

UCLA

UCLA Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

Critical media literacy in pedagogy and in practice: A descriptive study of teacher education instructors and their students

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3zs5j9vn>

Author

Funk, Steven Seth

Publication Date

2013

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Critical media literacy in pedagogy and in practice:

A descriptive study of teacher education instructors and their students

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor in Education

by

Steven Seth Funk

2013

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Critical media literacy in pedagogy and in practice:

A descriptive study of teacher education instructors and their students

by

Steven Seth Funk

Doctor of Education

University of California, Los Angeles 2013

Professor Tina Christie, Committee Co-Chair

Professor Diane Durkin, Committee Co-Chair

This qualitative study explored the exchange between post-secondary Critical Media Literacy instructors and their students, describing their understandings of Critical Media Literacy, as well as their pedagogical struggles, within the context of a teacher education program.

The data suggested that the UCLA instructors understood Critical Media Literacy as a pedagogy rather than as a content area. They described this pedagogy as one that fosters radically open learning environments, that poses questions rather than delivering material, and one that uses media and technology to develop students' critical thinking skills. Their pedagogical struggles were those of addressing the construct of whiteness, conducting assessment that

demonstrates and promotes students' learning, and teaching students with diverse backgrounds and hectic schedules.

The UCLA Teacher Education Program's graduates and students explained that integrating Critical Media Literacy into their high school Humanities classrooms increased their students' level of engagement with one another and with their communities. They described their challenges as the lack of access to technology and classroom materials, as well as the mandates to prepare students for standardized tests. While in-service teachers integrated Critical Media Literacy into their classes, pre-service teachers were less likely to do so, fearing that Critical Media Literacy would stimulate conversations too controversial for the high school setting.

This study depicts Critical Media Literacy as an engaging, relevant pedagogy, while revealing how educators understand and integrate Critical Media Literacy into their curricula. Future studies concerned with promoting Critical Media Literacy in the classroom should examine how instructors assess their students' learning, as well as how they navigate controversial materials with various student populations.

The dissertation of Steven Seth Funk is approved.

Douglas Kellner

Beverly Lynch

Christina Christie, Committee Co-Chair

Diane Durkin, Committee Co-Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2013

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to students and educators who go against the grain, subvert norms and construct their own realities. May we all continue to fail fantastically at following old forms.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One	1
Statement of the Problem.....	1
Critical media literacy and critical thinking skills.	3
Critical media literacy and relevance.....	3
Critical media literacy and social justice.	4
The Problem.....	5
Overview of the Research Project.....	6
Research design.	6
Summary of the data collection.	7
Research questions.....	7
Site.	8
Sample.....	9
Data analysis.	10
Future implications.	11
Summary of the Research Project.....	12
Chapter Two.....	13
Review of the Literature	13
The history of critical media literacy.	13
Critical media literacy.....	22
UCLA’s teacher education program’s critical media literacy course.	24
Empirical research on critical media literacy.....	24
Critical media literacy deserves a place in the curriculum.....	39
Teacher education curricula.	46
Summary of the Review of the Literature.....	50
Chapter Three	52
Introduction to Methods.....	52
Theoretical Framework.....	52
Research Questions.....	53
Research Design.....	53

Qualitative Methods.....	54
Data collection.	55
Data analysis.	58
Instructor interviews.	60
Questionnaire.....	61
Ethical issues.....	62
Summary of Methods.....	65
Chapter Four.....	66
Findings	66
UCLA Teacher Education Program Instructors.....	67
Critical media literacy as pedagogy.	67
Critical media literacy as critical thinking.	68
Radically open learning environments.....	76
Critical media literacy as question-posing.	85
Critical media literacy fosters critical engagement in society.....	88
Create and share unique narratives.	92
Pedagogical struggles of assessment.....	93
Students’ demanding schedules.	95
Summary of UCLA Instructors’ Understandings of Critical Media Literacy.....	96
UCLA Teacher Education Program Graduates and Students	97
Online questionnaire respondents.	97
Comparison of demographics.	98
Graduate and student participants.	99
Furthering social justice within students’ communities.....	107
Graduates’ and students’ pedagogical struggles.	112
Summary of UCLA Graduates’ and Students’ Experiences	116
Chapter Five.....	117
Key Findings and Recommendations	117
Critical media literacy as a pedagogy.	117
In-service teachers’ struggles with california standards tests.	118
Pre-service teachers’ reluctance to confront controversy.	119
Discussion.....	121

