single researcher within the boundaries of a single study. Secondly, as stated earlier, I have a strong personal stance in regards to race and racism that influenced my decision to focus on racial stereotypes. Given the focus on race, the purpose of determining the effects of media literacy on perceptions of stereotypes and the theoretical underpinnings of critical media literacy itself, it is only logical to situate this study in the critical theory perspective. Kincheloe & McLaren (2005) situate critical research as a branch of social research that emphasizes empowerment of groups of people and making positive social change:

> Whereas traditional researchers see their task as the description, interpretation or reanimation of a slice of reality, critical researchers often regard their work as a first step toward forms of political action that can redress the injustices found in the field site or constructed in the very act of research itself. (p.205)

Originating in Marxist thought on the economic base and social superstructure controlled by the powerful few, Habermas developed Marxist thought to include not only discussion of the inequities in social structures, but also possibilities of resistance to control through public discourse and agency (Crotty, 1998). In addition, Kincheloe and McLaren (2005) clearly establish the variety of post-discourses to Habermas' notion of critical theory and describe a reconceptualized critical theory that "questions the assumptions that societies such as the United States…are unproblematic and free" (p.303). In this branch of critical thought, critical research attempts to "expose the forces that prevent individuals and groups from shaping the discussions that crucially affect their lives" (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005, p.308).

Within this conceptualization of critical thought is a need to understand the complexity of power in a capitalist democracy and how power operates to shape consciousness. Gramsci's (2001) notion of hegemony is central to this conversation, for he understood that dominant power is not always physical force, but also exercised through social psychological attempts to win people's consent to domination through cultural social institutions such as media, schools, churches and families.

Connecting cultural studies and media literacy

Briefly stated, cultural studies include every aspect of everyday lives; it is the who, where, why and how of the human experience. Kellner and Durham (2001/2002) speak of "cultural texts, which in today's society not only describe a way of life, but also transcode a variety of political positions on issues such as sexuality, morality, masculinity and femininity (p.6). " Storey (1996/2003), explains cultural studies as the "practices and processes of making shared meanings; however, it is erroneous to interpret this to mean cultures are 'harmonious' (p.3)." On the contrary, cultural studies maintain that the characteristics, rituals, and truths from which cultures are made have many different interpretations or ways of seeing the world.

> That is, they can be made to mean in different ways. Given this, conflict over making the world mean – insisting on the 'right' meaning(s) – is almost inevitable. It is this conflict – the relations between culture and power – which is the core interest of cultural studies…cultural studies is an unfolding discourse, responding to changing historical and political conditions, and always marked for debate, disagreement and intervention. (Storey, 1996/2003, p. 2-3)

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Of these multiple ways of seeing the world, Marx and Engels (2001/2002) suggest the "right" view in any given culture is controlled by the ruling classes who "both produce ideas that glorify the dominant institutions and ways of life, and propagate these governing ideas in cultural forms" (p.7). In this theoretical lens, dominant views, or ideology prompts the interrogation of cultural texts, and suggests that dominant ideologies are not self-evident truths, but instead are "constructed, biased, and contestable…Culture includes artifacts such as newspapers, television programs, movies, and popular music," and it is invisible in a media-saturated culture, for media themselves are participants in the dialogue that creates culture (Kellner & Durham, 2001/2002, p. 6-7).

The understanding of this relationship between power and culture is perhaps influenced most by the works of Michel Foucault and Stuart Hall. Foucault's work on power (1977/1995) is in opposition to Marxist notions of mass media equals power as seen in the controls placed on mass media in countries such as Britain and China. The core of Foucaults' theory rests in the rejection of Marxist notions of a defining "truth," of which Foucault says there is not. Instead, Foucault suggests that history is a "set of fictions," that we construct, and what happened is not as interesting as how people were brought to think what happened (Sheridan, 1990, p.213). Foucault, therefore, does not think we can determine the outcome of studies in mass media, but instead offers perspectives to inform the discourse and evaluate claims of theorists. This is in contrast to Marxists who see media as tools to create false reality or disguise a reality of oppression and exploitation.

Foucault (1977/1995) rests on the notion that power is not a unitary concept; it is not absolute. Instead, power is dispersed through a network of relationships which make up society and which are based on discourse. Discourse is the interaction between individuals, groups and subcultures through which ideologies are questioned, truths are constructed and negotiated, and identities are formed and reformed. In order for power to have an effect on discourse, Foucault emphasizes the critical component, freedom. Power can only create an effect if an object has the possibility to resist; so power is not only oppressive but productive – it "renders bodies active, not passive" (Sheridan, 1990, p. 217).

Foucault's (1977/1995) work on power and resistance informs a study in media literacy, for media literacy is founded upon the premise that audiences can and will resist dominant ideology. This challenges the Marxist view of the media industry as mass deception because mass deception cannot work equally on masses since "masses" are actually complex and diverse relationships and discourses, and because the outcome of the situations are not predetermined, and each holds the possibility of resistance or different outcomes. However, Foucault does maintain the Marxist view that power produces knowledge and that at the individual level this power-knowledge might create a perceived "truth." Likewise, he suggests that knowledge also produces power: Those who know, construct what is deemed knowledge, and thereby retain power. The notion of a constructed power-knowledge is important because our perception of truth defines how we think, act and how we see ourselves in relationship to others. Therefore, Foucault sees the effect of power is un-stable, unpredictable and informs any dominant power theory of mass media (Sheridan, 1990).

Foucault (1977/1995) describes mass media as a form of the "panopticon," an all-seeing voyeur, which is constantly scanning society for signs of deviance with the threat of exposure. One might think that the panopticon prevents deviance; however, Foucault argues that displaying signs of deviance also brings deviance into public discourse where it is possible for the formation of reverse discourses and legitimacy. For example, media representation in the 1950's and 1960's attempted to define women stating either, "you are sex" or "you are maternal," and as a result, many women rejected media attempts to contain and define their gender and the feminist movement flourished, thus rejecting societal objectification and control of the female body (Sheridan, 1980).

So how do Foucault's theories inform a study on media literacy? First, media literacy may serve as a vehicle for discourse leading to an alternative meaning that differs from dominant discourse. By opening up the possibility for resistance and the tools to critique dominant discourses, media literacy creates a space for thinking about media, talking about media and creating media that represent viewpoints from outside dominant discourses. Referring back to Foucault's notion of how power-knowledge influences individual perceptions about truth, self and others, media literacy reveals the intricate relationship between power, politics, economics and media, thereby inviting individuals to become active, not passive, in the consumption of media. In addition, when individuals become active inquirers of media, they are thrust into an investigation of existing social structures and institutions. As Semali (2000) states, "When texts of all kinds are taken together and critically analyzed, this provides a more detailed picture and deeper meanings of what is going on in society" (p. 145). In this way, media literacy may provide a deeper social awareness and active resistance to misrepresentations, inequities

and injustices that are propagated through mass media. Foucault's work on power and resistance enhances critical media literacy's understanding of how power and resistance work, for it reveals that power lies in the discourse of individuals and groups, and resistance is the result of discourse. Lastly, Foucault's notion of power rendering bodies active informs and mirrors the activist aims of critical media literacy.

In part, Hall's theories reflect a critical theory perspective which views media as an oppressive institution which "closes" or limits representation of race (Jhally, 1997). In other words, media institutions which represent power attempt to fix ethnic groups' identities and the meanings attached to those group identities, thereby attempting to fix the meanings which viewers will derive from any given text or image. Although some argue that the process of fixing meanings is a form of Marxist control over the ruling classes, Hall blends critical ideology with constructivist theory where there is no fixed meaning, but instead, individual and shared constructions of meaning (Hall, 2000). Therefore, when viewers are constructing meaning, there is a constant negotiation between intended meanings constructed by media makers and meanings constructed by the individual. Hall's theories of media representation and construction of meanings act as a framework which shapes this study as I examine how media literacy instruction affects students' constructions of racial stereotypes on television.

The Use of Racial Stereotypes in Media

One particular symptom of the permeation of dominant ideology in media is widespread use of stereotypes to define groups of people. Meaning to ascribe a

predetermined set of characteristics, the term "stereotype" was originally a process in printing that used metal plates to print images on paper. Lippmann's (1922/1991) extensive public opinion research identifies stereotypes as signs that give a picture of the world as we expect it to be. As young children, we train the eye to pick out recognizable signs from art, moral codes, philosophy and other social codes that allow us to make sense of our world. Signs stand for ideas, and we fill these ideas with our own stock of images. We are told about the world before we see it or experience it, unless education has taught us to be aware and analyze the process of perception. Cortes (2000) explains that generalizations are needed to make meaning. For example, learning to drive a car means that one generalizes that all cars must be operated in the same manner. However, stereotypes are more rigid and used to define self and others. We also use stereotypes to define groups of people, thereby creating a sense of order when confronted with those who are different from self. However, as Lippmann (1922/1991) explains, stereotypes also act as a defense mechanism:

> A pattern of stereotypes is not neutral. It is not merely a way of substituting order for the great blooming, buzzing confusion of reality. It is not merely a short cut. It is all these things and something more. It is the guarantee of self respect; it is the projection upon the world of our own sense of our own value, our own position and our own rights. The stereotypes are, therefore, highly charged with the feelings that are attached to them. They are the fortresses of our tradition, and behind its defenses we can continue to feel ourselves safe in the position we occupy. (p.96)

For example, Lippmann (1922/1991) describes Aristotle's distress and confusion when questioning the basis for Athenian slavery when Athenian slaves were basically indistinguishable from Greek citizens. Aristotle follows by postulating that Athenians were intended by nature to be slaves, therefore different from Greek citizens. This is the first component of a stereotype. Completing the stereotype, Aristotle suggests that the bodies of slaves and free men are different from each other; slaves are muscular and strong while free citizens are erect and non-muscular making them fit for civil life (p.97-98). Lippman calls this the "perfect stereotype" for it "precedes the use of reason" and imposes meaning to our sights and senses before we can critically analyze them (p.98). If an experience contradicts lodged stereotypes, for example a muscular Greek citizen, then the individual may have three types of reaction. One will dismiss the Greek citizen as an exception to the rule or find a flaw somewhere and hold firmly to the stereotype; or if he is open minded the novelty is taken into the picture and the stereotype is modified slightly. Another possibility is that if the experience is shocking enough and he is shaken enough, the individual will begin to distrust other classification systems or ways of looking at the world (Lippmann, 1922/1991, p.100).

Some stereotypes have truthful historical and social roots. For example, in my recent experiences doing research on Hispanic immigrant children in the schools, I heard many teachers and administrators describe the group as "hard working." While this is a stereotype, there is truth in its simplicity, for Hispanic immigrant children are often among the poorest children in the schools. Their parents typically immigrate with only manual labor skills, and are therefore forced to work several jobs to make ends meet. However, the same teachers, when talking about poor Hispanic students' white

counterparts, labeled them as "poor," "low-income" or "free and reduced lunch," referring to school lunches which are provided to children of families who cannot afford to purchase school lunches. The stereotype of Hispanic parents as hard workers while other ethnicities are just poor, though subtle, is clear.

Cortes (2000) applies the influence of stereotypes on perceptions of groups of people to how children learn about others through the media. According to his work determining how children learn about diversity from media, children not only see and hear stereotypes of groups in media, but also learn those stereotypes by listening to parents and adults talking about groups represented in media.

> Learning, in short, does not necessarily conform to either the teaching
> goals or the non-teaching claims of media makers. Once a media product
> is published or projected, consumers "read" the product, including its
> treatment of diversity. They may react as conscious, analytical learners,
> pondering the media's treatment of race, ethnicity, gender, culture,
> religion and other aspects of diversity…On the other hand they may
> uncritically absorb or viscerally reject different multicultural lessons.
> (p.71)

Many media and education scholars agree that media portrayals have an influence on how viewers define racial groups (Graves, 1999; Gray, 2001; Giroux, 1992; Hooks, 2001). At this point, it is important to examine how race is represented in media. Although this is not a study of audience reception analysis, in determining the effect of media literacy instruction on perceptions of stereotypes, it is helpful

to clarify that stereotypes of race in today's media remain the norm and not the exception.

Racial Stereotypes in Television

A contemporary ideological construct of race can be explained by Omi and Winant (2005) as a development of critical theory called racial formation theory. In racial formation theory, construction of race is seen as a blending of dominance/resistance, contemporary politics, global context and history. In other words, race is viewed as a construction; however, this view changes over time and space. An image of a young Hispanic male in 1940 will not evoke the same meaning for the same viewer in 2005. Likewise, that same image will not have the same constructed meaning in both the U.S. and Zimbabwe. As Omi and Winant (2005) explain,

> As quality and difference oriented movements contend with racial "blacklash" over sustained periods of time, as binary logics of racial antagonism (white/black, Latino/Indio, settler/native,etc) become more complex and decentered, political deployment of the concept of race comes to signal qualitatively new types of political domination, as well as new types of opposition (p. 7).

Although the increase of representation for ethnic minorities on television (Gray, 2001) might suggest that media are no longer a threat to minority identity and cultural power, with an increase of representation comes an increase in misrepresentation. The minority viewer may resist dominant discourse and choose not to accept a negative portrayal of the

group to which she or he identifies; however, the damaging stereotype may be internalized for the non-minority viewer (hooks, 1994). For example, as hooks (1990) explains, a majority of White Americans live in segregated environments, thus they often learn about the Other from racist depictions found on television. What's more, hooks suggests that often blackness is an expression of the, "liberal white filmmaker's willingness to exploit the culture of blackness as he or she might exploit any subject matter" (p.155). Gangsta rap music and videos are an example of the exploitation of blackness as "a great spectacle," which attracts the audience while providing a "sensationalist drama of demonizing black youth culture," a twenty first century remake of *Birth of a Nation* (hooks, 1994, p. 115).

Gray (2001) describes this as the production of blackness (and other minorities as well) through the "white eye." These "discursive practices" are *assimilationist* (invisibility), *pluralist* (separate but equal), and *multiculturalist* (diversity) (p.450). Gray describes assimilationist representations of blacks in the 1950's and throughout the 1960's as those that "attempted to make blacks acceptable to whites by containing them or rendering them, if not culturally white, invisible." The "fact of blackness was treated as a minor coincidental scene" (pp.443-444). This trend is found in programs such as *Designing Women*, *Family Ties* and *Night Court* as well as contemporary versions today. Pluralist representations maintain separate-but-equal discourses that reinforce acceptance of whiteness as normal. Examples of this are in shows such as *Family Matters* and *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air* (pp.452-453). Finally, in multicultural representations, there are ethnic minorities within the discourse, but they are not tokens who become THE minority. Gray describes this characterization as one in which blackness is "constantly

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made, remade, modified, and extended" (p.455). This malleability and diversity eliminates the token quality of difference. This can be found in shows such as *Roc, Frank's Place*, *The Bernie Mac Show*, *Freddie*, *George Lopez and Everybody Hates Chris*.

This is not to suggest, however, that Black and Latino are the only ethnic minorities that deserve positive representation, for Native Americans, Islanders, Asian Americans, Indian and Arab Americans remain invisible in the media except for token roles. For example, Tamborini's (2000) work analyzing the representation of race in the television legal system quantitatively illustrated well the discrepancies specifically between race and character role. In the Tamborini study, researchers analyzed the roles of both white and minority characters in fictional television depictions of the justice system. Tallying representations of Blacks, Latinos and whites in the role of police, attorneys, judges, witnesses and military, it was found that none had representations of Blacks as victims of crime and there were no representations of Latinos in any justice system role except for police and victims. There were no Latino attorneys, judges, witnesses or military.

On the surface, the Tamborini figures for criminal representation are promising. More specifically, each ethnic group is represented proportionately to their population in U.S. society. However, in examining the figures for highly educated, professional characterizations or witnesses to a crime, minority representation disappears. In addition, there are no representations of Black characters as crime victims. This sends a clear message to viewers that either Black people are never victims of crimes, or crimes against Black people do not constitute actual crime. Finally, and perhaps most

disturbing, is the invisibility of all other ethnic groups in the Tamborini study. As Sut Jhally (1999) explains, in media invisibility translates to powerlessness. Troublesome as this is, media literacy is showing promise as a tool for curbing the effects of negative racial stereotypes (Ramasubramanian, 2004).

Locating Media Literacy in Curriculum Theory

Among media literacy scholars, the most widely suggested approach to media literacy instruction is full integration across the curriculum (Considine, 1992; Hobbs, 2005; Thoman & Jolls, 2005; Semali, 2000). As Semali (2000) explains,

> While most people seem to think general education should amount to a
> collection of required subjects…many educators and activists committed
> to social reform have called for other types of arrangements. Most
> prominent among these has been a curriculum organized around personal
> and social issues, collaboratively planned and carried out by teachers and
> students together and committed to the integration of knowledge. (p.52-
> 53)

Considine (1992) suggests that media literacy is a "built-in" interdisciplinary approach which increases active learning for it relates curriculum to social experiences, motivation, and empowerment. Giroux (1989) asserts that media literacy has the potential to empower entire communities, whether they are classrooms, school houses or community action groups. Hobbs (2005) explains how "regular" subjects benefit from integrating media literacy by forming connections between curriculum and life. Semali (2000) adds,

> This approach to curriculum inquiry aims to help demystify the nature of media culture by examining its construction, production, and the meaning-making processes by which media imagery and popular representations of people help shape students' personal, social and political worlds. (p.31)

The emphasis on connecting curriculum to life mirrors that of curriculum theorist John Dewey (1956) who asserted that curriculum must connect to students' everyday experiences, and be a lived experience instead of fragmented facts. Also influencing the roots of media literacy curriculum is a group of postmodern curriculum theorists, the Reconceptualists, who represented a paradigm shift away from the objectives-based, linear Tyler model of curriculum represented by the likes of Taba and Bobbitt, and toward a more existentialist/phenomenologist theoretical perspective. This perspective rejected the factory model of education and focused on individualized instruction which is relevant and grounded in the real world of human concerns. For example, Pinar (1975) emphasized that curriculum must include a component of reflection on lived experiences. He describes this as "currere," or the process of taking experiences from the past, present and future to reflect upon curriculum. Greene (1975) suggests that curriculum must encourage students to question assumptions in their "life-world" and help them break free from the "common-sense world" he normally takes for granted. Heubner (1975) connects curriculum to pop-culture and believes that this challenges what has been defined as valued activities that can go on in the classroom, thus disrupting traditional curriculum theories of legitimization and control, thereby mirroring the intentions of critical media literacy. Finally, Apple's (1975) ideas solidly connect with the tenets of critical theory and the goals of critical media literacy. Apple suggests that because

influencing young people in education is a moral activity and schools are not mirrors of society – they are society, education is always a moral and political activity. The role of schooling in distributing oppressive forms of knowledge must be eliminated, and a more empowering role must replace it.

Media literacy as a whole is perhaps best situated within Elliot Eisner's artistic approach to curriculum design. In Eisner's thought, curriculum should be outlined using certain guidelines. Goals are important; however, specific objectives may not be desirable or attainable, for often these are chosen because they are part of academic tradition. Instead, he stresses that most often the most important content (popular culture, mass media, law and others), coined the "null curriculum," is excluded from school curriculum. These are part of the lived experience of students and provide "learning opportunities," which "create varied, meaningful, and satisfying learning opportunities for students" (Marsh & Willis, 1999, p. 36-37). In addition, Eisner feels that curriculum must be organized around learning opportunities such as historical events, weather anomalies and social issues, and the subject areas should be integrated to be more meaningful in the students' lived experiences. Finally, Eisner suggests teachers use a variety of "modes" to present curriculum and assign a variety of "modes" through which students may present evidence of learning (Marsh & Willis, 1999).