Technology’s role in the critical media literacy classroom.....	121
Assessment of critical media literacy.....	123
Limitations	125
Narrow scope.	125
Few fields within humanities.	126
Teaching experience.	127
Modes of data collection.	128
Implications for Future Research.....	130
Conclusion	133
Reflections	133
Appendices.....	138
Appendix A UCLA TEP Critical Media Literacy Course Instructor Interview Protocol	138
Appendix B Critical Media Literacy Online Questionnaire	142
Appendix C UCLA TEP Graduate and Student Interview Protocol.....	149
Appendix D Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).....	155
Appendix E CML Instructor Interview Consent.....	161
Appendix F UCLA Student and Graduate Interview Consent.....	166
Appendix G UCLA TEP Critical Media Literacy Consent for Online Questionnaire.....	167
Bibliography	168

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I could not have completed this dissertation without good advisement, good luck and good intentions. To my committee and mentors along the way, I sincerely thank you for tolerating my prolonged periods of Internet silence punctuated by my multiple emails often sent within the same hour. Your feedback was direct, yet compassionate, and you all pushed the boundaries of what I had considered possible. I should be so lucky one day to possess a fraction of your intellect, your patience and your total commitment to academic integrity.

Merely ten years ago, I was a three-time college dropout. My success is in this adventure is the result of many fortunate encounters. Had it not been for the advice of strangers and the good will of acquaintances, my future could have unfolded quite differently. Never will I revel in my success, drunk on the milk of individualism. I see my good fortune as the universe beckoning me to pay it forward. I am indebted to students with whom I have not yet learned.

My children (now three under age three) reminded me throughout this process that in between school time and snack time, one just needs to put on a tutu and dance; that we should play as though we were inexhaustible; and that glitter confetti makes everything fun. To the “grrls” – thanks for taking me out on walks and listening to my ideas, and for teaching me to trust my instincts.

Lastly, to my soul mate – Jaydi, my life partner, my stunning and brilliant spouse – I am forever grateful to you for your patience, your keen insights, and your careful regard for my needs as a student and as a person. You will always be the first doctor in this family. You have had nothing but the best intentions for me since we met in elementary school and you will never know the depths of my gratitude. Between the sand and the stars, there is no love greater than ours.

VITA

Steven Seth Funk took a circuitous path through post-secondary education, attending several community colleges early in his academic career, which included many hiatuses to find his passion. He earned his Bachelor of Arts (Summa Cum Laude) in Literature, Communication and Media from the American Jewish University in 2005, nine years after he graduated high school. By 2008, he had earned his Master of Arts (Cum Laude) in Literature, with an emphasis on Modernism at California State University, Long Beach. After publishing his research, Dr. Funk looks forward conducting deeper explorations into the field of Critical Media Literacy and pedagogy in Higher Education. When he is not teaching, writing, playing with his kids, or playing his drums, he is usually running, or training to run, another marathon.

Chapter One

A book or a letter might institute a more intimate association between human beings separated thousands of miles from each other than exists between dwellers under the same roof.

(Dewey, 1916)

Statement of the Problem

The expansion of media engendered by new technologies has not only introduced myriad modes of knowledge production and educational tools, but it might also profoundly affect the very notion of literacy itself and what it means to teach literacy. What is now called Critical Media Literacy sprang from critical pedagogy, which emphasizes the importance of undoing social injustices within educational settings and of striving for equity (Freire, 1970; hooks, 2009; McLaren, 1995; Penuel et al., 2012). Critical Media Literacy challenges representations of class, gender, race and other media portrayals with the aim of deconstructing the hegemony, or dominant power structure(s), that they often reinforce (Kellner & Share, 2007). Most courses with Critical Media Literacy components are categorized as Humanities courses, or more specifically, as “Media Studies” or “Cultural Studies” courses. As a result, many courses incorporating Critical Media Literacy function as electives or special topics courses for college students and while few studies have described Critical Media Literacy students’ understandings and practices, none to date has described the instructors’ understandings and pedagogies.

The University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) Teacher Education Program has taken a uniquely proactive approach to integrating Critical Media Literacy into its curriculum. Acknowledging the importance of Critical Media Literacy’s potential to further its own social justice agenda, as well as the importance of its students to possess basic technological competencies, the UCLA Teacher Education Program made mandatory its course, “Critical Media Literacy: Teaching Youth to Critically Create and Write Media” (Share, 2011, p.1). This

course defines Critical Media Literacy as the culmination of “cultural studies and critical pedagogy,” calling it a course that critically challenges “media and new technology,” that explores “representations of race, class, gender, sexual orientation and other identity markers,” and that endeavors to create “alternative multi-media messages” (Share, 2011, p.1). Introduced to the UCLA Teacher Education Program as an elective special topic course in 2007, the course became required in the fall quarter of 2012.

The UCLA Teacher Education Program Critical Media Literacy course “prepares educators for teaching K12 students to explore their relationships with media by critically questioning media representations” (Share, 2011, p. 1). Fulfilling the Teacher Education Program students’ technology requirement, this interdisciplinary course combines scholarship from social studies, critical theory, critical pedagogy and digital literacy.

This study’s purpose was twofold: 1) to describe how Critical Media Literacy instructors at UCLA’s Teacher Education Program understood Critical Media Literacy and transferred that knowledge to their students; and 2) to portray how those students subsequently understood Critical Media Literacy and integrated it into their own classrooms. More broadly, this study sought to add to the literature concerning Critical Media Literacy in higher education and teacher education, as well as to inform educators concerned with promoting social justice who might seek to incorporate Critical Media Literacy into their own curricula.

The burgeoning field of Critical Media Literacy is one with much interdisciplinary potential, yet few empirical studies have examined it. More specifically, no studies to date have described how teachers move the theory behind Critical Media Literacy into praxis in their classrooms. While some empirical research touts how Critical Media Literacy benefits K - 16 students, none describes, from the instructors’ and teachers’ perspectives, how Critical Media

Literacy is understood and taught. Moreover, the extant empirical literature on Critical Media Literacy is discipline-specific, focusing on how Critical Media Literacy is utilized within History or Literature classrooms. The current research examining Critical Media Literacy commonly reveals three themes: Critical Media Literacy develops students' critical thinking skills; Critical Media Literacy increases student and teacher engagement through its relevancy; and Critical Media Literacy fosters students' awareness of social justice issues.

Critical media literacy and critical thinking skills.

One documented benefit of incorporating Critical Media Literacy in the classroom is its potential to develop students' critical thinking skills. A comparative study revealed a statistically significant relationship between students using a series of multi-media (including new and digital media) modules and their scores on a critical thinking test (Penuel et al., 2012). While this study advertised the benefits of using Critical Media Literacy in classrooms, it did not describe how the teachers implemented the new modules. The study's most commonly cited teacher objection to the use of various media in the classroom was that "producers have not packaged the materials in a way that could be readily integrated into classroom instruction" (p. 115). The teachers, in theory, wanted to incorporate multi-media teaching methods in a critical manner, but did not know how to do so. This study, in contrast, added to the literature specific exercises and pedagogical methods for educators to incorporate into their own instruction.

Critical media literacy and relevance.