Also influencing media literacy curriculum is John Dewey's notion of a student-centered curriculum and authentic assessment. Dewey and the progressive movement in the 1920's suggested that curriculum should be driven by how well the curriculum "contributes to the students' deep understanding not only of subject matter but of their own lives" (Marsh & Willis, 1999,p.278). A student-centered curriculum is based on the

idea that students must be active in creating their learning opportunities. This is done by allowing students to set goals, and allowing student responses to "drive lessons" and "shift instruction strategies" (p.279). Authentic assessment allows many form evidence that students are learning such as portfolios, artistic representations, teacher-student conversations and inquiry-based projects. Intricately linked to student-centered curriculum and authentic assessment is constructivism, or the thought that each of us constructs meaning individually in our own mind. Vygotsky (1978) concludes that knowledge is socially constructed, and that peers are important in the learning process, for children know of a child's experience and thoughts better than an adult instructor. As Crotty (1998) explains,

> Constructivism taken in this sense points up the unique experience of each
>
> of us. It suggests that each one's way of making sense of the world is
>
> valid and worthy of respect as any other…social constructivism
>
> emphasizes the hold our culture has on us: is shapes the way in which we
>
> see things … and gives us a quite definite view of the world. (p.58)

Translating this into the field of curriculum, constructivist pedagogy is one in which teachers help students resolve inner questions and conflicts while investigating other ideas and concepts in order to construct knowledge. Put this way, it is quite logical to situate media literacy firmly within constructivist, learner-centered curriculum theory. The constructivist lens is at the core of one of the best known U.S. organizations in media literacy, the Center for Media Literacy in Los Angeles, California. In designing this study, I made a choice to utilize the curriculum designed by the Center for Media Literacy, but before doing so, I chose to conduct a meta-analysis of their curriculum in

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order to determine whether it was truly situated within the parameters of my theoretical lens.

Examining and Evaluating the Center for Media Literacy Organization and Curriculum

The Center for Media Literacy (CML), founded by Elizabeth Thoman in 1976 in Los Angeles, has been a force in media literacy worldwide, publishing newsletters to media educators and providing curriculum and courses year round for educators wanting to teach media literacy. The CML defines media literacy as a

21st century approach to education that provides a framework to access, analyze, evaluate and create messages in a variety of forms. It builds an understanding of the roles of media in society as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy. (Center for Media Literacy, 2006)

I chose to analyze this curriculum to determine whether is closely resembles the critical lens from which I viewed my data. In using this curriculum for a study on the effects of media literacy instruction, it is important to determine if the curriculum represents the pedagogical stance it claims, that of Friere's education as emancipator.

I used a checklist by Belenky, Clinchy,Goldberger and Tarule (1996) (Appendix D) which serves to analyze the underlying assumptions about learning and knowledge. While other checklists may be more specialized as curriculum selection lists, I use this list because it better suits the nature of the evaluand. More specifically, it investigates the position of the implied values of this curriculum clearly from a critical theory position,

the same critical position that the CML maintains. A critical perspective examines issues, and in this case, curriculum as a "political text, a gender text, a racial text, a religious text, and an autobiographical text" (Reynolds, 2003, p.24).

The Center for Media Literacy advocates a philosophy of "empowerment through education," drawing on Paulo Freire's critical literacy process by which "students [are equipped] with the tools to not only read the word but also to read the world" (Yosso, 2002, p. 54).

Assuming that skills in all forms of literacy are essential for both children and adults as citizens in a democratic society, the CML shares Paulo Freire's views of literacy as a valuable equalizer in society. Stating that it is favorable for children to be prepared for living in our 21st century media culture, the organization believes that the ultimate goal is to provide tools for students to make wise choices. The center's social foundations come from a subset of media literacy, termed *critical media literacy*. Semali (2000) defines this subset,

> …not as an antidote to help students learn how to liberate themselves from texts that are designed to dupe them. Rather, the broader goal is to cultivate systematic methods of inquiry, models of critique, and analytical ways of reading visual images and messages embedded in both print and electronic texts. Such a process seeks to get at the deeper meaning of texts as well as enhance the pleasures that students may derive from them. (p. ix)

In other words, critical media literacy encourages students to deconstruct media, recognizing bias or misrepresentations, thus learning more about society and themselves while acquiring the skills to produce media messages of their own.

In the CML's concepts/questions, "questions to guide young children" are provided. Within these questions, learners are asked to self reflect through questions such as:

What do I think and feel about this?

What does this tell me about how other people might think and live?

Is anyone or anything left out?

What do I see or hear? Smell? Touch?

It seems that these questions invite the learner to think and reflect on their own perceptions and notions rather than having perceptions prescribed to them. In this respect, the CML's curriculum seems firmly grounded in critical and reflective education.

Supporting Freire's (1998) beliefs in the "development of the awakening of critical awareness" and the power of critical pedagogy the CML seems to be one of the pioneers in its field, and states that one of the keys to curriculum reform is educating students to be full participants in our democracy (127). Furthermore, the organization maintains, as I do, that to be full participants in this democracy, citizens must be offered both the skills and opportunity to make independent and informed choices and form independent and informed beliefs. Although critics may suggest that the support from religious organizations may compromise its claims to be a proponent of critical pedagogy, I found that the ideals of democratic thinking were quite apparent. Unlike many media literacy counterparts who believe that the purpose of media literacy is as a

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prophylactic to prevent the damaging effects of media, the CML recognizes media as a powerful tool for positive social change. This is not to suggest that other media literacy counterparts do not share the CML's propensity to question and analyze media stereotypes. In fact, Analyzing stereotypes is a feature that all of the programs I discussed have in common. However, based on the analysis of the CML through the *Educational Dialiectics* lens, which places curriculum on a continuum between didactic and constructed knowledge, I found the CML curriculum to be most complementary to this study. I found the curricular materials they provide to be quite helpful and adaptable to any audience from preK-adult education. The CML curriculum assumes that curriculum is a gendered, political, racial and autobiographical text and thus encourages a critical stance.

Outcomes and Assessment of Media Literacy

The scarcity of media literacy curriculum evaluation and assessment is problematic. While most media literacy scholars and advocates call for integration of media literacy across the curriculum, to gain the acceptance and understanding within the schools, there must be more qualitative and quantitative evidence of its effectiveness. Although there are commonly shared notions about the outcomes of media literacy instruction, there are no national standards for media literacy outcomes. Scharrar (2002) calls for more groundwork on the definition of outcomes and potential strategies for assessing media literacy instruction effectiveness:

In order to move toward increased adoption and acceptance of media

literacy in the K-12 curriculum and elsewhere, however, it is necessary to

move beyond implicit assumptions about the benefits such efforts can

achieve and toward their explicit definition and measurement. (Sharrar,

2002, p.355)

In addition, there is very little research supporting the effectiveness of media

literacy curricula in improving critical viewing, thinking or questioning. More

effort is needed to determine the scope of desirable outcomes as a result of media

literacy instruction. Kubey (2003) asserts that media education must "move to a

more mature stage that draws on an established and evolving research base to

guide programs and practices (p.110). Little evidence is collected, updated or

shared on the efficacy of media literacy instruction, and Kubey (2003) calls for

media literacy organization websites to assume the task of compiling and

publishing a list of media literacy outcome and assessment studies. Other

important issues in the implementation of media literacy in US schools are the

lack of formal, widespread or standardized assessment for student progress and

the lack of teacher training in media education. Competency in the area of media

education is most often assessed by individual teachers within the standards of the

"host" subject, e.g. Social Studies. Teacher training is also decentralized and

fragmented, yet organizations such as the Alliance for a Media Literate America

(AMLA) and UNESCO are playing a vital role in developing professional

development and university-based training and instruction in media literacy

(Brown, Goetze & Schwarz, 2005). In recent years, a few studies of media

literacy efficacy have surfaced. This chapter will close with a review of media

literacy studies that are relevant to this study.

Relevant U.S. Media Literacy Studies and the Gap this Study Fills

In recent years, a few U.S. studies emerged in the field of media literacy with

mixed results of its efficacy. Studies have shown that media literacy has a marked effect

on whether a six hour exposure to media literacy education affected children's skills in

determining real and fictional elements of a program (Dorr, Graves & Phelps, 1980) and

whether an eight-session course on media literacy improved camera and editing

techniques in filmmaking instruction (Singer, Zuckerman & Singer, 1980). More

recently, Hobbs & Frost (2003) concluded quantitatively that media literacy instruction

had a significant effect on students' abilities to analyze media messages and diverse

forms of communication; while Gonzales, Glik, Dovoudi & Ang (2004) drew modest

results on the effects of a media literacy curriculum for tobacco control for high school

students. Chen (2005) determined that media literacy did not have a strong impact on

viewers' emotional response while viewing MTV videos with high sexual imagery. Arke

(2005) reported no effect of media literacy instruction on college students' critical

thinking skills. In contrast, Angell's (2005) study determined that media literacy is

needed to reach at-risk adolescent audiences, and Choma (2004) determined that first

year university women experienced positive changes in well-being after media literacy

instruction such as feeling better about oneself and body. Beaudoin (2005) demonstrated

qualitatively and quantitatively that media literacy education had a marked effect on

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attitudes and behaviors of potential media makers, students at the School of Media Arts of Columbia College Chicago.

There has been an abundance of research on stereotype formation and internalization in the fields of media and cultural studies, sociology and social psychology (Hall, 1997; Helms, 1990, 1995; Lippman, 1922/1991; Omi & Winant, 2005). However, more relevant to this dissertation study, is Ramasubramanian's (2004) research which explored the effects of media literacy training in suppressing stereotyping effects of media content. The study included three seemingly unrelated mini-studies involving 227 participants. The participants were then separated into three groups. The first group watched either a media literacy video or a control video and then read a news packet containing stories that were manipulated to be stereotypical about Blacks, stereotypical about Indians, counter-stereotypical about Blacks and counter-stereotypical about Indians. In addition, a second mini-study involved computer-based stimuli which required lexical decision tasks and word fragment completion. Finally, a third mini-study included participants sharing their perceptions of and feelings toward Black Americans and Indians. In the first group, those who watched the media literacy video were slower in recognizing Indian stereotypes, and those who read stereotypical stories of Indians were slightly more likely than those who read counter-stereotypical stories of Indians to perceive Indians as disadvantaged and feel sympathy toward them. The participants from the second group who watched the literacy video were more likely to finish the word fragment prompts with stereotypical words, suggesting that the literacy video itself served as a stereotype-primer. Finally, the participants who watched the control video and subsequently read stereotypical news stories about Indians also reported more

contempt toward Blacks.

Also relevant to this work is a recent dissertation study by Henry (2005) in which 358 students from high schools in Pennsylvania and Florida answered surveys regarding media use and influences. Although the study's focus was a qualitative analysis of how students evaluate media, interestingly, Henry found that race played a greater role in the understanding of media. African American students were found to have lower levels of awareness than white or Asian students. The participants in my study were predominantly white, so it serves as a deeper examination of how well white students understand the complexities of media in regards to representation of race.

However, there is a gap in research that examines whether media literacy affects secondary students' abilities to recognize and analyze images that are considered racist. While studies have shown that negative racial stereotypes on the news influences white viewers' opinions about criminal punishment for minorities who commit crimes (Gilliam, Valentino & Beckmann, 2002), and that vicarious experience through television contributes to the development of stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination among young children (Graves, 1999), there has been no research to determine if instruction in media literacy encourages students to recognize and critically analyze racial stereotypes. Furthermore, research has not examined whether any effects of media literacy may influence the process of identity formation. These are the gaps my research is intended to fill.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

While it is valuable to pursue research that quantifies the effects of media literacy instruction, the purpose of this particular study is to discuss possibilities of media literacy as a tool for multicultural/racial awareness and sensitivity. For this purpose, qualitative research was most useful. More specifically, the wide spectrum of qualitative research methodology allowed more freedom to provide the thick description needed to promote a deeper understanding of the complexity in the relationship between the media literacy instruction and the ability to recognize and analyze racial stereotypes in media, and perhaps a deeper understanding of how media literacy instruction affects the way individuals perceive self and others.

Historically used by sociologists and anthropologists to "report about and represent the Other," qualitative research is a field of inquiry that "crosscuts disciplines, fields and subject matters" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.7). Many of the research perspectives connected to qualitative research are related to cultural and interpretive studies. It is the link to cultural studies that informs this study of the effects of media literacy on racial stereotype awareness. Also informing this study is a firm footing in critical inquiry, more specifically critical action research.

While action research began with an idea attributed to social scientist Karl Lewin, the movement has experienced many mutations. However, each shares a common origin

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in Habermas' notion of research as a social practice with political intentions (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005). Habermas' theories stemmed from Marxist notions of the powerful elite controlling the masses through control of wealth and the production of ideas (Marx & Engels, 2001); however, Habermas initiated a critical theory approach to cultural studies which promoted the possibility of resistance and even the inevitability of resistance to control. Critical theory is most often defined as a theoretical perspective which examines social issues with the intention of empowering those who are oppressed (Patton, 2002). Action, or participatory research is a "philosophy of social research with three particular attributes: shared ownership of research projects, community-based analysis of social problems, and an orientation toward community action" (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005, p.560). It is this line of critical thought blended with activism that informs critical action research, bringing together broad social analysis, in this case using media literacy as a tool to teach students to recognize that television uses stereotypes and to encourage students to feel empowered when using media to challenge stereotypes and to make autonomous decisions about race and identity.

Critical action research is strongly represented in the literature of educational action research, and there it emerges from dissatisfactions with classroom action research that typically does not extend of the role of educational to making social change. Critical action research also recognizes inequity in schooling and the disadvantages attributed to gender, race, ethnicity, social class and sexual orientation (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005). It is important to note again, as I did in Chapter I, that because this study has an underlying purpose to make social change, it is not intended to claim objectivity in any way. I firmly believe that misrepresentation of race in media is a social ill that calls for

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change. I also firmly believe that schools are arenas to create and maintain social change that benefits those who are typically oppressed.

While critical action research is the lens that informs this study, the method of data analysis and conclusions is grounded theory. For the purpose of this study grounded theory refers to a specific mode of analysis. Charmaz (2005) defines grounded theory as "a set of flexible analytic guidelines that enable researchers to focus their data collection and to build inductive middle-range theories through successive levels of data analysis and conceptual development" (p.507). Charmaz (2005) points to grounded theory as an area in which researchers can apply grounded theory to issues of social justices. Strauss and Corbin (1998) use the term grounded theory to describe theory that "was derived from data, systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process" (p.12). This method emphasizes a close relationship between data collection, analysis and emergent theory in that the researcher "does not begin a project with a preconceived theory in mind, but instead allows theory to emerge from the data. [Resulting theories are termed] grounded theory because they are drawn from data [and] are likely to offer insight, enhance understanding and provide meaningful guide to action" (p.12).

Description of Hill High School Students and Community

In order to situate this study within the parameters of high school students, it is necessary to give some background for Hill High School. Hill High School is located in the suburban hills of a large Midwestern city. Hill High is the hub of the community, for other than the fire station, there are no other community municipalities. The school was

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founded in 1922 as a rural farm school that served children of large farmers and tenant workers. As the adjoining city grew, in the 1960's parcels of the large farms were sold and modest suburban housing developments took root. The bedroom community remained secluded until the mid 1990's when another housing boom created two more large housing developments with homes that attracted upper-middle class families. The independent school system became known as a "best kept secret" by locals, for it boasted a high graduation and college-bound student rate. However, one of the unspoken characteristics of the "best kept secret" is the lack of ethnic diversity. Although the percentage of Native American families is significant, all other minority ethnic groups account for less than 1% of the remaining population. With this homogeneity, it seems that many forms of racism may be acceptable or unnoticed.

I was a teacher in the school system for three years preceding my graduate studies, and throughout the duration of this experience, I witnessed countless examples of racism and bigotry. For example, in the high school parking lot, a group of senior boys started a club they named the "Rebels," referring to the rebel flag stickers that adorned each members' back window of their vehicles. Monday mornings before school, many students liked to gather in my classroom to share stories about their weekend antics. Often the stories centered on violent fights between the Rebels and either the "northsiders" or the "westsiders." Students described their adversaries as "spics," "wetbacks," or "niggers," when they thought I was out of earshot. When I was within earshot, they referred to them as gang-bangers, Blacks and Mexicans. Most disturbing perhaps, were the minority students who participated in the racial slurs against members of their own ethnic group.

In the case of Hill High, the virtual isolation of the community may have prevented students from having many positive relationships with those of another ethnicity, and the perpetual sparring with the "northsiders" and the "westsiders" only exacerbated the problem. When I left Hill High, I was frustrated that I failed to create any significant change in students' attitudes toward minorities and racism. I also realized that my experience was most likely very common in communities and schools across the nation. This frustration led this inquiry in multicultural education and media literacy. I witnessed how media literacy provided an impetus for conversations about race and racism in a graduate class on media literacy, so I wondered if the same might be possible in the K-12 classroom.

Methodology

Utilizing a modified version of curriculum designed by the Center for Media Literacy (Media Lit Kit, Appendix B), in the fall of 2005 and 2006 I joined former colleagues of mine in co-teaching a unit on media literacy in one high school sociology and one anthropology classroom. It is important to note that the concepts we taught in this unit were not in addition to the accepted objectives of state curriculum, but instead part of the state curricular objectives. Appendix A lists the State Department of Education curricular objectives which are met by this unit, all of which fall in the subject areas of social studies. The students participating in this study are two classes of high school students in a suburban, blue and white collar community. The first group of fifteen participated in a three-week study conducted in the fall of 2005. The second

group of thirteen, an anthropology class in the same school, participated in the same instruction and measurement in the fall of 2006.

Both groups participated in the same two-week unit on media literacy, focusing on the use of stereotypes in media (Appendix B). It was important to try to avoid "teaching" racial stereotypes, or in other words, telling the students what stereotypes to look for in media representation. In attempting to avoid this, I simply introduced group identifications and allowed the students to offer stereotypes that are often connected with each specific group. The following is dialogue transcribed from this activity in the 2006 group:

In talking about stereotypes surrounding the single group identifier, Blacks, students were asked to share descriptors they associate with this group. As the students shared descriptors, I wrote them on the board. In a few seconds we had this short list.

Blacks

Gangs

Criminals or cops

Rappers

T: how many of you identify yourselves as African American's or have

friends or family members who are African Americans?

(All raised hands)

T: How many of the AA people you know fit into these descriptions?

S: I know a guy who is in a gang

T: anyone else?

(None)

T: So where do we get these descriptions if most of us do not personally

know someone who fits into this?

S: television, movies, the news

T: who is left out of the descriptors?

S: normal blacks

S: women and kids

S: I am1/2 black,so this is ½ my family you are talking about and not one

of them fits into this stereotype.

(Silence, white girls in the back exchanging looks with each other)

T: okay, this brings up another problem with stereotypes – can we identify

someone by the way they look and classify them into just one group?

S: No, not really

S: Yeah, I am ½ Cherokee (doesn't identify white)

Although I think it impossible to be sure that we are not teaching the stereotypes, by asking the students to develop these instead of handing out a list of stereotypes, we could then view media that contained these stereotypes as a way of connecting common stereotypes to media representation.