Research has also displayed a significant correlation between using Critical Media Literacy in the classroom and enhancing student (as well as teacher) engagement. Kubey and Serafin's 2001 study found not only that students correctly answered more critical thinking

questions at the end of the academic year and “obtained an increased and appropriate skepticism about the claims of advertisers and increased caution with regard to the veracity of information found on the Internet,” (p. 2) but also that their level of engagement increased. The instructors attributed this change in pupil engagement to the higher level of relevancy the Critical Media Literacy component added to their instruction. Students were generally more energetic and engaged when they analyzed advertisements and websites to improve their critical thinking skills. They appreciated the inclusion of contemporary issues and popular culture in their classrooms. The study did not specify how Critical Media Literacy was applied in the classroom and although the study used mixed methods, the qualitative portion was a lengthy questionnaire that focused on quantifiable data, rather than interviews and/or focus groups, which might have allowed for richer descriptive data. Sponsored by the Discovery Channel, Kubey and Serafin’s 2001 study sought to emphasize the learning experience of the students more than the teaching methods and observations of their teachers. This study, however, described teachers’ (post-secondary and high school) understandings of and experiences with Critical Media Literacy.

Critical media literacy and social justice.

In addition to the body of research that emphasizes Critical Media Literacy’s positive impact on students’ critical thinking and engagement, data indicate that by including Critical Media Literacy in the classroom, educators have witnessed notable transformations in students’ perceptions concerning social justice. The findings of a 2010 study (Kimber & Wyatt-Smith) suggested a strong correlation between the incorporation of students’ online collaborative e-designs and their increased understanding of critical analysis, respectful communication, and honesty regarding citations (p.617). The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) recently announced the success of its “Flight to Freedom” program for middle school students. Using a

digital video game format, students played a simulation game featuring a fictional slave trying to escape to freedom during the American Civil War. The findings indicated that these students “had a more critical awareness of issues pertaining to Blacks, Loyalists and Women” (PR Newswire, 2012). The online game’s use of Critical Media Literacy increased students’ awareness of social justice by engaging them in reading about historical events, and by enticing them to participate in the simulation of those events. Rather than focusing on students’ experiences, this study narrated the experiences of social justice-oriented educators as they did (or did not) integrate Critical Media Literacy into their own courses.

The Problem

Empirical research demonstrates Critical Media Literacy’s potential to develop students’ critical thinking skills, to increase students’ engagement and to promote social justice; however, most data in this body of research have been collected from primary students (K – 6), on international students, or by corporations seeking to sell proprietary educational media. Additionally, no qualitative research has critically examined how post-secondary instructors and high school teachers understand Critical Media Literacy, how they apply it as a theory into their practice, and what their experiences have been while doing so.

The problem was threefold: 1) UCLA’s Teacher Education Program had no data informing it as to how its graduates and students understood and applied Critical Media Literacy; 2) no empirical research had described specific methods by which educators used or taught Critical Media Literacy in their classrooms; 3) research on Critical Media Literacy was discipline specific. While advocates boasted the benefits of Critical Media Literacy, they did so without explaining how educators understood it or made it operate in a classroom.

Overview of the Research Project

This study examined the understanding of and transfer of knowledge regarding Critical Media Literacy from the UCLA Teacher Education instructors to their graduates and students, as well as how those graduates and students (teaching high school Humanities courses), in turn, incorporated Critical Media Literacy into their own teaching. By collecting qualitative data from educators working within higher education and high school, this research sought to uncover how Critical Media Literacy instructors understood their course, and how their students, who became high school teachers, incorporated Critical Media Literacy. These data culminated in a report on the UCLA Teacher Education Program's Critical Media Literacy instructors' understandings about what and how they taught. Additionally, the report documented how UCLA Teacher Education Program's graduates and students have tried to integrate Critical Media Literacy into their own high school Humanities classrooms. Overall, this project sought to add to the literature on Critical Media Literacy and the ways in which it is understood and integrated into classrooms.

Research design.

This descriptive qualitative study investigated educators' "conscious experience of their life-world" (Merriam, 2009, pp. 24–25). Qualitative methods were appropriate for this study because they called for personal interviews to look for the participants' meanings, and allowed the design to be somewhat emergent (Creswell, 2008). The personal interactions with participants allowed for the probing of participants when necessary. As this study sought to describe educators' understandings of and experiences with Critical Media Literacy, qualitative methods were appropriate.

Summary of the data collection.

This research project consisted of four stages. The first was a syllabus review of the UCLA Teacher Education Program Critical Media Literacy course to identify the key concepts that the instructors aimed to teach their students. This review looked for the UCLA instructors' definition of Critical Media Literacy, their intended course outcomes, and their criteria for meeting those outcomes. The second stage was comprised of interviews (Appendix A) and follow-up emails with UCLA Teacher Education Program instructors who taught Critical Media Literacy. The third stage utilized a questionnaire (Appendix B) emailed to every Teacher Education Program graduate and student who completed the Critical Media Literacy course. These students attended UCLA between the fall 2007 and winter 2013 quarters. This questionnaire was the means by which the study's more specific population, high school Humanities teachers, was offered the opportunity to participate in personal interviews. The fourth stage of this research consisted of personal interviews (Appendix C) with those high school Humanities teachers.

Research questions.

While this study's primary and secondary objectives were to describe how instructors understood Critical Media Literacy and how their students subsequently applied the course concepts, its tertiary aim was to discover innovative methods of teaching Critical Media Literacy. To these aims, the research questions were as follows:

- 1) What do UCLA Teacher Education Program instructors think they are teaching when they teach a course on Critical Media Literacy and what do they want their students to gain from the course?

- a. What are the instructors' objectives and processes to help their students learn the material?
 - b. How do they think their students are learning the material?
- 2) How do UCLA Teacher Education Program graduates and students who took the Critical Media Literacy course describe their experiences in applying Critical Media Literacy to their own classrooms?
 - a. How do they translate the course materials into lessons?
 - b. What obstacles/challenges, if any, have they encountered?

Site.

During the time this study was created and conducted (2011 – 2013), UCLA's Teacher Education Program was the only known teacher education program in the United States (U.S.) that required its students to complete a course in Critical Media Literacy. Moreover, UCLA's Teacher Education Program emphasized equity in education, increasing social justice awareness and teaching urban youth, all of which are issues central to Critical Media Literacy. For all of these reasons, the UCLA's Teacher Education Program was chosen as the study's site. Data collection, however, did not take place on the UCLA campus. The potential number of instructor respondents was five, and two were known to have relocated out of the Los Angeles area. Moreover, many of the graduates and students who had completed the Critical Media Literacy course by the winter 2013 quarter had relocated to areas outside of commuting range to Los Angeles and outside of the U.S. To overcome geographical limitations and to garner the most participants (instructors, graduates and students alike), the study asked the respondents to choose their preferred method of personal communication. Course instructors were initially contacted

via email and all five preferred to complete personal telephone interviews. All five also answered additional follow-up questions via email.

The UCLA Teacher Education Program graduates and students were emailed an optional online questionnaire hosted on a confidential survey platform and those teaching high school Humanities classes and self-selecting to provide additional data were offered the choice of completing personal interviews in person, over the telephone, online in a chat, through email, or in focus groups. Eight of the ten graduates and students who met the study's criteria, and agreed to further participation, preferred email, while the remaining two preferred any Internet communication (Skype, chat, email). The participants were clear in their preference of online communication. To maintain a consistent method of data collection among these participants, the project utilized email for the interviews and follow-up questions.

Sample.

Five instructors had taught the Critical Media Literacy course at least once since its inception in 2007 (as of winter 2013) and all five were interviewed. One of the course instructors had taught the course with a doctorate, while the remaining four taught the course as graduate students pursuing doctorates, or taught with a Master's degree. The course instructors all self-identified as male and predominantly white, or stated that they believed their students viewed them as predominantly white. Other, more specific demographical information was omitted to ensure the instructors' confidentiality. As merely five instructors constituted the entire instructor sample, any further description of their educational background, race, ethnicity, age, or other identity markers, may have resulted in a breach of their confidentiality.