Sampling and Data Collection

The 2005 group completed a pre-assessment tool to indicate pre-existing perceptions of television conventions, images and "constructed-ness." I followed up with

this 2005 group by repeating the same assessment tool post instruction (Appendix C). The 2006 group included the students who were enrolled in an anthropology course in the fall of 2006. Other data included field notes, audio taped class discussions and a post instruction open ended questionnaire (Appendix F). I replicated the original study; therefore, my data analysis treats all participants as one group.

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The high school population was chosen through discriminate sampling (Strauss & Corbin, p.212). According to enrollment data, the subjects were identified as predominantly Caucasian (77%), with a small population of Native American (22%), and Hispanic (1%). There are only two self-identified African American students in the district population of 1244. The somewhat homogenous nature of the population makes for an interesting setting for research on stereotypes of race, for it has been my experience, like that of Rothenberg in *Invisible Privilege* (2000), that whites who are racially privileged are least likely to recognize that racial privilege exists.

Throughout instruction, students and instructors shared perceptions and feelings about television programming they viewed outside of class, and many students brought examples of magazine advertisements that pertained to a discussion of racial

representation in media. Students also had the opportunity to create collages, print advertisement and to plan a 22 minute news segment. After the student post-interview questions (Appendix F) were completed, the students and instructors participated in a "debriefing" where they shared feelings about the effects of media literacy instruction on the way they used media now, as compared to before the unit.

My system for identifying each of the students was twofold. First, when recording student responses and transcribing audiotapes, I used a numeric system, numbering the students and also identifying them as male or female: for example, F-1. Next, as I used responses of specific students within the write-up, I assigned them pseudonyms that remained for the duration of the study. Other raters knew individual students as either F-1 or "Jessie," for example. In addition, I obtained approval from the Institutional Review Board before collecting any data (Appendix E) and I followed accepted requirements to ensure confidentiality and informed consent (Appendices, G, H) of all participants.

Data Analysis: Grounded Theory

In data analysis, I used a modified version of Strauss and Corbin's procedures as they suggest to be followed, not "dogmatically, but rather to be used creatively and flexibly by researchers as they deem appropriate" (p.13). They further suggest the following procedures to provide standardization and rigor to the coding process:

1.) Build rather than test theory

2.) Provide researchers with analytic tools for handling masses of raw data

3.) Help analysts to consider alternative meanings of phenomena

4.) Be systematic and creative simultaneously

5.) Identify, develop and relate the concepts that are the building blocks of theory

(p. 14)

Given the details of Strauss and Corbin's suggestions, I analyzed data in these ways. First, I became immersed in the data by repetitive reading and listening to participants' dialogue about racial stereotypes throughout media literacy instruction. Strauss & Corbin (2005) describe this as discriminate sampling of data through which

> A researcher chooses the sites, persons, and documents that will maximize opportunities for comparative analysis. This might mean returning to old sites, documents and persons or going to new ones to gather the data necessary to saturate categories and complete a study. (p.212)

I attempted to organize data into "chunks" with a similar theme. This process is often referred as "open coding," whereby the researcher organizes and provides insight to the way people understand and make sense of the world around them. Understanding and organizing these codes leads to theory. "We want to see new possibilities in phenomena and classify them in ways that other might not have thought before" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.105). For example, many times students used the word "racial" instead of "racist" when describing media that depicted discriminatory or racist images. Although the word "racial" is a commonly used word, I had never heard it used in the manner that these students were using it. I chunked all data that used "racial" onto one category and added my own notes about use of this term and my analytic statements to this category.

In this step, I was simply trying to make sense of what I had seen and what I was thinking by organizing the two under a connecting feature. Strauss and Corbin (2005) explain that a category is saturated, or complete, when no new or relevant data seem to emerge, when the category is well developed and when there are clear relationships among the categories. Once new theory is developed, parts of it may be tested further by others either quantitatively or qualitatively. It is at this point that I tested these categories by considering alternative meanings of the data. Once I had teased out themes that I believed to be meaningful and true to the data, I organized themes into a theoretical scheme, or conceptual ordering. As Strauss and Corbin (1998) explain, conceptual ordering is a precursor to theorizing in which themes, or categories of thought, are placed in an order of some sort. The order may be temporal, visual or otherwise, but the purpose of this step is to create a cognitive pathway to developing theory. I attempted to depict the categories of responses, field notes, dialogue and interpretations and by repetitive analysis, by conducting member checks where participants checked my categories and responded with feedback on their accuracy. I ordered the categories into well-developed themes; however, it was not at this juncture that the themes were connected to form any integrated theoretical scheme.

Multiple Raters and Individual Code Cards

Three raters were used in this study. Each rater used a card filing box that contained the following:

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1. A title card. This card contained pertinent information about the study including the focus - racial stereotypes, the purpose – to determine if media literacy instruction influenced students' perceptions of media literacy, and a coding space. This space was used for individual coders to write in codes as they reviewed data. After all raters completed coding, the codes were either compiled or thrown out after deliberation.

2. Data cards. These cards contained selected data chunks from field notes of classroom instruction and students' spoken written responses that held references to race, ethnicity, racism or stereotypes. Upon these data cards, raters used a numeric system to code data according to their code lists.

Raters are described as follows:

Rater #1 The first rater was a high school English and journalism teacher for nine years who holds bachelors degrees in English Education and Traditional English. In addition, she holds a masters' degree in School Administration and has been teaching teacher education courses and conducting educational research for three years.

Rater # 2 The second rater was a counselor/educator in a state women's correctional facility. She is currently a doctoral candidate in the School of Educational Studies and has been conducting educational research for four years.

Rater # 3 The third rater is a business professional who holds a bachelors degree in marketing. He worked as a candidate screener/recruiter and consultant for the Big Brothers and Sisters organization and has extensive experience in creating and analyzing marketing media.

Each rater received explanation and purposes for the study prior to rating using the code cards. In addition, after all individual coding was complete, each rater examined the list of existing codes and participated in narrowing, clarifying and compiling the final coding categories/themes. Finally, raters coded data again using the final coding catgories/themes. If there were discrepancies between raters on individual data chunks, those data were eliminated from final theme development.

Development of Codes and Categories

The codes that raters used emerged from the data in that individual raters did not initially code the data with pre-determined codes. Instead, individual raters coded data and then all three raters deliberated to develop categories to encompass the codes. Since the purpose of this study was to determine whether media literacy instruction initiated change in participants' perceptions of racial stereotypes after media literacy instruction, it was necessary to assign an identifying number to each participant's responses. By doing this, raters could determine change among the group as a whole and change among individuals. The process of developing codes was as follows:

- First, raters coded only pre-instruction data to develop initial codes

- Secondly, raters coded both pre-instruction and post-instruction data together to allow for the full development of categories.

- Third, I divided the data into pre and post instruction groups to determine whether there was any significant difference between words students used to talk about racial stereotypes and their tendency to express recognition of racial stereotypes.

- Finally, data were analyzed to determine whether there was any significant change between individual participants' pre and post words regarding racial stereotypes in media and participants' tendencies to express recognition of racial stereotypes.

The following are individual students' written responses on the pre-instruction tool (Appendix C) after viewing a clip from *The Jeffersons* in which a Black couple speaks of using race as a tool to get out of trouble with the police. A white neighbor is depicted as unaware and socially inept. The following are responses to this clip that exemplify each of the four categories of responses.

"I see" - Leslie: *[The clip] is very racist and stereotypical. It makes the Black people out as playing the race card, and the white man is pale and nerdy*

"I don't know" – Jason: *I don't know – who cares?*

"Other people" – Jake*: Other people might think the black man was treated unfairly*

Jessie's response is from a clip called Border Wars, a special on illegal immigration from Mexico.

"Us vs. them" – Jessie: *It tells me that those Mexicans want to get out of there cus its bad. But they want to take away our jobs and money!*

After coding the pre-instruction data, raters deliberated and developed pre-instruction categories, as illustrated in the following diagram. This diagram was modeled after Helms (1995) linear stages of progression in white identity development.
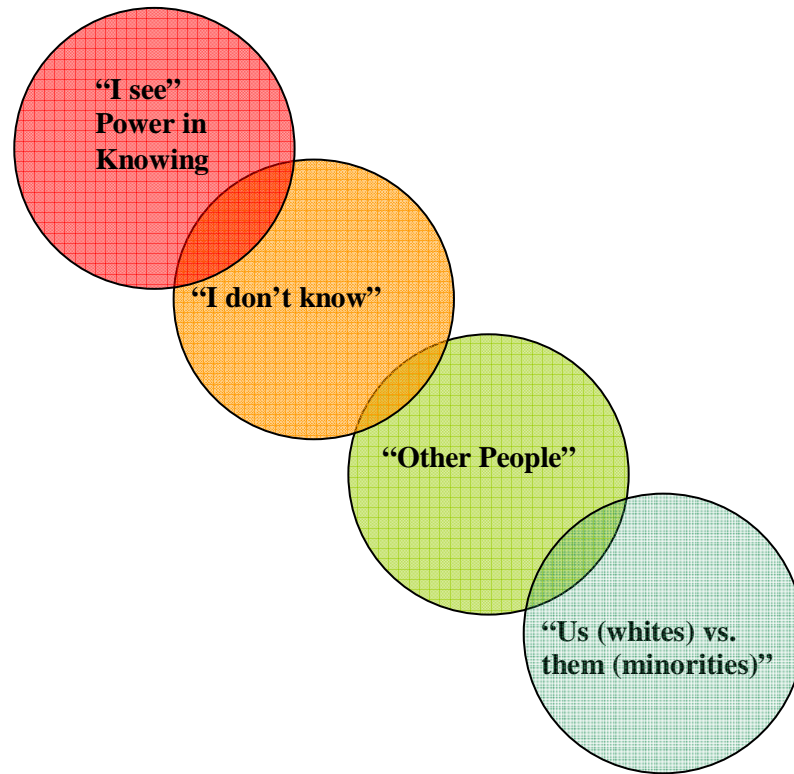
Figure 3-A: Initial coding: Pre-media literacy instruction

However, after coding post- instruction data, raters began to notice subtle differences in the response categories that did not fit into the four-stage model. In Chapter IV I will trace three of the previous four students' responses to illustrate how a new model emerged. This new seven category model is illustrated in the following diagram:

Figure 3-B: Development of Coding: Post media literacy instruction

Definition of codes

A quick description of each category or theme will help in navigating Chapter IV.

- • "I see": Racial awareness in analyzing media: This category includes

  comments that use a form of the verb "see" to describe what they believe

  is a newfound ability to recognize racial representation in media. Also, it

  includes comments that include a deeper analysis of media that applies

  representation in media to social issues in U.S. society such as poverty or

crime. Lastly, this category includes comments that suggest the student feels powerful in being able to analyze and evaluate media representations of race.

- "Other people": In this category, students used a form of the phrase "other people" to describe who may be offended by racist images in media.

- "I don't know": Many responses used either "I don't know" or simple narrations of scenes in media viewed. These responses may have been genuine at times; however, deeper analysis suggested that students may use these strategies to avoid sharing painful, controversial or what they thought may be unaccepted views with the class.

- Defensive: In this category, students used claims of reverse racism, a tendency to blame the "angry" person of color and competing victimization such as, "they are taking all of our jobs."

- "Us vs. Them": In this category, students used either a black vs. white dichotomy to describe all racism, or they placed whites in the right and all others in conflict with whites.

- Anger: This category included comments and situations that occurred throughout the unit that were volatile, emotional and often included angry confrontations between the student and me or the student and other class members.

Although formation of these categories is interesting, in order to understand the connection between these themes and how they inform a study about the effects of media

literacy instruction, it is necessary to examine the relationship between themes and the development of each. In Chapter IV, I will analyze the categories and the relationship between and among them. In addition, I will report specific data from the study to support the findings.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

It is important to recognize that critical action research includes a specific activist

lens which shapes a study on racial stereotypes and media. Therefore, while I used

grounded theory as a methodology for analysis, researcher positionality discussed in

Chapter I played a distinct role in the way data were analyzed. As explained in Chapter

III, data collected were coded and categorized into categories or themes. In grounded

theory, these themes were then used to form theory; however, this is just the beginning of

this process. In Chapter IV, I will develop the categories by describing relationships

between and among them. In addition, I will report specific classroom dialogue and

incidents from the study to further support the findings.

The Role of Classroom Dynamics

When I first began this study, the group of students I worked with was enrolled in

a 2nd hour sociology course. When I first asked the teacher if I could conduct the study in

one of her classes, she chose this class because she said they were, "mostly good kids"

who were, "involved in sports, cheerleading and band," and who, "made good grades." I

assured her that I wanted to work with them, but that it didn't matter if they were the

"good kids" or not. When I contacted her a few weeks before the study was to begin to

finalize the details as she had requested, she said that she still wanted me to work with the 2nd hour group. Because I was focusing on race, it was important to me to ask the students to identify themselves ethnically. I did so by asking them to discreetly write this on the back of all papers I collected. In this class, only two students identified themselves as minorities; both were part Hispanic. Although the results from the group of students from the previous year had, in fact suggested that the media literacy unit had greatly improved the students' abilities to identify and analyze racial stereotypes, because they were such "good students" who made such "good grades," I couldn't help but wonder how much of this change was attributed to their need to be "good" and give me the answers that they thought I wanted.

The second year of this study, I worked with a different teacher, a person of color, and who had shared stories with me about some of the racism she had experienced and witnessed while teaching at Hill High School. When I told her the purpose of the study, she told me she wanted me to work with her 5th hour anthropology class, which she described as "very verbal." She told me that the class was a bit "difficult," and that she had a few students who had troubled home lives as a result of poverty, alcoholism and mental illness. Thirteen of the students in this class self-identified as white; the other two were Native American and African American/white biracial. The biracial girl chose to speak about her identity, for as she said, "I don't look Black, so people usually think I am white. My mom is white and my dad is African American." I watched the other students as she spoke and noticed a group of three white girls near the back of the room who turned to whisper to each other. Maybe it was because of the racial makeup of this particular class, or maybe it was because this was not a classroom that consisted of all of

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the "good" kids, but there was something significant in this group that created a sometimes volatile, sometimes compassionate, but seemingly always brutally raw and honest dialogue about media, race and racism.

Evidence of Effect

After data collection of pre and post questionnaire responses, field notes, transcriptions of class conversations, artifacts of student daily work and post-instruction interview questions, I began to ask questions of the data and of existing theory in curriculum, media studies, cultural studies and racial formation theory. Through the process of selective coding, or formulating codes with a preconceived focus, I asked questions such as, "What do these data say about race, ethnicity or "the other" after participating in media literacy instruction? Are there recognizable differences in the way the entire group or individuals talk about race after instruction? What connection may be made between the data and existing theory? Do I have further evidence in the data to support categories? What existing theory conflicts with this category? How does this category validate, conflict with or add to existing theory? Referring to the description of each category in Chapter III, p. 68 will help in navigating the rest of the analyses, for it was often difficult to identify a single comment into one category, but rather, comments often fit into multiple categories, thus reflecting the complexity and cyclical nature of student's written comments, classroom discussions and incidents. The following lists student responses before instruction and is followed by figures representing coded responses both before and after instruction.

Pre-instruction responses to Appendix C
2005 group
(note- responses listed are ones taken from questionnaire that had ANY semblance to issues of racial representation – letters and numbers are for tracking students while maintaining confidentiality)

He Sold drugs and did crack, he probably justifies it in his mind   F-9

A court trial about a murder suspect   F-7

About a guy having drugs he shouldn't   F-13

A court case, the lawyers are trying to defend a murderer   M-10

A clip about a drug bust. It is a news story.   M-6

I think that this is good television, that it's the wrong thing to be shown
                    M-8

I think that it is a good thing that they arrested this guy…other people probably think the same thing   M-12

Don't sell drugs or you will get caught   M-10

North Tulsa is rough   M-5

A courtroom deciding whether person is innocent or guilty   F-1

Drug bust news   F-2

African American gets caught and arrested for possession of drugs.
                    SID-HF-9

A court scene with a cop being examined   M-10

Story about a drug bust. Police bust dude's house   M-6
A court scene about a murderer   F-7

A news clip about a drug bust   F-13

There just shows another Black drug dealer on TV   M-12

A trial in a courtroom?   F-2

A man got busted for drugs   F-2

I hear about someone getting caught. Its getting another bad person off the streets.
                              M-5

Court scene. Cop being questioned by the defense   M-6

News clip about a drug bust   M-6

Pre-instruction responses to Appendix C
2006 group
(note- responses listed are ones taken from questionnaire that had ANY reference to race or racial issues – letters and numbers are for tracking students while maintaining confidentiality)

I see Mexicans that ther are illegal immigrants that try to pass border
F-1

Dirty Mexicans! Same dirty Mexicans!!   F-1

That Mexicans want to get away from where they live because its bad there/ lots of Mexicans   F-1

Yes, that there is still racial people out there   F-1

They may be offended by the white joke   F-2

I feel like it's the right thing to do. Some might think its wrong because they employ Mexicans for less amount of money or for the same amount but they do better work.
F-2

That African Americans play the race card a lot. It is true but in most cases the situation is called for it   F-2

I see a problem with Border patrol   M-1
I think it's a big problem

I see border hoppers   F-3
Its true but might offend others

People talking about Blacks lying in court   F-3
Its racist. Says Black people lie in court

It tells me that Blacks cant be president because they lie in court
                              F-3

Telling me that Hispanics are swimming over   F-3

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The white guy is kinda quiet   F-3

Some might be offended by the Jeffersons one   F-4

The Border show might hurt someone – all they want is to be American
                          F-4

Illegal aliens, border war – [I] saw people trying to get into America, I like America
                    M-2

The Jeffersons – has racist, kinda. They believe people are prejudice. Its telling me that
some people are racist
                                                              M-2

People in Mexico want in America   M-2

People talking, two black people, I dislike nothing   M-3

It tells me that they are judged by color. Its not fair.   M-3

I see and hear racism, I dislike nothing.   I don't care but other people may be offended
                    F-5
It was put together to make fun of how blacks are treated – its making fun of black
people. Some may find it amusing but others might find it offensive.
         F-6

Its letting people know the truth about whats going on on the border – people will do
anything for a little freedom   F-6

It shows people believe no one should illegally cross the border
                                                                    F-7

It tells you he thinks he is being cheated because he is black. I think its funny – other
people will like it   F-7

People believe that they can use racism to their advantage   F-8

It tells me that racism still occurs today   F-8

[Border wars] is a news documentary – these people must have done something bad.
Some people don't live according to the laws that they should
            F-8

African American couple visited by white man. Very racial & stereotyping   I think its stereotypical and kind of hard on whites – others might agree
        F-9

Blacks do think of how they can claim prejudice   F-9

It tells me that African Americans think white people are racist
                        F-10
[Border patrol] I feel shame toward others. I dislike the way the footage is compiled.
                M-4

[border patrol] I feel indifferent. Others might feel offended
                                                M-4

[The Jeffersons] I think it is fine. I think other people may dislike it
                F-10

It only shows America's side of border patrol which isn't fair even though I agree with the majority of America   F-11

I believe that Mexicans shouldn't be here. They left out the Mexicans side of the story
                F-11
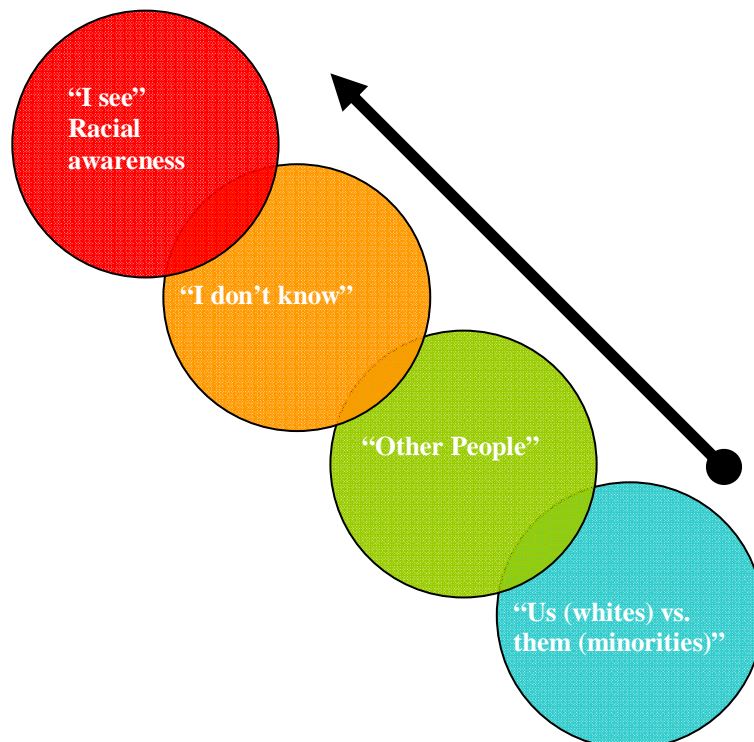
Figure 4-A: Linear Stages of Identity Development Pre-Media Literacy Instruction

Figure 4-A represents the way I interpreted data before media literacy instruction. Based on Helms' (1990) linear stages of identity development, I perceived that the students' awareness of racial stereotypes in media mirrored that of Helms' linear stages.
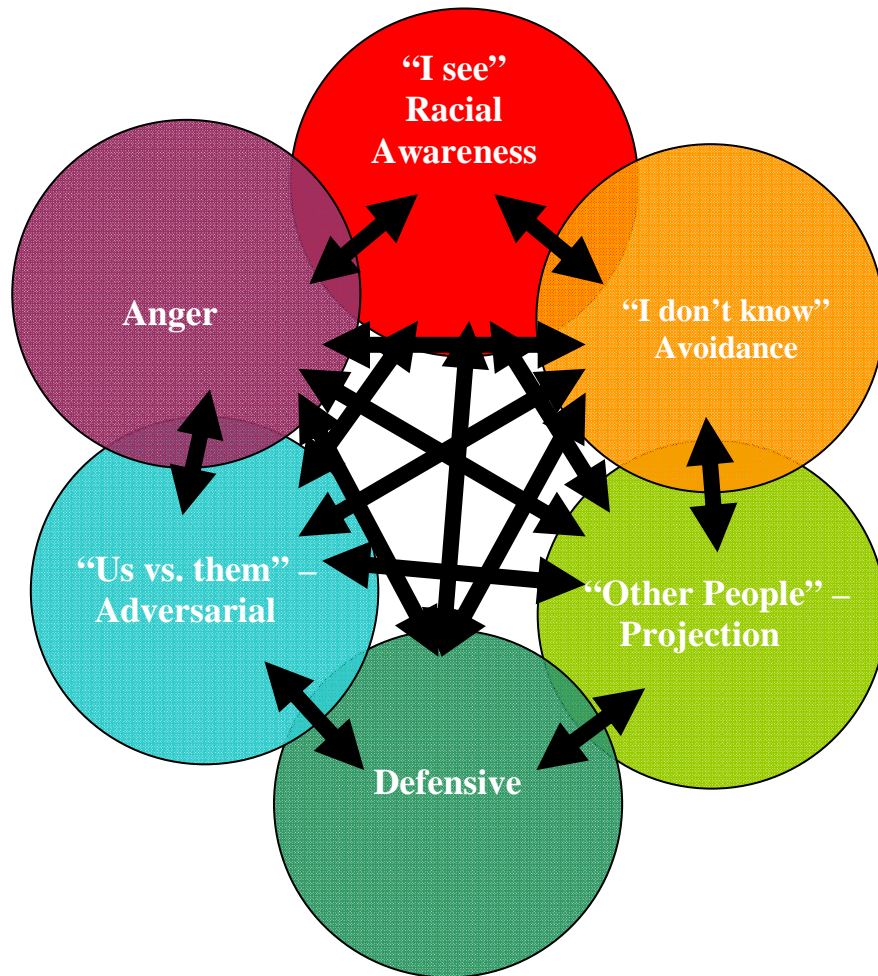

Figure 4-B: Recursive stages of identity development post-media literacy instruction

In the post-media literacy graphic, I chose a Venn diagram to represent my findings because it most suited the dynamic of students' responses to racial stereotypes in

media both before and after media literacy instruction. Each theme is represented in a

circle that overlaps and is connected to the next with a two-way arrow, thus representing

movement from one theme to another and back again. Also, the multi-directional arrows

in the center represent movement across the center space, for it is in this movement that

theory about the recursive nature of post-instruction dialogue emerged.

Evidence of change in individual students

Jessie, a "resister"

When I began teaching this unit, I asked students to write on the back of each

measurement tool (Appendix C and E) the ethnicity they most identify with in terms of

self-identity. "Jessie" (a pseudonym has been used for all individual students

mentioned), a student who identified herself as "white European, Finnish/Romanian" on

the back of her questionnaires sat with a group of female students near the back of the

room and from the beginning, I named this group "the Resisters" in my field notes. This

was my way of identifying them in terms of their reactions to media literacy curriculum

regarding racial stereotypes. The name *Resisters* describes both behavior and attitudes,

overt and covert. Specific behaviors I identified as overt resistance were visible anger

and verbal defiance, verbal attacks on classmates and me as a reaction to something said

in discussions, defensiveness in discussions of race and racism whereby the student

thought that people were "blaming" them for racist practices or whereby they saw race

and racism as a power struggle between whites and Blacks. Specific covert reactions I

identified were eye-rolling, laughing at others' comments and arm-crossing in

combination with silence and refusal to participate with class activities. Although other *resisters* exhibited equally resistant behavior, for the purpose of this discussion, Jessie represents this group.

The first day of instruction during the second year of the study, I began class by telling the students who I was and that we were going to learn about media together. The students seemed to be attentive, all eyes were on me, but body languages varied. There were two girls in the back on the left of the room, who smiled at me sat upright in their desks. Three boys sat in front of them, and although they seemed attentive, they gave no visible sign of acceptance such as the smile that the girls behind them offered to me. Front and center were two girls who also smiled and sat upright. To the right of them, one boy and two girls whispered to each other occasionally, glancing at me sideways. In the middle of the room, all the way to the back sat a group of five girls dressed in dark clothing from head to toe. Dark makeup covered their eyelids and lined their eyes which were barely visible under dark long hair. One girl added to this coverage with a black hooded sweatshirt, hood pulled low over her eyes. Jessie sat at the front of this group of girls, and her body language spoke volumes. She sat scrunched down in her seat with her arms crossed. Her left Sketcher-clad foot was resting in the seat of the desk in front of her. On her face, she wore a sort of half-grin, half frown.

After introducing myself, I described the process for the pre-instruction clips, and handed out the student questionnaire (Appendix C). *The Resisters* immediately began talking during the clips, at which the classroom teacher reprimanded them. They turned back toward the television and assumed their arm-crossing, this time wearing scowls. The following are Jessie's reactions to these pre-instruction clips.

First, we watched a commercial for dandruff shampoo that depicts a white, thin woman with long shiny dark hair, seemingly naked in the jungle (she is framed from about the waist up, only from the back and looking over her shoulder) and tossing her long locks of hair to the beat of low, seductive drumbeats. A male voice-over talks about the sensuous experience of using this particular shampoo, and how it can make your hair look as beautiful as the model's. She responded by saying that "they try to sell you using big words. I don't like it, but I don't know how other people would feel about it, cuz I'm not them!!!"

The next clip was the lead-in for *Fox* television's special titled, *Border Wars*, in which the described reality show follows border patrol officers on the Mexican border between Texas and Mexico. This was a highly charged racial clip that depicts groups of male "border-hoppers" running through dusty expanses being chased around the sagebrush by rifle-packing white border officers in a four-wheel drive pickup. The male voice over is booming and deep and warns of the danger of these "criminals" breaching our borders and threatening our safety. Jessie responded by writing that she saw

> *The border war – I see Mexicans and that ther are illegal imigrats that*
>
> *try to pass border- dirty Mexicans! Same dirty Mexicans!! (What does*
>
> *this tell me about how other people liv eand believe?) that mexicans want*
>
> *to get away from where thay live bc its bad there/lots of Mexicans*

However, in conversation during class, Jessie talked of being followed in a store by security when she was with on of her friends and how she thought it is wrong to judge people by their appearance. This was just the beginnings of the struggle apparent in

Jessie as she negotiated between feelings that appeared to be racist, and feelings of empathy toward victims of racial stereotypes.

The following two days we learned of one and two way communication and of the way media messages are constructed through techniques such as lighting, sound and camera angles. The class seemed to have fun, and Jessie in particular enjoyed the exercise in which we watched clips from Jurassic Park using three different audio backgrounds. (One was silent, one full sound, and one used comical music to show the effects of each on audience perception.) She laughed and joked with her friends, and commented about how, "it was really funny to watch the guys getting all scared and stuff, but the music was hilarious."

Day four began the introduction of the focus of the study, racial stereotypes. On this day, the instruction culminated in an activity in which students broke into groups and cut photographs out of the local newspaper, searching for two categories of pictures: whites and a minority group chosen by the class. They were to take the photos and paste them on a poster board divided in half, placing whites on one side and the minority on the other, thus providing a visual reference of minority representation in media. The class chose to look for Middle Eastern people, and quickly discovered that there were few if any photos of people who appeared to be Middle Eastern. At this point, I asked them if they wanted to include any other groups, and they agreed to look for any people of color. The results of this exercise were powerful, as each poster was filled with photos on the whites' side and was barely peppered with photos on the persons of color side.

At this point we began talking about who the people of color represented. The class noticed a trend in the ethnicity (Black) and representation (athletes) of the majority

of the photos. Other than photos of Iraqis from the warfront and a photo of Condaleeza Rice, there were no other representations of people of color other than Black athletes. I asked the students to think about television and representation, and I suggested that this trend may also apply there. One student brought up *Black Entertainment Television* and *Gray's Anatomy*, suggesting these were evidence to refute this idea. After many comments on both sides of the issue of representation, I pulled out the *TV Guide* for that week, and began reading the list of programs in the Prime Time, 7-10pm slot. As I read each title, a student kept a tally on the board of the primary ethnicity of lead characters for each program. When we finished, the tally read much like the poster board representations of the newspapers. There were nineteen primarily white programs, three primary people of color, and two mixed. The following is the audiotape transcription and analysis from that day:

> *At this point, Jessie, who had been adamant that, "Blacks have just as much TV as we do, and they have BET! WE couldn't have WET (white entertainment television)!" became very angry and yelled, "That's a lie! That's a lie! This is just stupid!" The classroom teacher admonished her for her outburst, and I tried to lighten up the situation by moving closer to her and smiling, commenting, "It is nothing to get angry about." At which she replied, "Just shut up!" I was shocked at her venom, and asked her in a low, firm voice to please be respectful or she would have to leave the classroom. She crossed her arms, set her jaw and stared straight ahead for the remainder of the class period. Her resister friends assumed similar body language and were likewise silent. Ironically, this is when*

one of the more reserved students, Leslie, began sharing some of her

experiences with both white and minority racism. Other students joined in

after Leslie shared. It seemed that maybe the display of raw emotion

made it safer to open up about personal experiences.

The following field note describes Jessie's response after this painful and emotional confrontation with me the day before of which I will share in detail in the defensive/resistance section:

The next day at the beginning of class, I approach and apologized to

Jessie for embarrassing her, making sure that others could hear me and

hoping to repair any damage I may have done to her dignity in the eyes of

her peers. She apologized back to me and said she had been disrespectful.

Then, as we started class, she raised her hand and said, "You know I

didn't see it before but you were right. I flipped through all of the

channels last night and I couldn't find anything but white (people). I

guess it was just hard to see when you aren't looking for it." I hoped that

the shock didn't show on my face. The remainder of the class period, she

maintained her 180 degree shift, giving examples of racist or no

representation of minorities in media.

In the following few days, Jessie began to illustrate a recursive pattern in identity development. As we spoke about stereotypes on days six and seven, she would argue against stereotypes, yet use them in the same sentence. For example, when we watched a Shakira music video, a Hispanic/African American singer who is known both for her dancing abilities and her hyper-sexualized image, the class

noticed that in media, Hispanic women are often depicted as either harlots or victims of crime. As we talked about this and the students shared examples from their media viewing, Jessie commented that she agreed with this and that it seemed unfair, but that, "Shakira really can dance, but that's because she's half-Black."

In Jessie's post-questionnaire and interview questions, she continued a pattern of recursion. For example, after a clip from *Fox* television's *Cops*, in which a white female officer detains a group of suspected drug users, yet only arrests the Black male in the group, Jessie said she, "didn't like how the cop acted in it," but that the detainee was a, "bad druggie guy." In the following sentence, she commented that she didn't think all people were bad. Likewise, when asked if the unit on racial stereotypes in media had any effect on the way she watches TV, she said, "I don't know. I don't watch TV really!!" But then she commented that she sees, "a lot of racial remarks and things." In just these few sentences, it seems apparent that Jessie's (and other resisters who showed similar response patterns) are not following a linear pattern of white identity development, but instead are circling around and back between stages. Jessie went from, *I don't know*, to *I see*, to *anger*, to *us vs. them* and back again, often even in the same day.

Although Jessie's transformation through these few days was inconsistent, it did suggest that media literacy played a role in inviting her to think more critically about stereotypes of race in media. Her changes are representative of the group of resisters, and her changes speak volumes in the potential for media

literacy to be used in meaningful multicultural awareness instruction that truly invites internal change.

Jason

Jason represents a group of students in which the effect of media literacy was not nearly as dramatic as Jessie's. Jason typifies a sixteen year-old rural white boy whose interests include cars and beer (he shared these affinities several times with the class). Throughout the unit and instruction, he never became emotional or passionate about the topics, and spent a lot of the time talking to the lean, tan and blonde girl who sat behind him. His pre-instruction responses were mainly narratives describing the scene, with no critique included. For example, a clip from *The Jeffersons* that depicted a Black couple suggesting that it is okay to use racism as a ploy if Blacks are caught breaking the law was described only as "funny" and that, "People will lie to get what they want." The few value-laden statements were racist. For example in response to the *Border Wars* clip, Jason claimed that the clip told him that Mexicans are "bums," and that, "you keep the Mexicans out!"

Throughout the week when others became involved in debates and heated discussions, Jason did not engage. He was never unpleasant, but he was also never fully engaged. In his post assessment responses he responded, "Who cares" to three questions, and with seven "no" responses. Although I labeled the avoidance category as *I don't know* because this was the most common response that emerged in this category, Jason's "no" and "who cares" are also obvious forms of *avoidance* and *resistance*.

Finally, in Jason's exit interview questions, (Appendix F) he states that the "whole black thing" sticks out in his mind, and that the specific stereotypes he recognized were, "Black being thugs with being racist." While this seems to indicate movement toward the *I see* category, he circles back around to Avoidance and *Us vs. them* in his final responses, stating "no," that he didn't want to share anything else with me about the way her felt after the unit, and that he didn't like, "the race thing. It like black get everything they want and whites have to feel sorry about it."

Leslie

Leslie identified herself early in the week (the day of Jessie's outburst) as mixed race. She wrote four identifying ethnicities on the back of her questionnaires, African American, white, German and Native American. Leslie represents the group of students who started the unit at a point of high racial awareness, or somewhat firmly in the *I see* category. As she stated on her pre-instruction questionnaire in response to *The Jeffersons* clip, "African Americans use the race card a lot. It is true but in most cases the situation is called for it." In addition, after the *Border Wars* clip she responded, " I feel that [patrolling the borders] is the right thing to do, but some people might think it's wrong because they employ Mexicans for less amount of money for the same amount but they do better work." Her responses seem to indicate complexity in her thought. Interestingly, however, she uses the same projection technique, "other people" to mention that "they might be offended because of the white joke" regarding a joke on *The Jeffersons* that stereotyped whites.

When we had the discussion about institutional racism, Leslie was the first to share a story about her African American father receiving poor health care until her white mother stepped in to complain. Likewise, she shared a story of her brother being followed through a white neighborhood by a police officer. Although Leslie does represent students who are racially aware, this does not mean there was no movement in her position on the Venn diagram. Instead, there were times when she looped around to the *anger* category when talking about the racism she experiences from both Black and white people. However, I can say that there were subtle changes in the complexity of the way she talked about racial stereotypes after media literacy instruction. For example, after watching a clip from Cinderella, she commented that the clip proves that, "racism still exists and always will," because Cinderella is "of course a blonde white girl" and it tells her that, "whites have more opportunities of living in wealth." Although subtle, this seems to indicate both *anger* and a maturity in the way she talks about racial stereotypes in media. In the next section of this discussion, I will use examples of student comments from Appendix E and C, as well as sections from field notes of student-teacher dialogue to further develop the evidence of change present in the categories of responses that emerged from data.

<div align="center">Evidence of Change in Emergent Categories</div>

Racial awareness: "I see…"

In order to discuss the six themes in relation to one another, I will begin at the top circle, power in knowing. This circle represents responses and dialogue that indicated

racial awareness to the extent that they both recognized racist and stereotypical images in media and also interrogated those images in relation to their own experiences. There were a few students who entered this study racially aware; for example, Katie, a female student wrote this about a clip from the *Fox* television show *Border Wars*, "They believe that the Mexicans shouldn't be here, but they left out the Mexicans' side of the story." However, many responses from the pre-instruction questionnaire indicated that most were not racially aware. For example, some did not mention race and some made overtly racist statements. Others became quite angry and defensive when we discussed racial stereotypes that were aimed at people of color. These will be discussed in the section titled *Anger and Defensiveness*.

Identifying whiteness: there were other races besides white.

Through inductive analysis I found that media literacy may play a role in students' abilities and willingness to identify white as a distinct racial group, an unanticipated theme which emerged from my data. Encouraging media literacy students to include European Americans in discussions of the representation of race in media was not part of the study; however, it was a significant change that occurred. For example, one student wrote, *there were different races, besides white [in the television shows we watched in class.]* Another shared, *I can't look at a TV show or commercial now without wondering why the race is only white. It (media literacy instruction) has forever changed the way I look at media.* It is intriguing that this particular student identifies "white" as a racial group after media literacy instruction, but even more intriguing is how she takes an

additional step in critical thinking by questioning the absence of representation for other ethnic groups.

Racial awareness: "It has opened my eyes to see things I never thought of before"

Many students shared examples of race and racism that they had begun to notice in media they used at home or out of school. Lorrie's pre-instruction questionnaire suggested that she noticed that "certain shows are making fun of Black people," and that "some might find it amusing but others may find it offensive." The following is one of Lorrie's post-instruction interview question responses (Appendix F)

> *Some of the stereotypes are true but most aren't. I notice more ethnic*
> *and gender related things. Some has bothered me, like how they portray*
> *black people and Hispanics. I have a lot to think about more but it has*
> *opened my eyes to see things I never thought of before.*

The effect of instruction is apparent in how after instruction she says that she is offended instead of projecting those feelings onto others. In addition, she uses the metaphor of "opened my eyes" to suggest that media literacy has given her a new perspective, or vision that enables her to see and feel racial stereotypes in a new way.

Joe, a male student whose pre-responses, daily conversations and daily writing up to this point had remained consistently in the *I don't know* category or simple narration of scenes which suggests total disengagement from the effects of media literacy, gave this subtle, yet telling response indicating evidence of change.

> *I noticed more race and stereotypes; I see more racial and more*
> *stereotyped images.*

This was Joe's first mention of noticing anything regarding race or racial images in media. Up to this point, he had responded with I don't know, or basic descriptions with no critical analysis. However, the rest of his responses on the post-instruction questionnaire reverted back to the *I don't know* category, indicating that students will move from category to category even within a single measurement tool.

Several students described this change as a sight metaphor, or a new way of "seeing" media that made them feel more confident and in control of their media choices. Kathy, a white female responded to the first question on the interview questions that asked only about shows that they recalled viewing in the last two weeks by sharing, "*Laguna Beach* has all white rich people." That I didn't ask anything about race or socioeconomics, this response suggests that stereotypes were on her mind when she was watching television. In addition, she responded to the fourth question about the effects of the unit by stating, "I pay more attention to racism – if I feel something is racist I try not to watch it." This suggests both effect and agency, as she uses her new insight to reject shows that depict racist images.

Jessie, a female student who responded to pre-instruction clips using racist slurs such as, "yuck Mexicans!" exhibited drastic change in her post-instruction interview questions. "[This unit] has had weird effects [on me] cus I see a lot of racial remarks and things on t.v." She literally refers to noticing stereotypes as *seeing*, however, like Joe, she changed this position in the next question that asked what effect the unit has had on the way she watches T.V., at which she responded, "I don't know."

Others' responses indicated both awareness and a deeper analysis of the social issues attached to racial stereotypes in media. For example, after watching a clip from

Cinderella depicting the stepsisters trying to fit into Cinderella's glass slipper, Sarah, a white female student responded, *white people are always wanting to be better than everyone else…and white people have more opportunities of living and wealth.* Other examples included,

> *In the last two weeks, I notice when there's all whites in a scene or when other degrading to other ethnicities. Black males are athletes or gangsters, poor people aren't worthy. (it suggests that) nothing can become of them. I notice quickly now how there's that 'set of mind' hat whites are superior to other races in all types of media.*

> *White female on cops checking out what's going on with…& I saw people being put in hand cuffs. I dislike how they (police) saw him (black male) and automatically thought he was doing something. I think they arrested him because he was black. People automatically think black people are the criminals…racism still exists and always will.*

> *I can see how racism, gender, socioeconomics plays a role on how the media chooses its stories, or how producers pick their plot.*

However, these responses are not to suggest that these students have been "converted" into full racial awareness, or a complete change in mindset. As indicated in the post-instruction diagram, movement is not one directional. A few students seemed to jump from one stage to another within a single comment. This female student responded

to the scene from *Cops* of a white female officer who arrests only the young black male in a group of mixed race suspected drug users. Notice she does not seem to be aware of this detail, yet she states that she does feel affected by the racism on television as a result of the media literacy unit.

> *It is an arrest on cops. It doesn't bother me. I think its good. I saw more racism than I usually do cuz that's all I think about when I watch tv now. Everything – news, movies, tv shows – Everything! It kind of bothered me because now I can't watch tv without thinking about the racism in it. It has made me think a lot.*

It is unclear whether this movement suggests an inner struggle with the newfound "sight" of racist images in media, or whether it suggests confusion or some other unknown emotion or cognition.

After viewing the same *Cops* episode, one white male student expressed critical thinking combined with an inner reflection and application to his own life that seems ultimately promising when considering media literacy as an agent for multicultural awareness and anti-racist agency:

> *Its racial profiling – she's being violent. She thought just because he's black that he could be a threat. It tells me that some people are racist and don't even know it. This unit has made me think. I prejudice other people just because of their race sometimes and I really shouldn't do that.*

Racial Awareness: Moral Outrage

Some students' responses to media literacy instruction suggest that individuals had a drastic change in the way they responded to racist images and racial stereotypes.

During a discussion in class about the news coverage of Hurricane Katrina victims (Katrina struck the Gulf Coast the first week of instruction with the 2005 group) one female student commented that the news coverage was "chosen" to make it seem, *that white people don't like black people and that they should suffer*. Another male noticed that the news showed *scenes of mainly Black people suffering*. And still another male student commented, *[I noticed] the news on the hurricane [and] all the Black people involved…mostly all the people in the hurricane that are acting crazy are black.* These comments led to another student bringing up the controversy over newspaper captions using the word "finding" to describe white people taking needed items from ravaged stores while Black people were labeled as "looters" provided a rich conversation about equality in representation and compassion in our society (see coverage at www.aamovement.net/news/2005/katrinacoverage). A few students said they felt badly for the Black victims because the news "always makes them look bad." Yet another student made the connection between these representations and those of Oklahomans after a tornado, saying that the news crews intentionally choose to interview those with the "biggest accents" or those who are "Bubba's," referring to the stereotype of uneducated, poor rural "folk."

Individuals who did not comment about race in pre-instruction television clips responded in ways that suggested moral outrage after viewing post instruction television clips. For example, after viewing the before-mentioned clips from Fox Television's *Cops* which contrasted the Black man's arrest to the white man's arrest, one female student responded, *It's racial, there are a lot of people out there that are very racial. I think it needs to change.* By constructing her own term, *racial*, it seems she is identifying racism

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and calling for change. Another female wrote, *It wasn't right. Both of the guys should have been treated the same…They are harder on black people and they shouldn't be*. These comments are important in two ways. The first student makes a clear demand for social change in "racial" people, while the second recognizes the moral injustice of being *harder on black people*. Perhaps most important is that this leap in the cultural awareness spectrum from only ten days of media literacy instruction represents a finding that is not supported in multicultural awareness literature. Instead, Helms (1990, 1995) and McIntosh (2000) describe white cultural awareness as a process that is both linear and gradual.

One of the students who showed empathy for Katrina victims of color is self-identified as Mexican American, and she did identify racial representations pre-instruction. Therefore, one could conclude that she may have begun instruction with a heightened sense of racial equity in representation. In fact, both her pre and post-instruction responses contain references to people of color such as "African Americans, Mexicans and Chinese." She responded to a pre-instruction news clip featuring a drug possession arrest of an African American male that, *this tells me not everybody is your average American; a lot is left out. Why did he sell [drugs], what started this, does he have a family?* Therefore, one could conclude that she began instruction with critical media analysis skills already in place. In addition, there remains the possibility that students did not comment about racial representation pre-instruction, although they were aware of it.

In addition, I cannot say for certain that being "offended" by stereotypes in media means that students are truly interrogating stereotypes, but instead may be critiquing the

media system. For example, a male student responded to questions about the *Cops* episode,

> *The cops [are] arresting trailer trash white dudes and Black crack heads.*
> *I don't like it 'cause it stereotypes poor white trash and Black people in*
> *general…its stupid 'cause this show creates alot of stereotypes against*
> *people. All they show are Black drugs and white trash.*

While on the surface he seems to be critiquing racial and socioeconomic stereotypes, he uses these very stereotypes himself; *trailer trash white dudes*, and *Black people* in general. Notice he did not lump all whites into one category, but he did so with *Black people*. He then says that the *show creates stereotypes*, which suggests that he is criticizing media, not the stereotypes. More evidence of this may be seen by revisiting a comment from a female student that I discussed previously, *I think this is very offensive because of course they showed black man escaping from police & most people who get arrested are poor black & white people.* She recognizes the systematic misrepresentation of underprivileged groups in media by using the phrase *of course they showed*; *they* being media. Still another shared, *I can see how racism, gender, socioeconomics plays a role in how the media chooses its stories, or how the producers pick their plot*. Therefore, it is logical to assume that these students are analyzing media critically while not necessarily shifting that gaze to the stereotypes themselves. Even if the students are not necessarily analyzing racial stereotypes critically, what is reasonably clear is that these students are indicating a change in comments regarding racial stereotypes.

Transference: "Other People"

Overwhelmingly apparent in these students was the change between pre-instruction and post-instruction responses regarding race. Before media literacy instructions, the students' responses rarely identified race in television and movie clips. Student responses regarding clips that depicted criminal activity focused on the crime and punishment aspect of the message, a type of "crime doesn't pay" lesson.

What was most striking in student responses after media literacy instruction was the prevalence of racial talk. These white middle-class students were not ignorant of racism. As one student explained, *We know about being PC (politically correct).* This means that while on the surface, they may be taught to speak respectfully of other ethnicities, simply telling children to be respectful does not help them develop verbal tools to talk critically about racism. As a result, I found the students indicated that they have difficulty talking about racial stereotypes. Perhaps white students do not want race to be about *them*, and are therefore uncomfortable talking about it. For example, instead of describing particularly racist television scenes as racist or as examples of racism, some students in this group used the word "racial" to describe negative stereotypes of people of color in the media. Perhaps students use the term "racial" because it is a term used within their peer group, or perhaps they use it because the words racist or racism are uncomfortable for them to use.

I confirmed the prevalence of race talk after media literacy instruction through three types of responses from student participants. First, in my analysis of student responses, I noticed that post-instruction students identified *white* as a racial group.

Secondly, there was evidence of a word-choice negotiation in criticizing racial stereotypes in the media. This was exemplified by the post-instruction prevalence in race talk, often seen as transference to "someone else" or "other people" who might view a media image as stereotypical or racist. Finally, a few post instruction student responses indicated moral outrage, a drastic change in racial awareness. This is a key point as it is not supported by multicultural education literature which suggests the process of becoming culturally aware is linear and progresses in stages (Helms, 1990, 1995).

Transference: Students' references to "someone else"

The students in this school are identified by the school district's demographics as predominantly white and middle class; therefore, the intense personal, political and economic insults of racism may be foreign to their experiences, and thus feelings of indignation toward racism may be assigned to "someone else." This may also be a form of binary logic, in which students categorize racism as something that affects either self or other. Another possibility is that because the students are white, they choose not to share an emotional commonality with people of color. Growing up white and middle class, I also chose not to share the emotional indignation of the injustices of racism until it affected me personally. There are many other possibilities of finding meaning in students' comments about "someone else," and it seems that this particular notion is one worth exploring. This notion of "someone else" being offended by racism while the white student does not claim to be (by omission) is indicated by students' comments about television scenes that they perceive as racist. The following discussion includes evidence of this.

The post instruction responses from students followed the viewing of three television clips which contained what I would consider police brutality against an African American man who was suspected for passing a bad check at a bank. The four White male arresting officers tackled the man in the parking lot, ripping his shirt and causing his forehead to bleed. Gravel was imbedded in his cheek as they wrenched him to his feet by his cuffed hands, pinned behind his back. This episode of the Fox network's *Cops* juxtaposed the arrest of this man against a white man who was pulled over for drug possession, but whose treatment by the arresting officers was much different. The two white officers arresting the white man joked with him about the drug paraphernalia he had in his car; they did not force him into handcuffs; and they gently helped him into the squad car.

While pre-instruction clip responses to a news story about an African American man who was arrested for drug possession in his home resulted in comments such as, a *news clip about a drug bust* and *a man got busted for drugs*, post instruction responses elicited racial identification and recognition of racist images; however, the feelings associated with the racist images were assigned to "other people" or "someone else." One white female shared, *I think this is very offensive to people because of course it was a black man escaping from police & most people who get arrested are poor black & white people.* What is interesting about this comment is that she does include poor white people in the stereotypes shown on television; however, she assigns feelings of offense to others instead of identifying with the negative white or Black stereotype. Another student shared, *someone else might think the black man was treated unfairly.* Again, this white male recognizes the unfair treatment of the Black man, but instead of claiming

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feelings of indignation, he transfers these feelings to "someone," which may be translated to "other people." Perhaps most intriguing is the post-instruction response of a White male student who commented, *I think it's good the cops arrested him. Black people might call the cops racist.* One can almost see the struggle manifested in the dichotomy of his dialogue. The first sentence seems to affirm hegemonic ideologies about criminals and justice; but the second sentence recognizes the possibility that racism may be in play. Instead of saying that he was offended, he assigns this to *Black people.* I recognize there is always the possibility that this student may be simply echoing television commentary he heard during racially divisive instances such as the OJ Simpson trial or the treatment of African American victims in New Orleans in Hurricane Katrina aftermath; however, using the phrase *Black people* indicates that he is making an effort to dis-identify with people who cry racism.

In the pre-instruction local news story, a Black man's mug shot was shown while anchors "reported" (constructed) the story. They described how police searched his house and found narcotics and arrested him, suspecting drug dealing. In pre-instruction, a white male student did not comment about the color of the suspect's skin; he simply commented - *There just shows another Black drug dealer on TV*. When this particular student entered media literacy instruction, he did not identify race in any media examples, but instead described print, movie and television characterizations in terms of characters' actions. In contrast, post instruction he recognized stereotypical depictions of race and applied racial stereotyping to a white family setting. *I think if it would have been a black family eating the chicken other people might say that it is a racist commercial.* However, instead of stating that he may be offended by the racist stereotype

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connecting African Americans and fried chicken, he expressed this by transferring feelings of offense toward racism to "other people." This fails to eliminate the possibility that he does not see it as racist but he recognizes that "other people" might cry racism when *they* saw it.

Does this mean that one must be an ethnic minority to understand and be offended by negative stereotypes of ethnic minorities on television? Perhaps it does not. As one white male high school student shared, *It (media literacy instruction) makes me look at things a different way - how it (stereotypical image) would come across to others and myself*. By including himself in the group that may be concerned about how stereotypes might *come across*, this student's comments may also be interpreted as taking ownership of anti-racist sentiment.

<div align="center">"I don't know," and Other Strategies of Avoidance</div>

Anyone who has been either a student or a teacher in a classroom knows that students develop a gamut of strategies to avoid voicing opinions and answers to questions in class discussions. In this group, two common strategies of avoidance were answering, "I don't know," or simply narrating the scene and avoiding any analysis. Whether the use of these strategies is avoidance of the social participation in classroom activities, or the avoidance of the possibility of embarrassment if they say something that their peers and teacher reject, or the avoidance of a internally confusing and conflicting subject is unclear; however, the prevalence of this form of avoidance was significant enough in this group that it warrants mention.

Although several students used either *I don't know*, or simple narration, one specific example stood out. One male student responded to the white female police officer on *Cops* arresting the only Black male in a group of drug users, *They are getting the bad guy off the streets. Who cares [how other people may feel about it] its wrong – they are dope heads.* He responded to the rest of the questions with "I don't know," which may be a form of avoidance. He writes that the scenes that stick out in his mind the most are, *the whole black thing*. However, he states that,

> *This [media literacy unit] really hasn't had much effect on the way I view*
>
> *other media. [The thing that bothers me is] the race thing. It's like blacks*
>
> *get everything they want and whites have to feel sorry about it.*

There are many things going on in this dialogue. At first, it seems that his opinions are clearly situated within the anger theme; however, within the same sentence he retreats and uses an *I don't know,* strategy to disengage from what may be a controversial comment in this group. Even using the phrase, *the whole black thing,* may be a way of removing merit from the possibility of media perpetuating racist stereotypes, and therefore could place the comment into either the *Us vs. them* or *defensive* category. The final comment about *blacks getting everything they want and whites have to feel sorry about it,* is clearly situated within the *Us vs. them* category. This dialogue clearly illustrates the cyclical model of racial identity development, for this student moves among three to four different themes of identity development within one stream of consciousness. This suggests a recursive movement in identification of self and other in regards to racial stereotypes in media.

Adversaries: "Us vs. them"

Political science research has termed the seemingly backward swing of white American citizens' resentment and distrust toward Black American citizens as "white backlash." The legacy of "us vs. them" thinking in terms of race dates from before the nation's founding, and includes the "whitening" of some ethnicities over others, depending on deep sociopolitical issues. Jacobson (1998) describes how in popular presses in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, various European ethnic groups were considered a different race than the original settlers, primarily from England. In time, we have gathered many ethnicities under the umbrella of whiteness, and denoted African Americans, peoples of Eastern and Southeast Asia as having an identity of "race." Although groups have been added and subtracted from the groups we identify as a race, Jacobson (1999) establishes that the difference between European immigrants and all others was that European immigrants could easily become American because of the color of their skin. More recently, Hartigan (1999) found that attitudes regarding, "that black and white shit" vary depending on the class and racial mid of the neighborhood (p.107). In poor Detroit neighborhoods where whites were the minority, whites shared poverty and police brutality with black counterparts and most refused to settle for sharp racial dichotomies. However, in an affluent primarily white neighborhood, white identity assumes a natural quality, and Hartigan (1999) found much more evidence of a dichotomous relationship between Blacks and whites.

White backlash boils down to an *Us vs. Them* mentality among whites, and this sentiment is evidenced in the following examples. Referring again to the student from

the previous section, I don't know, he referred to, *the whole black thing,* and *[The thing that bothers me is] the race thing. It's like blacks get everything they want and whites have to feel sorry about it.* It seems this student seems to have constructed a dichotomous relationship between Black and white people, and sees Black gain as white loss.

In pre-instruction comments on Appendix C, some expressed an *us vs. them* sentiment by using racism *to their advantage.* For example,

> *This is about an African American couple visited by a white man. It is very racial and stereotypical – I think it's stereotypical and kind of hard on whites – others might agree. This tells me that Blacks do think of how they can claim prejudice*

> *They are using racial comments for humor. Some may get offended but I thought it was funny – it tells me that people believe that they can use racism to their advantage, and that racism still occurs today.*

However, in post-instruction comments, the *us vs. them* mentality was much more subtle. One of the subtleties was the *other people* tactic discussed earlier, but a few other comments stood out as well. For example, the 2005 study was occurring at the same time as Hurricane Katrina, and scenes of the New Orleans tragedy peppered the news twenty-four hours a day. Although one cannot be sure whether this student was criticizing or interpreting news coverage, his comment, *All the black people in the hurricane…were acting crazy,* clearly uses the words *black people* to separate himself from them. More blatant comments signifying an *us vs. them* sentiment were, *Black people are not as*

sophisticated as white people, and *I think its good the cops arrested him. Black people might call the cops racist.* Again, both students clearly demarcate the lines between Black and white, and suggest that it is necessary to take sides.

Caught in this invisible but palpable struggle between black and white was a mixed race girl who expressed so eloquently on the final question of Appendix E, whish asked if anything about the unit bothered them,

> *(this unit) has opened my eyes to realize that they (media) stereotype everything. Some things have bothered me like the way some people don't realize how minorities are being treated. One day in class a girl said the N word . She asked if it offended me. I said yes I think its disrespectful. She replied by saying black people call me cracker so I'm going to call them whatever I want. The whole time I was thinking I get it from both sides because I am mixed. White people call me the n word and blacks call me cracker & some just say a mixed girl you're crap. But never have I once replied to them with a racial slur. It just angers me how stupid and petty some people are.*

When one sees a young girl who is hurt by media stereotypes and the influence they have on what her peers say and do, the potential for media literacy instruction on racial stereotypes to open up meaningful dialogue about race is clear.

Defensiveness and Anger

I chose to group these two categories together because the two reactions were often so tightly linked that it was impossible to isolate one from the other. Often defensiveness turned to anger or vice versa, as illustrated in the following vignettes.

The intense emotion and painful transition between defensiveness and racial awareness proved to be quite volatile, as evidenced in the following excerpt from my field notes on the day that Jessie, one of *the resisters*, became quite angry with me.

I told a short story about when I realized that I lived a life of privilege in my whiteness, and listed some of the things from Peggy McIntosh's unpacking the invisible knapsack of privilege. It was at this point that three of the resisters became visibly angry, arguing against the examples McIntosh lists. "Black people can live anywhere they want!" and "They have the same stuff we do – maybe even better because they get jobs and scholarships just because they are Black."

Leslie, who had identified herself as mulatto was silent up to this point in the discussion but now spoke about her father who is Black and how his symptoms of a heart attack had been ignored in a local hospital from an all white staff until her white mother came in to the room to insist that they perform a diagnostic test for heart attack. Normally quiet students began speaking up about examples of institutional racism. For example, another blonde girl told of being stopped by police while out on a date with a mulatto friend and they had their car searched – something that had never happened with her white friends. Another student said she and her Black friend were followed around by security in a

shopping mall. The teacher, who is Mexican-American, told of her brother who she described as a *very dark skinned Mexican* who is frequently followed in stores, despite his "professional appearance." An excerpt from my field notes describes the incident. Although not verbatim as the transcription earlier in the chapter, the effect is the same.

> *One of the resisters became angry (at what?) and began challenging me*
>
> *by talking back, "that's not true!" and "that's a lie!" I asked her why she*
>
> *was so angry and tried to lighten it up by adding that she needed to settle*
>
> *down and be respectful of others' opinions. She then told me I was rude*
>
> *and that I had embarrassed her; her face became flushed. She made no*
>
> *other comments to me for the remainder of the class; however, she and*
>
> *two more resisters whispered comments back and forth while occasionally*
>
> *glancing up at me. I tried not to take it personally, remembering*
>
> *Howard's (1999) words about the painful process in recognizing white*
>
> *privilege and dislodging racist beliefs.*

As suggested earlier, another form of defensiveness and anger found in this study but not present in current literature is transference of emotion to the teacher or the person who is presenting ideas about race and racism that cause internal tension for the receiver. When the class was discussing *BET*, or *Black Entertainment Television* and Jessie suggested that *BET* is racist because "we" can't have WET, White Entertainment Television, the classroom teacher retorted, *Every other channel is White Entertainment Television!* This led to the earlier vignette where we looked through the TV guide to test whether a majority of television used white, Black or mixed races. After this, I thought that the emotions had calmed from this tense discussion; however, some of the following

comments from the interview questions (Appendix F) suggest that the emotions were still on the surface, and some of the anger was now aimed at me.

I think that you don't like our ideas very much. You seem to take offense when we ask you something, but most of us are really just curious. Some people are rude in the class, but I think it would help if you were more open-minded

(The thing that bothered me was) the part about how only whites are racist – cause I've known a ton of other races that are racist against whites

No matter what the situation is whether there were just as many white people, Mexican, black and Asian people that did the same things, we could always find some kind of a stereotype. I was kinda bothered when you said white people don't have to worry about race, they do. Maybe not in the United states as much but we definitely do.

These comments at first glance indicate that I should have clarified the difference between *individual racism* and *institutional racism*. *Individual racism* is when a single person or group of people treats others negatively based only on race. *Institutional racism* is a much larger issue and involves inequalities in public policies and social institutions such as schooling and health care. However, at second glance, I realized that the comments were not necessarily aimed at things I said, but instead at things others had said as well. Instead of confronting the comments that they disagreed with as they were spoken, some students expressed anger toward me. The student who claimed that I said

white people don't have to worry about race was correct. After reviewing my tapes I found that I did say that; however, I meant to say that whites in America did not have to worry about institutional racism. This experience taught me to make clear the difference between the types of racism and to help students analyze media messages keeping in mind the types of racism that may occur.

Summary

The findings and initial analysis of this study were reported in this chapter. Findings reveal that media literacy instruction changed the way the students perceived racial stereotypes on television. First, students' responses to television clips with racial stereotypes were much more complex after media literacy instruction. Coding patterns revealed that while pre-instruction responses reflected four categories, *I see*, *Other people*, *I don't know*, and *Us vs. them*, post-instruction revealed two more categories, Defensiveness and Anger. The emotive nature of these two categories suggests a deeper level of critical analysis and an internalization of media literacy curriculum. Simply put, the students as a group were more emotionally vested in the analysis of racial stereotypes in media after media literacy instruction.

Secondly, findings reveal that students were more aware of racial representation after media literacy instruction. Coding patterns revealed that pre-instruction identification of white as a racial category was rare, but post-instruction identification of white as a racial group was commonplace. In addition, post instruction responses revealed a heightened awareness of the lack of minority representation on television.

The results in this study were both expected and not expected. I was surprised by the emotion and by the participation of the students. Having taught high school for many years, I know that it is sometimes difficult for an *outsider* to walk in to a classroom and get full participation from students. In addition, I was surprised by some of the racist attitudes expressed by students on pre-instruction questionnaires, the same students who claimed to know what it meant to be *PC,* or politically correct. On the flip side, I was most surprised by the change in attitudes expressed post-instruction, for it seemed that some students were truly moving toward a more racially aware existence. Finally, an unanticipated result from media literacy instruction was that some seemed to have a heightened resistance toward instruction, and toward racial awareness.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine whether media literacy instruction influences students' ability to recognize and analyze television's use of racial stereotypes. In addition, this study sought to determine whether media literacy instruction is a catalyst for students' analysis of media representations of race without a teacher's prompting. This study used grounded theory and a critical theory lens to observe and record these results.

This chapter will apply theories pertinent in this study including those from the fields of cultural studies, psychology, sociology, curriculum theory, multicultural education and media literacy. Secondly, I will focus on the influence this study may have on existing curriculum theory, racial identity theory, and on the field of media literacy. Finally, I will discuss changes I would make if I were to repeat a study on the effects of media literacy instruction on students' ability to recognize and analyze racial stereotypes in media, and I will make suggestions for further research and review research suggestions of other media literacy scholars.

Applying Identity Development Theory to This Study

Identity development, most simply put, is the way that groups and individuals negotiate identity in society. As we grow from small children to adults, we identify ourselves both in how we are similar and dissimilar from others. Gender, nationality, class and race are only a few of the subcategories that we use to develop identity. Current white identity development theory uses stages through which white individuals may develop an anti-racist white identity (Helms, 1990/1995). Similarly, Phinney's (1992) racial identity development theory describes stages through which individuals self-identify into an ethnic group; however, she does not consider identity to be fixed, but instead changing with experiences and social contexts of one's group. However, within the dynamics of a classroom, racial identity does not present itself in a multiple choice format. Students do not arrive in class each day exhibiting classic signs of each stage in Helm's (1990, 1995) formation of a non-oppressive white identity:

1. Contact stage – In this stage, whites pay little attention to significance of racial groups and perceive themselves as free of prejudice.

2. Disintegration stage – At this stage, whites begin to notice the social inequities and effects of racism. This results in cognitive dissonance and discomfort that either alienates or engages individuals to take action to interrupt the racism.

3. Reintegration stage – Whites may seek to alleviate the guilt by placing the burden of social change on the targets of racism.

4.   Pseudo-Independent stage – Continued dialogue about racism results in deepened awareness and potentially dis-identification with whites who do not share an antiracist perspective.

5.   Immersion/Emersion – Individuals intensify their efforts to create a positive white identity which is non-oppressive.

In trying to understand the distinction between linear social theories of racial development, and the recursive nature of students' identity development after media literacy instruction, it seems the summative point is that social theories do not apply in the context of an authentic classroom environment, for they do not take into account the multiplicities in influential factors. Classroom dynamics, social interaction, individual feelings surrounding the school culture, even the school culture itself plays into the complexities surrounding classroom research. Therefore, the *Recursive Identity Development Model* (Dunlop, 2007) better suits classroom research regarding identity development. In the Recursive Model of Identity Development, each stage is represented in a circle that overlaps and is connected to the next with a two-way arrow, thus representing movement from one stage to another and back again. Also, the multi-directional arrow in the center represents movement across the center space, for it is in this movement that tentative theory about the recursive nature of post-instruction dialogue emerged. This study reveals that students may bounce from stage to stage and back again, in recursive movements that suggests inner struggle. Even students who said that they were victims of racial stereotyping moved recursively from the *I see* stage of racial awareness and feelings of empowerment in recognizing and rejecting racial stereotypes in media to the *anger* stage or *us vs. them* stage, often times in one statement.

"I see"
Racial
Awareness

Anger

"I don't know"
Avoidance

"Us vs. them" –
Adversarial

"Other People" –
Projection

Defensive
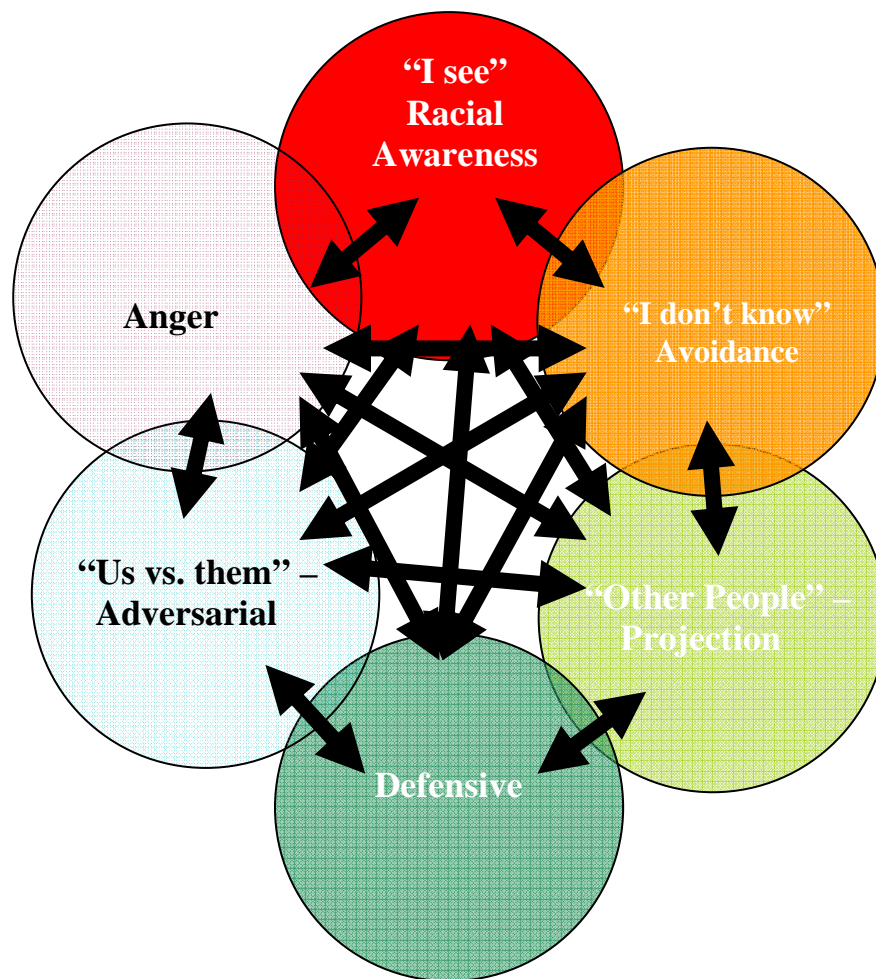
Figure 5-A: *Recursive Identity Development Model* **resulting from Media Literacy Instruction**

In addition to revealing new ideas about the nature of identity development within a classroom environment, the recursive movement suggests that racial stereotyping in television is an emotionally laden topic in a high school classroom. Discussions of television are emotionally laden because the students both love and hate media. They love television, as most of us do, because it both entertains and in many ways defines us as a culture. However, this does not mean that the way media defines us is accurate or invited. Throw in the volatile mix of race relations and racial identity and the erratic

movements between stages of identity development evoked by this study are not surprising but instead, expected.

Finally, this research suggests that there is a need for a different model to assess the effects of media literacy instruction on racial identity development, for the social theory models do not accurately apply to classroom and pedagogical dynamics. According to the results of this study, the process of identity development does not always follow a linear path as current theory suggests, but it is instead recursive movement that may vary according to experiences that encourage racial identity development. Examples of change and recursion shown in the responses of individual students, Jessie, Jason and Leslie, as well as evidence of change and recursion within the individual stages of identity development: racial awareness, avoidance, projection, defensive, adversaries and anger clearly support the use of the *Recursive Identity Development Model* (Dunlop, 2007) in classroom studies regarding race and identity.

This idea is supported by Puka (1982) who examined both Kohlberg's and Piaget's work on logical and moral stage development. Puka (1982) asserts that Piaget's work on logical and moral stage development (on which identity development theory was built) clearly avoids establishing clear-cut moral stages, but instead emphasizes more complex stages. Futhermore, Piagetian theory shows individuals experience stage transition where they "vacillate between the stage they are supposedly leaving and the stage they are acquiring" (Puka, 1982, p.480). Puka (1982) explains that "full consolidation of a stage across domains might occur slowly and in conjunction with the increasing development of other lingering stages" or "*decalage*" (Puka, 1982, p.481). Decalage seems a more appropriate way of describing the findings of this study, for the

students involved did include vacillation between stages and lingering of other stages. In sum, Puka's (1982) work emphasizes the validity of the *Recursive Identity Development Model* (Dunlop, 2007).

Explanation

In this discussion, I will apply existing social, educational and curriculum theory to selected categories from the *Recursive Identity Development Model* (Dunlop, 2007). I chose the categories in two ways. First, I selected the *I see* category of Racial Awareness because it best represents the endpoint, or goal of media literacy instruction. Responses in this category represented individuals who were fully aware of racial representation and misrepresentation in media and the inequities that misrepresentation may inflict. Secondly, I chose *Us vs. them*, or *Adversaries* because it indicated perceptions of a dichotomy between persons of color and whites that is both common and concerning. Finally, I chose *Anger* and *Defensiveness* because these are the responses that both surprised and bothered me personally. A closer examination of these responses was both enlightening and therapeutic.

Racial Awareness: Identifying white as a racial group

Through inductive analysis I found that media literacy may play a role in students' abilities and willingness to identify white as a distinct racial group, an unanticipated theme which emerged from my data. Encouraging media literacy students to include European Americans in discussions of the representation of race in media was not part of the study; however, it was a significant change that occurred. Referring again,

to a resistant student's revelation about racial representation on television, *"You know I didn't see it before but you were right. I flipped through all of the channels last night and I couldn't find anything but white (people).* It is logical to apply Gross's (2001) notions of *symbolic annihilation* to this student's revelation whereas those who are at the bottom of the various power hierarchies will be kept in their places in part through relative invisibility (p.409). Symbolic annihilation is the disempowerment of groups of people through lack of representation. Logically if a particular ethnic group is not represented in media, or symbols of a culture, then that particular group is deemed irrelevant and symbolically invisible. The gross under-representation of people of color is a visual text that teaches young viewers of every ethnic background about the power structure in our country. Perhaps most destructive for any oppressed group is invisibility, for, as Jhally (1999) states in *Tough Guise*, "… in media, visibility is power." It seems that this is just one example of many of how media plays a role in perpetuating the socialization structures that promote hegemony in our society. However, the comments *different races besides white* and *wondering why the race is only white* indicate that media literacy may play a role in dismantling those socialization structures, or at the very least that it may play a role in encouraging students to question them. This has significant implications to teacher education, for teachers must be equipped to both recognize and challenge symbolic annihilation, thus modeling critical media consumption for students.

Gordon (2005) refers to the inability to see white as a racial group as "colorblind logic" through which race is something white people notice but are uncomfortable acknowledging it unless it pertains to "others" (p. 289). Students' comments before

media literacy instruction seemed to practice this logic, for none identified white as a racial category. Furthermore, in responding to television clips, if they described race it was of people of color only. For example, responding to pre-instruction television clips depicting white, African American and Hispanic men who were suspects of crime, only two students identified the race of the suspects and both were of the African American suspect. Given this, it is even more convincing that media literacy instruction affected students' tendencies to identify white as a racial group.

Adversaries: White Backlash

As discussed earlier, the tendency to reduce racial stereotypes in media to an "us vs. them," or black and white dichotomy has historical roots. Political science research termed this seemingly backward swing of white American citizens' distrust and resentment toward Black citizens as "white backlash." The reasons for "white backlash" may be traced to the Civil Rights agenda that in the 1960's included righting the wrongs of racism and slavery. It was seen as an attempt to reverse the effect of slavery and racism on "de facto" equality involving "the main areas of racial exclusion- residence, education and employment." (p.18). "White backlash" is characterized as a reaction to a Civil Rights movement that attempted to move too far, too fast. Recently it is seen as a response to urban riots in Black communities in the 1960's, 1970's and even more recently in Los Angeles in the 1990's. While most white Americans may agree with the principle of racial equality, few whites are willing to hold firm to that principle if it threatens their own security or well-being (Hewitt, 2005). Evidence of white backlash is frequently found in popular film representations of conflict between the white male

protagonist and the non-white antagonist. Many representations even go so far as to blame non-white crime and poverty ridden communities, in subtle fashion, for their situation.

In the past fifteen years, symptoms of racial backlash were frequently evidenced in popular motion pictures such as *Falling Down* and *Rambo III*, among others. In *Falling Down*, Michael Douglas plays a white, middle class working man who gets fed up with inner city crime and violence (represented by stereotypical young Black and Latino characters), and takes matters into his own hands by arming himself and killing the "criminals." *Judgment Night,* starring Emilio Estevez, features Estevez and a group of middle class friends who take a wrong turn in the inner city and battle street thugs. Both are classic examples of the white man "taking back" American values by defeating those who threaten them.

Kellsteldt (2000) argues that coverage of racial policy by media has influenced and swayed public opinion by emphasizing certain core American values, of which the degree of emphasis varies over time:

> What are these core American values? They are two centerpieces of the
> American ethos, individualism and egalitarianism. Individualism refers to
> the principle that people should get ahead on their own, pull themselves up
> by their own bootstraps. A person should get what he or she earns and
> earn what he or she gets. Assistance from government (or anyone else) is
> not required, nor particularly desirable. Individualism has long been
> considered the distinguishing American value…After passage of the Civil
> Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Civil Rights

Act of 1968 (Fair Housing), most of the fundamental legal rights that were

the stated goals of the civil rights movement had been won. But the

struggle to improve the lives of black Americans continued. The focus of

the civil rights movement shifted to thornier issues, namely the means to

achieve desegregation (like busing) and affirmative action programs to

achieve workplace and educational equality. And this shift generated a

shift in the nature of media coverage of civil rights issues from egalitarian

to individualistic themes. Although it is not uncommon to see stories about

affirmative action that mention "leveling the playing field" or "making up

for past discrimination" (that is, using egalitarian frames), at least as often,

such coverage is framed in the guise of the core value of individualism.

Terms such as "reverse discrimination," "race-based quotas," and the like

were used and became symbols for the view that blacks were getting

something that was not earned or deserved, but given. Liberal racial

policies, then, sometimes transgress upon the traditional American belief

in individualism. Media messages that highlight the inconsistency between

the American value of individualism and liberal racial policies lead to

more conservative policy preferences. (p.247)

Furthermore, Kellsteldt (2000) quantitatively illustrated how news programming

emphases on egalitarianism sentiment spiked following each media message, thus

supporting the notion that affirmative action policies increase an us vs. them

sentiment.

Defensiveness and Anger

In trying to understand the source of students' emotive reactions to discussions regarding race and racism, it is helpful to apply Alice McEntire's (1997) research on "white talk" as a coded language of avoidance describes how this language is a way of talking about racism that insulates white people from interrogating their individual and collective role(s) in perpetuating racist ideologies and practices. It is a self-defensive way to distance oneself from the painful task of exploring the privileges attached to being white in the United States. One form of white talk is not talk at all, but evidenced through uncritical acceptance of biased comments and dismissing counter-arguments through silence. Another form of white talk is minimization in which individuals and institutions attach achievement to personal ability and not racism. This was evidenced in comments such as, "People are lazy and desperate in all races." "They are using racial comments for humor. Some may get offended but I thought it was funny – it tells me that people believe that they can use racism to their advantage." "I think its good because they are bums and you keep the Mexicans out." The following transcript again to the students' reactions of defensiveness and anger,

> *Transcript, day 2*
>
> *S: now though it seems like they get stuff that we could never get, like AA*
> *scholarships*
>
> *S: the thing that bothers me is things like Black history month, we couldn't*
> *do that!*
>
> *Classroom teacher from corner: Every month is white history month!*

T: what are you reading in history?

(Silence, then laughter)

T: Okay, what are you reading in English?

S: about that monster and his mom…

T: Beowulf?

S: yeah, that's it

S: and that isa representation of whose history?

(Silence again, then laughter)

T: Okay, I will help you – that is the among the earliest of British

literature/history influenced by the Norman invasion of the Anglo's

Saxons and Jutes.

What did you read before that?

S: Shakespeare

T: also British…

(I continued through questions to establish a pattern of primarily white

male representation in school curriculum and then began adding

television and film representations)

Field note, day 8

I went in today feeling like I needed to "arm" myself with proof or

stereotypical and racist representation in media. It is the last day of

instruction. Yesterday, we created poster collages of representation of

race in our local newspaper, and as they shared the collages, the results were surprising even for me. All five of the groups had completely filled the left side of the poster, which was labeled white, and the left side of the posters had s sparse spattering of people of color. When we originally began the assignment, the students chose one ethnic group, Middle Eastern to be represented on the right side of the board, but after twenty minutes or so, students began expressing frustration because they couldn't find any Middle Eastern people represented in photographs. One group found two Middle Eastern photos, and held them up for the class to see. I asked them what was happening in the pictures and they replied, "It's the war in Iraq." I then asked them to think back about Middle-Eastern representations in movies, news clip and television shows they have seen. One student offered, "like in 'Die Hard 2'," and another said, "Yeah, and that last 'First Blood' movie." "Do you see a pattern?" "Yeah, they are always terrorists or at war." "Do you think that is accurate?" "No." "Yes, kind of – they are always fighting each other."

The class then decided that they should include all other races on the right side of the board; however, they still arrived at meager results for non-white representation. Instead of this convincing the resisters, it seemed to cause animosity toward me. I pushed on, and held up magazine advertisements and photos from a popular teen fashion magazine, from an army recruitment pamphlet and from a popular family magazine. We began to discuss who was represented and who was not represented in the

photos. The same students agreed or resisted the idea that these photos represented any specific group. Remembering an earlier discussion in which a resister suggested that BET was racist against whites, and that "They have an entire channel for them – we couldn't do that!" On a whim, I picked up the TV guide and read the titles of shows listed for the 7pm prime time slot. I asked the students to place these shows into all white, mixed, or all people of color. As the tally marks for all white grew, I watched the resisters' expressions and body language change. Arms crossed, eyes rolled, lips were pressed together firmly. When the tallies were complete, the evidence of the lack of representation for people of color was on the board. The resisters were markedly silent, and the class discussion died.

At this point, the resisters knew they shouldn't speak, but silence is also a form of resistance; thus the pattern continued using a different strategy through which to resist.

Another type is defensiveness in the form of stipulations such as, "I am not racist. I have friends who are _____ (Black, Arab, Hispanic…). I am colorblind. I took a course in multiculturalism so I treat everyone the same." Kivel (2002) details more strategies of defense such as blaming racism on the person of color for being "angry," and counterattacks that offer competing victimization. However, McEntire (1997) and Kivel (2002) do not include the possibility of anger and resistance toward the person who attempts to dislodge racist beliefs.

Devine (1989) suggested that culturally shared stereotypes are often so deeply rooted that they are triggered automatically when people meet members of the stereotyped group. This is observed even in people who are only slightly prejudiced and who do not approve of the stereotypes. However, Devine and Monteith (1999) revised this model to include that although the automatic trigger is controllable, and that complex factors such as focus of attention, presence of counter-stereotypes and cognitive resources might influence whether stereotypes are triggered. This possibility speaks volumes toward the effect of media literacy instruction on racial stereotypes in media.

Implications:

Connecting Results to Existing Theory

As discussed in Chapter II, media literacy in best situated within the realms of constructivist and social constructivist curriculum theory. Throughout this study, I was quite conscious of the ways in which some students first resisted and then reflected upon what we viewed and discussed in class and negotiated new or conflicting views to fit within their existing knowledge. It also seemed this negotiation was most obvious and drastic on the heels of anger and resentful feelings between opposing views. This was most apparent in the instance in which the female student became angry and called me a liar when the classroom teacher, other students and I presented evidence of racism on the individual and institutional level. Often times, less vocal students changed statements or views according to the reactions of members of the group. Viewing this, it is apparent that at least in the field of media literacy, social constructivist theory is quite helpful in

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making sense of the learning process. It is also quite possible that the social component is integral in the process of conducting media literacy instruction that inspires critical thought that transcends to the level in which students apply media critiques to existing social structures. In the words of Maxine Greene (1975), constructivist theorist,

> The desire, indeed the need, for orientation is equivalent to the desire to constitute meanings, all sorts of meanings, in the many dimensions of existence. But this desire…is not satisfied by the authoritative confrontation of student with knowledge structures (no matter how "teachable" the forms in which the knowledge is revealed). (p.313) Curriculum can offer the possibility for students to be the makers of such networks. The problem for their teachers is to stimulate an awareness of the questionable, to aid in the identification of the thematically relevant, to beckon beyond the everyday. (p.315)

Equally intriguing is the possibility for media literacy to connect Giroux's (1997) "critical pedagogy" and a cultural studies curriculum to link learning and the process of social change itself (p.168). Giroux (1992) describes the connection of critical pedagogy to cultural studies and "border crossing" which fulfills the commitment for education to be transformative and render bodies active in enacting social change.

Of particular importance is the connection between this study and student resistance theories (Butin, 2005). Butin's (2005) comprehensive literature review traces how student resistance has been examined from differing lenses or theories, and is strongly represented in the student resistance I found. An overview of these is as follows:

Identity development theory – views student resistance as an expression of students' "lack of self-knowledge about crucial aspects of their identity." For example, in an almost all-white classroom, student resistance may revolve around race and class issues of historically marginalized groups and may be attributed to the students' unexamined identity, or lack of knowledge about how social and historical factors influence an individual's identity. Helms' (1990/1995) and Phinney's (1992) racial identity development theories fall under this umbrella term.

Neo-Marxist critical theory – attributes student resistance to "alienation from the normative schooling process." In this notion, students' alienation is inflicted upon them by external normative structures such as requiring Standard English to be spoken in the classrooms, and resistance is a disruption of these structures that is both a "move of empowerment" and one of "dis-empowerment" that alienates these students from the dominant "culture of power" (Butin, 2005; Delpit, 1995).

Whiteness studies – view student resistance as uncaring or the "refusal and avoidance of the realization of white privilege and how it is imbedded within our society's very practices and thoughts" (Butin, 2005). Student resistance is exemplified in statements such as, "racism no longer exists," or as something that happened to "someone else," and "that all happened a long time ago." In this way, Whiteness studies blends critical pedagogy's

emancipatory stance with racial identity theory's desire to understand the process of rejecting the privileges of whiteness (Butin, 2005). Referring back to figure 4.B, the recursive nature of racial identity development presented in this study, all three of these theoretical lenses are represented. Having said this, it is important to note again, that the *Recursive Identity Development Model* (Dunlop, 2007) is in stark contrast to linear stages of racial development represented in social theories (Helms, 1990/1995; Phinney, 1992). It is this distinction that places the importance of this study in the field of media literacy.

Although the effect of media literacy training may be significant for all students as represented by *Jason*, many (all but three students from both groups, N=28) did express that the media literacy instruction made a significant difference in the way they recognize and analyze racial stereotypes in media. While all students did not respond in ways that were consistent to one who is racially aware as represented by *Leslie*, *Jessie* represents the majority of responses which indicate the emotions evoked, and the movement from one position to another, often times in the same sentence suggests an internal conversation and struggle about racial stereotypes.
As Giroux and Simon (1989) suggest, this struggle is the terrain of critical pedagogy,

> Such a discussion of lived difference, if pedagogical, will take on a particular tension. It implies a struggle – a struggle over assigned meaning, a struggle over the direction in which to desire, a struggle over

particular modes of expression, an ultimately a struggle over multiple and even contradictory versions of "self" (Giroux & Simon, 1989).

Finally, it is important to note the significance of this study on multicultural education. Cortes (2000) established the need for media education to create a space for meaningful multicultural education in the schools; however, his work does not include classroom research to support his claims. It is apparent that the present study speaks directly to the efficacy of media literacy instruction in creating authentic multicultural dialogue within the classroom. Instead of a "canned" curriculum package that teaches multiculturalism in isolation, media literacy instruction uses students' lived experiences with media to interrogate beliefs about stereotyped groups. From this study, it is apparent that multicultural education can benefit from media literacy as a tool for authentic classroom talk about race, racism and tolerance.

Recommendations

In its' entirety, I feel that this study went relatively well; however, there are a few changes I would make if I were to replicate it. First, I would extend the instruction period from two weeks to at least nine weeks, or preferably a semester. I felt rushed to "get as much in as possible" in the two weeks and feel that in my haste I may have taken away from the students' opportunities to internalize and *try on* what they were learning with their media use outside the school. Also, in an ideal situation, the students would have the opportunity to experience the creation of media, an important component of

media literacy. In speaking of students, Goodman (2005) has shown through his New York based Educational Video Center that

> Throughout this process they [students] will learn much more than the content of [a] social issue. They will learn about the power of media to represent ideas, values, and voices, and their own power, as learners and cultural producers, to use media as a tool to educate, inform and make change in the community. (p. 207)

While the group of students represented by Jessie did see a modest to significant influence from media literacy instruction, the results of this study would have been more conclusive if the instruction period had been extended. Secondly, I would have chosen a different tool to measure the effects of media literacy on racial stereotype recognition specifically. The tool (Appendix C) was a modified version of one used by the Center for Media Literacy to guide students' learning, and as it may serve instructional purposes well, it was somewhat confusing for these students and did not induce the deeper responses I needed to determine media literacy effect. While the interview questions to which each student responded at the end of the unit (Appendix F) gave me a clear picture of the students' post instruction thoughts and feelings, in hindsight I should have used this tool to measure students' thoughts and feelings before instruction instead of Appendix C.

Another improvement on this study may be asking the classroom teacher conduct media literacy instruction. This would help in two ways. First, students have already established a relationship with the classroom teacher, and, hopefully, trust the teacher to value a variety of opinions. In addition, because of this relationship, students may not be

tempted to be disruptive or test the boundaries of proper classroom etiquette. In the best situation, the classroom teacher will have already established an environment of trust and tolerance in order to promote free discussion and allow for differing and often oppositional dialogue, thus enhancing the authenticity of the effects of media literacy instruction. Secondly, with the classroom teacher conducting instruction, this frees the researcher to more closely observe and record the dialogue and dynamics between teacher, student and media.

Also, it would be helpful in another similar study to increase the number of participants and introduce a quantitative tool to measure perceptions of racial stereotypes both before and after media literacy instruction. Hobbs and Frost's (2003) study indicating that media literacy instruction had a significant effect on students' abilities to critically analyze diverse forms of communication may be a model for a quantitative component in another study on racial stereotypes and media literacy. Although I agree with Fox's (2005) assertion that

> Qualitative paradigms assume that the phenomena under study cannot exist apart from how people perceive it; that researchers can never function in purely objective ways – At the same time they can demonstrate that other experts may share the same or similar interpretations of the same phenomena. Qualitative researchers try to view their subject through the eyes of the study's participants, so that they reduce carrying preconceived notions into their study, and they seek to conduct their research in the most natural environment possible. (p.251)

I am also aware of the large numbers of researchers who place equal emphasis and meaning on statistical analyses. As Fox (2005) explains, "federal funding agencies restrict or disallow qualitative research," and in many instances federal agencies reject proposals for grant monies if they do not employ quantitative methods (p. 255). Euphemisms such as "scientifically based research," and "rigorous evidence" pepper the *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)*, leaving no room for misinterpretation of what kind of research "counts." (www.ed.gov/nclb/methods.whatworks/edpicks). If these euphemisms are not clear enough, the NCLB website's "best picks" for research methodology include quantitative clues such as, "control group," and "intervention" or "treatment group." The emphasis on quantitative evidence invites the prospect of conducting an interdisciplinary research which incorporates researchers from other schools that education such as business marketing, sociology, psychology, cultural and media studies, thus sharing the load, and providing a wider lens through which to view the study.

In addition, a longitudinal study on the ability of students participating in media literacy instruction to recognize and analyze racial stereotypes in media may provide even more insight to the long-range effects of media literacy. Perhaps another possibility to improve this study would be modifying media literacy curriculum to be integrated into all subject areas. Initially the best possibility for the success of this strategy would be to locate the study in an elementary or middle school that has team-teaching in place. For schools that already used an interdisciplinary approach to teaching, it would not be a stretch to use a media literacy component within existing thematic units. In this way,

media literacy research may serve to inform the scholarship of integrated media literacy proponents.

The Need for More Research

Fox (2005) created a list of eleven possibilities for future qualitative research in media literacy,

1. How do students' interactions with media connect to their larger, interpretive communities and cultures?

2. How do students compose media messages? How do composing and comprehending these messages function as a reciprocal process (Steve Goodman's work as an example)?

3. How do students understand "media convergence"?

4. How do media affect the development of students' voices?

5. How do students respond to rapid, brief, fragmented, and deconstructed media messages, such as those delivered in television commercials and in "new headlines" programs?

6. How do students interpret media messages that "arouse desire" for intangible qualities, by associating them with tangible products?

7. What is the nature of "HyperDramas" and "memes" – how do students interact with them?

8. How do media affect students' physical and mental health?

9. When teaching media, how effective are certain approaches?

10. What are teachers' perceptions of the barriers they face when teaching about media?

11. What are the ethical issues within the media literacy movement itself, and how are they resolved? (p.252-253)

While this study surely pertains to the first recommendation, this list furthers my argument that research in media literacy must become an interdisciplinary endeavor in order to provide the information, the meaning and the bigger connections to life.

From my perspective and directly related to this study, I would recommend future studies which addressed any of the following:

1. How does media literacy instruction affect the behavior of students in regard to interactions with those who are commonly stereotyped in media?

2. How does media literacy instruction affect self-perceptions of those who are commonly stereotyped in media?

3. Does media literacy encourage a critical examination of whiteness for white students?

4. How might media literacy play a role in connecting multicultural education to students' lived experiences?

5. Is media literacy an extension of the hope that the younger generations will save us from our own mistakes in regard to racism, sexism and classism?

6. How does media literacy affect students' perceptions of their power to change society?

7. What, if any, behaviors of agency are connected to students'

    experiences with media literacy?

As I delve deeper in to the study of media literacy, it seems the questions increase instead

of decrease. However, it seems that this is the nature of research in the field of education.

I welcome the questions, for sometimes questions result in greater understanding.

Although it was not my original purpose, drawing as this study does, from an

interdisciplinary body of theory illustrates the possibility for media literacy research to

bring many disciplines together in a unified goal. The connections I see between media

literacy and other fields are quite numerous. To name a few, the field of law and

criminology could use media literacy to examine the ways in which ideas of justice and

law are portrayed in media, and how this affects different social groups' trust or mistrust

of the criminal justice system. A study on students in law enforcement may also benefit

from media literacy instruction in order to identify preconceptions or stereotypes

reinforced by media about certain social groups that may influence the way they identify

"criminal" and 'non-criminal." Likewise, the medical field may benefit from media

literacy research that investigates the influence of media literacy instruction on social

groups' self-advocacy in health matters. Nutrition studies, women's health issues and

many others may benefit from media literacy instruction as a possible vehicle for

individual and group empowerment and positive social change.

Another possibility within the medical field is an examination of health

practitioners, patients' and family members' perceptions of the influence media has on

their stigmatization of certain health issues such as mental illness and AIDS. This study

would be similar to Lather and Smithies' (1997) feminist ethnography *Troubling the*

Angels: Women Living with AIDS, but adding a media literacy variable to the study. In addition, media literacy may be used to determine the effects of drug company advertising. Also in sociological fields, media literacy may be employed as a deterrent to the criminalization of social issues such as poverty, mental illness and drug addiction.

The implication of the widely diverse application of media literacy in other fields opens up a range of possibilities for educators in media literacy. While presently, media literacy research has remained somewhat isolated to educational studies, the possibilities for enacting social change in other fields suggests that media literacy educators and researchers must actively pursue research that applies media literacy instruction in other social arenas. This seems to be one way to spread the word about how media literacy empowers individuals and groups to become active and influential participants in our democracy, while also creating social change that challenges institutionalized and normalized hierarchical structures which perpetuate the status quo.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, the implications of the present study bring to the forefront the need for teacher education in media literacy. As Goetze, Brown and Schwarz (2005) suggest,

> If media literacy is to become part of the K-12 school experience, enabling transformation in both curriculum and teaching, then teachers need to become literate first. Teachers cannot teach what they have not learned, and learned to value themselves. Although more American teachers are becoming knowledgeable about media literacy, much remains to be done.
> (p. 161)

Schwarz (2001) asserts that media literacy is essential content knowledge for future teachers and can serve as an interdisciplinary structure through which to "connect educational psychology to foundations courses and student teaching" (p.118). Likewise, Schwarz (2004) contends that a media literacy component in teacher education may better equip teacher candidates for diversity in classrooms by reaching four goals; Understanding those who are different from self, learning to interrogate and challenge media messages and assumptions that may be demeaning to others, learning alternative teaching approaches that reach students with a variety of learning styles, learning how to find resources and materials to showcase and support diversity in the classroom (pp.225-227). Although it may not be practical to require a media literacy component in all teacher education programs, it seems that the effective teaching of media literacy and the possibilities for critical pedagogy that encourages authentic multicultural dialogue and growth in classrooms call for more opportunities for K-12 teachers to discover media literacy.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

State Department of Education:
Curricular Objectives Met by Media Literacy

<u>Information Literacy</u>
Standard 2: The student who is information literate evaluates information critically and competently.

Standard 6: The student who is an independent learner is information literate and strives for excellence in information seeking and knowledge generation.

Standard 7: The student who contributes positively to the learning community and to society is information literate and recognizes the importance of information in a democratic society.

Standard 8: The student who contributes positively to the learning community and to society is information literate and practices ethical behavior in regard to information and information technology.

<u>Social Studies</u>
Standard 4: The student will evaluate human systems of the world.

Standard 1.2: The student will recognize and explain how different points of view have been and are influenced by nationalism, racism, religion and culture.

Standard 1.3: The student will distinguish between fact and opinion in examining sources.

APPENDIX B

ADAPTED CURRICULUM FROM

CENTER FOR MEDIAL LITERACY'S MEDIA LIT KIT

Day 1

Read and sign student consent letter (read consent orally and audiotape consents)

Show clips and do pre-test

Introduce Media Literacy
        Handout 5 core concepts - 5 key questions sheet

Show clip from *Independence Day* (Will Smith)
        Ask these questions orally:
        1. What is the message *genre* (define genre if needed)
        2. What technologies were used to construct this message?
        3. How is this message similar & different from others with similar content?
        4. Who created this message?
        (Adapted from CML's key questions)

Talk about genres and how they are constructed. What hints do media makers use to help an audience identify each genre?
Ie: Westerns
        Love stories
        Horror
        Comedy
        News
                Etc.....

Day 2

Core Concept #1:   All media are constructed
Key question: Who created this message?

Do lesson 1a & 1c from CML's Media Lit Kit

1a- One way vs Two way communication

Show short news clip – Is this one or two way communication? Why?

Read Peter Jennings quote
1c- The World in 22 minutes: Constructing a TV News Lineup
        (handout 1C)

Discuss "constructedness"
        Written by someone
        Imbedded choice
        Selection of captured images
        Natural vs real (it's all constructed…even the news)

Messages that often go unquestioned:
        "experts say"
        "research says"
        numerical figures
        photographs with meaning "prescribed" in captions
        news clips that are "narrated"

Day 3

Core Concept: Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules

Key question: What techniques are used to attract my attention?

How can the camera manipulate what you see on TV?

DO exercise 2c & 2d from MLKit

2c- **The power of editing (MLit kit, p.33)**
  Using photographs with different framing, show how pictures can be
  Manipulated by framing. Then use captions which suggest meaning to
  Show the same effect.

2d – **The Language of Sound – Tools, Tricks & Techniques (MLKit, p.36)**
    Show opening clip of *Jurassic Park* with sound
    (discuss what they thought)
    Show again without sound
    (discuss how sound changes perception, and how sound can manipulate
    Or limit perception)
    Show a third time with Sugarplum Fairies, Tchaikovsky playing

    Show *Gorillas in the Mist* Scene without sound
    (discuss what they thought)
    Show same scene with classical music
    (discuss how the music affected the MOOD of the clip)
    Show clip final time with scary music
    (how did music interact with the images and ideas they had about the
    images?)

    Show clip of Iraqi women discussing factory unions with poster held in
    Front of the screen
    (Have students try to guess what was going on)
    Show clip again with sound and picture
    (what was the difference between the two experiences?

Day 4

Core Concept: Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules

Key question: What techniques are used to attract my attention?

Using page 38 MLit Kit, discuss the Basics in Persuasion
(Handout 2E; 10 Techniques of Persuasion)

Show clips of commercials
       Kid's cereal commercial
       Funny commercial
       Car commercial

Discuss techniques used in each to persuade the buyer

Using handout 2E: In groups, go through magazines and find ads to represent each of the ten techniques. Paste ads to poster boards with the label of the technique and share with class. Display in room afterwards.

Day 5
Core Concept #3   Different people experience the same media message
differently
Key question   How might people who are different from me understand

this message?

Do Lesson 3a, Section II in MLit Kit

Using clips from the CML DVD clips – choose obscure clips of which the
meaning may not be obvious

After each clip, have the students write down what they thought was happening

Trade papers, having fellow students underline things which were actually seen
or heard
Circle things that were not seen or heard, but instead DEDUCED or
CONNOTATED from the message.

Discuss where those interpretations come from
What things were omitted?
Did any prejudices, biases or personal experiences surface?

Assign homework for the weekend:
Lesson 3c – Understanding audience research
Review things that make us different:

Gender	language	mood
Ethnicity	age	personality
Class	culture	health
Religion	education	talents

Review similarities we share

Family	shelter	humor
Safety	love	fear
Food	sex	violence

Homework Handout 3c
As a class, select five new or old popular movies and write on the board
Each class member will ask two women over 35 and two men over 35, two men
under 35 and two men over 35 which of the films listed is their favorite.

I will tally the results and make a bar graph with the results

Day 6
Core Concept # 4: Media have embedded values and points of view.

In looking at the content of a media message, it is important to understand that there are no value-free media and never will be. All media carry **subtle messages about who and what is important.**

Because all **media messages are constructed**, choices have to be made. These choices inevitably reflect the values, attitudes and points of view of the ones doing the constructing. The decision about a character's **age, gender or race** mixed in with lifestyles, attitudes and behaviors that are portrayed, the selection of a setting (Urban? Rural? Affluent? Poor?), and the actions and re-actions in the plot are just some of the ways that values become "embedded" in a TV show, a movie or an ad. Even the news has embedded values in the decisions made about what stories go first, how long they are, what kinds of pictures are chosen, and so on.

Sometimes, like us, media makers are careless and turn a **generalization (a flexible observation) into a stereotype (a rigid conclusion)**. We should expect them, however, to strive for fairness and balance between various ideas and viewpoints.

Generalizations vs. Stereotypes: Common stereotypes in media:

Teenagers	Male hairdresser
Intelligent girl	Asian student
Hispanic immigrant	Rural residents
Oklahomans	Urban young black male
Urban young Hispanic female	Single mother on welfare
White male businessman	Male teenage athlete

Homework due tomorrow: View one television sitcom or drama, looking for embedded values or stereotypes. Write the name of the program and examples of values or stereotypes you found. Be ready to share with the class.

Day 7:

Core Concept # 4 Media have imbedded values and points of view

Share stereotype/value homework and discuss using the following questions as a guide:

> ➢ What values or stereotypes are obvious?
> ➢ What values or stereotypes are more subtle?
> ➢ What kinds of behaviors and what kind of consequences are depicted?
> ➢ What type of person is the audience invited or persuaded to identify with?
> ➢ Whose point of view is presented?
> ➢ Is this message an example of hegemony?

Break into groups. Using the television shows that they examined for homework, focus on who is left out of these samples of media.

> ➢ Who is NOT represented in any of the media?
> ➢ What does this imply?
> ➢ Who is MISrepresented?
> ➢ What does this imply?

Next, each group will create three characters for a television show that conflict with society's stereotypical images.

Groups share with class.

Reminder: Homework for tomorrow: Bring tv clip or magazine page to deconstruct in class.

Day 8: Core concepts #4 & #5:
   Media have embedded values and points of view
   Most media messages are constructed to gain profit and/or power.

Finish presenting group findings on stereotypes and embedded values in the media we brought to class.

Share stereotype/value homework and discuss using the following questions as a guide:
> ➢ What values or stereotypes are obvious?
> ➢ What values or stereotypes are more subtle?
> ➢ What kinds of behaviors and what kind of consequences are depicted?
> ➢ What type of person is the audience invited or persuaded to identify with?
> ➢ Whose point of view is presented?
> ➢ Is this message an example of hegemony?

Show video game hegemony display board and discuss implications of representation.

Break into groups. Using the television shows/ magazines that they brought for homework, focus on who is left out of these samples of media.
As a class, discuss these issues:
> ➢ Who is NOT represented in any of the media?
> ➢ What does this imply?
> ➢ Who is MISrepresented?
> ➢ What does this imply?

Day 9

- Do class reflection on what they thought about the targeting of audiences and the stereotypes these targets represent.

- Hand in product charts from yesterday

- Do clips and post assessment:
  One commercial
  One "news" clip
  One comedy or drama clip

- Handout post interview questions and allow time to complete

- While students are completing post interview, collect contact information sheet for follow-up study. Explain what follow-up participation will mean.

APPENDIX C
Media Literacy Pre and Post Questionnaire
Media Literacy: Learning to Analyze TV Messages

(Students, please answer the following questions following the viewing of the television clips. Answer as honestly as possible, for no one will read your answers but me. There are no right or wrong answers. I simply want to know what you think.)

First name only _____

1. What is this? How is it put together?

    First clip:
    Second clip:
    Third clip:

2. What do I hear, see, smell, touch or taste? What do I like or dislike about this?

    First clip:
    Second clip:
    Third clip:

3. What do I think or feel about this? What might other people think and feel about this?
    First clip:
    Second clip:
    Third clip:

4. What does this tell me about how other people live and believe? Is anything or anyone left out?
    First clip:
    Second clip:
    Third clip:

5. Is this trying to *tell* me something? What is it telling me?
    Is this trying to *sell* me something? What is it selling me and what method is it using?
    First clip:
    Second clip:
    Third clip:

*(*adapted from *2003 Center for Media Literacy Question to Guide Young Children)*

EDUCATIONAL DIALECTICS
Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, Tarule. (1994). *Women's ways of knowing.* (p. 237-238)

Process Oriented   **Goal Oriented**

    Means   Ends

            What are the aims of education?

Discovery   **Didacticism**

    Constructed knowledge   Received knowledge

How is knowledge viewed? How is the act of becoming a "knower" explained?

Rational   **Intuitive**

    Logical, analytical,   Gut feeling, subjective,
    objective   ESP

What method(s) are used for analysis? What method(s) are valued?

Discrete   **Related**

    Compartmentalization   Synthesis

     What is the relationship between learning and "life"?

Being with Others   **Being Alone or on Own**

    Collaborative   Solitary
    Cooperative   Competitive

    What arrangements for learning are preferred? Have been
               experienced?

Breadth   **Concentration**

    Generalist   Specialist
    Dilettantism   Narrowness, blinders

      What is the range of interests in learning?

Support   **Challenge**
What are the optimal conditions for learning? Who and what are experienced as supportive/nonsupportive? Challenging/nonchallenging?

Personal   **Impersonal**
What is the relationship between self and the content of one's learning? How are these relationships structured in terms of the curriculum, relationship with peers, relationship with faculty and staff?

Self-Concern   **Responsibility & Caring for Others**
Is concern for self vs. concern for others an issue in educational decision making?

Inner   **Outer**
What factors control goal setting, pacing, decision making, and evaluation?

Listening   **Speaking**
What are the experiences of voice?

Appendix E

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Thursday, June 09, 2005

IRB Application No   ED05119

Proposal Title: Media Literacy: Action Research on its Effect in a Sociology Classroom

Reviewed and   Expedited (Spec Pop)
Processed as:

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved   Protocol Expires: 6/8/2006

Principal
Investigator(s

Janet Cooper Dunlop   Gretchen Schwarz
6920 E. 78th St.   2444 Main Hall OSU Tulsa
Tulsa, OK 74133   Tulsa, OK 74016

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

✓ The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Beth McTernan in 415 Whitehurst (phone: 405-744-5700, emct@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,

Sue C. Jacobs, Chair
Institutional Review Board

IRB Application No ED05119
Longitudinal Effects of Media Literacy Instruction: Analyzing Stereotypical TV
Messages Regarding Race, Gender and Socioeconomics
Janet Cooper Dunlop

Student Interview Questions

1. Tell me about the television shows, commercials or newscasts that you recall viewing outside of class in the last two weeks.
2. What specific scenes, characters, conversations, etc. stick out in your mind?
3. What types of stereotypical images or messages did you recognize? (Racial, gender, age and socioeconomic stereotypes are the ones we have discussed, but others may be recognized.)
4. What effect, if any, has the unit we have been studying on stereotypes in media had on the way you watch television?
5. How do you feel about the way television portrays teenager images or images of people who are quite different from you?
6. What effect, if any, has this unit of study had on the way you perceive other types of media? (Radio, film, music, magazines, newspapers, textbooks, billboards, Internet, etc.)
7. Is there anything that you would like to share with me that I haven't asked you about regarding media literacy or stereotypes in media?

Thank you so much for your time and for sharing your thoughts with me. Your input is very valuable to my study.

APPENDIX G

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date   Wednesday, February 01, 2006   Protocol Expires: 6/8/2006

IRB Application   ED05119

Proposal Title: Longitudinal Effects of Media Literacy Instruction: Analyzing Sterotypical TV
                              Messages Regarding Race, Gender and Socioeconomics

Reviewed and   Expedited (Spec Pop)
Processed as: **Modification**

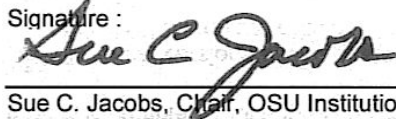Status Recommended by Reviewer(s)   **Approved**

Principal
Investigator(s) :

Janet Cooper Dunlop   Gretchen Schwarz
6920 E. 78th St.   2444 Main Hall OSU Tulsa
Tulsa, OK 74133   Tulsa, OK 741060700

The requested modification to this IRB protocol has been approved. Please note that the original
expiration date of the protocol has not changed. The IRB office MUST be notified in writing when a
project is complete. All approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB

☑   The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB
        approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during
        the study.

Signature :

Sue C. Jacobs, Chair, OSU Institutional Review Board   Wednesday, February 01, 2006
                                                                                      Date

APPENDIX H

Longitudinal Effects of Media Literacy Instruction: Analyzing Stereotypical TV Messages Regarding Race, Gender and Socioeconomics

Assent Letter for Student Participants

Fall 2006

Dear _____ :

Last fall, you participated in a study I conducted through Oklahoma State University on Media Literacy instruction. As a follow-up for this study, I would like ask you to view three network television clips and complete two questionnaires. By collecting this extra information, I will be able to complete my study on using Media Literacy in the curriculum.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. If you choose to participate in the study, you are free to withdraw permission at any time. You may also decline to participate. You will not be penalized for withdrawing or declining. If at any time during this study you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you may contact:

Sue Jacobs, PhD., Chair, Institutional Review Board
415 Whitehurst, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078
(405) 744–5700

If you have further questions or concerns, please contact Janet Dunlop at the following address and telephone number. Thank you for participating in the study.

Sincerely yours,
Janet Dunlop
Oklahoma State University-Tulsa 2403 Main Hall
Tulsa, OK 74106
(918) 381-0986

Gretchen Schwarz, Professor,STCL
Oklahoma State University -Tulsa 2444b Main Hall
Tulsa, OK 74106
(918) 594–8468

Please indicate whether or not you wish to participate in this study by checking a statement and signing your name. Please sign both copies of this consent form and keep one copy.

_____I wish to participate in the study described above and have read this consent form.

_____I do not wish to participate in the study described above.

_____   _____   _____

Signature   Please print your name here   Date

_____   _____   _____

Signature of researcher   Please print your name here   Date

APPENDIX I

Longitudinal Effects of Media Literacy Instruction: Analyzing Stereotypical TV Messages Regarding Race, Gender and Socioeconomics

Consent Letter for Guardian/Parent

Fall 2006

Dear Parent:

Last fall, your child, _____ participated in a study I conducted through Oklahoma State University on Media Literacy instruction. As a follow-up for this study, I would like permission to ask your child to view three network television clips and complete two questionnaires. By collecting this extra information, I will be able to complete my study on using Media Literacy in the curriculum.

Although your child provided contact information, could you take the time to complete the contact information form if he/she is no longer living with you (new address, e-mail, college address, etc.). Thank you so much for your help.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. If you choose to participate in the study, you are free to withdraw permission at any time. You may also decline to participate. You will not be penalized for withdrawing or declining. If at any time during this study you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you may contact:

Sue Jacobs, PhD., Chair, Institutional Review Board
415 Whitehurst, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078
(405) 744–5700

If you have further questions or concerns, please contact Janet Dunlop at the following address and telephone number. Thank you for participating in the study.

Sincerely yours,
Janet Dunlop
Oklahoma State University-Tulsa 2403 Main Hall
Tulsa, OK 74106
(918) 381-0986

Gretchen Schwarz, Professor, STCL
Oklahoma State University -Tulsa 2444b Main Hall
Tulsa, OK 74106
(918) 594–8468

Please indicate whether or not you wish to participate in this study by checking a statement and signing your name. Please sign both copies of this consent form and keep one copy.

_____ I wish to participate in the study described above and have read this consent form.

_____ I do not wish to participate in the study described above.

OSU
Institutional Review Board
Approved 2|1|06
Expires 6|8|06
Initials Qj
ED05119-mod

_____   _____   _____
Signature   Please print your name here   Date

_____   _____   _____
Signature of researcher   Please print your name here   Date

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VITA

Janet Cooper Dunlop

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: EFFECTS OF MEDIA LITERACY INSTRUCTION:
 RECOGNIZING AND ANALYZING RACIAL STEREOTYPES IN MEDIA

Major Field: Curriculum Leadership, Social Foundations

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born Janet Lynn Cooper in Kansas City, Missouri, on
December 12, 1966, the daughter of Howard and Sharon Cooper

Education: Graduated from Claremore High School, Claremore, Oklahoma in
May, 1985. Received Bachelor of Arts degree in Traditional English
from Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, in December
1989; earned teaching certificate in Secondary English from Oklahoma
State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May 1991; received Master of
Science degree in Teaching, Learning and Leadership from Oklahoma
State University, Tulsa, Oklahoma, in December 2002; completed
requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree at Oklahoma State
University in May 2007.

Professional Experience:
Oklahoma State University, Fall 2004 – present,*Teaching GA, Research
Associate;* Berryhill Public Schools, 1996-2000, *English Teacher;* Jenks Public
Schools – Jenks East Middle School, 1993-1994, *Language Arts Teacher;*
Sand Springs Public Schools – Central Junior High, 1991-1993, *English Teacher*

Professional Memberships:
Association for the Supervision of Curriculum Development; International
Reading Association; National Writing Project; Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society
Kappa Delta Pi International Honor Society in Education; American Association
for Teaching and Curriculum; National Society for the Study of Education;
Oklahoma Council of Teachers of English

Name: Janet Cooper Dunlop   Date of Degree: May, 2007

Institution: Oklahoma State University   Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: EFFECTS OF MEDIA LITERACY INSTRUCTION:
 RECOGNIZING AND ANALYZING RACIAL STEREOTYPES IN MEDIA

Pages in Study: 161   Candidate for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Major Field: Curriculum Leadership, Social Foundations

Scope and Method of Study: The purpose of this study was to determine whether media literacy instruction that encourages critical consumption of media also affects students' abilities to recognize, deconstruct and analyze racial stereotypes in media. Over two years, this study focused on the effects of media literacy instruction on students' abilities to recognize and analyze racial stereotypes in television. The participants were in 10th-12th grade and consisted of two classes (34 students), one in 2005 and one in 2006. Students participated in ten days of media literacy instruction (ten hours of class time) in a suburban Midwestern high school sociology and anthropology class. Students were administered pre and post measurement to determine effect of media literacy instruction.

Findings and Conclusions: Findings reveal that media literacy instruction changed the way the students perceived racial stereotypes on television. First, students' responses to television clips with racial stereotypes were much more complex after media literacy instruction. Coding patterns revealed that while pre-instruction responses reflected four categories, "I see," "Other people," "I don't know," and "Us vs. them," post-instruction revealed two more categories, Defensiveness and Anger. The emotive nature of these two categories suggests a deeper level of critical analysis and an internalization of media literacy curriculum. Simply put, the students as a group were more emotionally vested in the analysis of racial stereotypes in media after media literacy instruction. Secondly, findings reveal that students were more aware of racial representation after media literacy instruction. Coding patterns revealed that pre-instruction identification of white as a racial category was rare, but post-instruction dentification of white as a racial group was commonplace. In addition, post instruction responses revealed a heightened awareness of the lack of minority representation on television.

Advisor's Approval: Gretchen Schwarz, Ph.D.