Of the 168 UCLA Teacher Education Program graduates and students who had taken the Critical Media Literacy course by the winter quarter of 2013, 55 (33%) responded to the online

questionnaire. To be contacted for follow-up interviews, the questionnaire respondents needed to be employed as high school Humanities teachers since completing the Critical Media Literacy course and to volunteer to further contribute to the study. Of the 55 respondents, 18 (33%) qualified to participate in interviews because they taught high school Humanities courses. Ten (55%) graduates and students of the 18 agreed to participate in interviews.

Of the ten graduates and students who taught high school Humanities courses, three were veteran (three or more years experience) credentialed teachers who had recently (within the last five years) attended UCLA to complete their Master's degrees, three were newly credentialed in-service teachers and four were pre-service, non-credentialed instructors in the process of student teaching while earning credentials. The participants' range of experiences provided a rich array of descriptive data, revealing teachers' methods of the integration of Critical Media Literacy, as well as their successes and struggles. Seven of the ten graduates and students interviewed were female, making this sample's gender breakdown consistent with the larger questionnaire respondents' gender statistics (78% female). The educational attainment and teaching experience of the interview participants were significantly higher than the questionnaire respondents'. While 42% of the questionnaire respondents were credentialed in-service teachers (Master's only students), 60% of the interview participants were credentialed in-service teachers. Further demographical information regarding race, ethnicity, age and other identity markers were omitted because revealing them may have breached the participants' confidentiality.

Data analysis.

This research project required a three-step approach to the data analysis: 1) finding prominent themes during the syllabus review for coding; 2) analyzing the juxtaposition of those codes with emergent themes from the Critical Media Literacy instructor interviews; 3) examining

the data from graduate and student interviews within the larger contexts of instructors' understandings of Critical Media Literacy. To increase researcher credibility, an outsider reader examined 20% of the instructor interview transcripts, as well as 20% of the graduate and student interview transcripts, and confirmed the reliability of the coding system. The inter-reader reliability rate was 86%, with 80% being the accepted minimum for qualitative research (Tinsley, H. & Weiss, D., 1975).

Future implications.

As the review of the literature demonstrates, the U.S. educational system has fallen short of its goal of preparing students for participatory democracy. Moreover, the K-16 pipeline is increasingly congested by students un(der)prepared for the kind of critical thinking demanded at post-secondary educational institutions. Despite the growing awareness of university faculty worldwide that media pervade every facet of young peoples' lives, the U.S. Department of Education fails to incorporate Critical Media Literacy into the high school curriculum in any substantial manner. Utilizing standardized and summative assessments, much contemporary educational research lacks descriptive data for Humanities educators interested in applying Critical Media Literacy in their own courses.

This research focused on the application of Critical Media Literacy at the post-secondary and high school levels for five reasons: 1) courses devoted solely to Critical Media Literacy at the post-secondary level in the U.S. are rare; 2) this study sought to facilitate future dialogues between post-secondary and high school educators; 3) high school is a pivotal transition period for students, acculturating them to democratic participation in society; 4) high school is often the deciding factor for whether students continue on to college; 5) high school educators, particularly in urban areas, work with diverse and often underrepresented student populations who have

much to gain by analyzing representations of identity among media. With its focus on social justice and its relevance to today's youth, Critical Media Literacy might be the critical component missing from today's high school curriculum. This qualitative study sought to provide educators with descriptive data to which they could personally relate, data that helped them focus on improving their students' critical thinking skills, data that could help them to engage their students with relevant material and encourage them to promote social justice.

Summary of the Research Project.

This research investigated how UCLA Teacher Education Program instructors understood what they taught in “Critical Media Literacy: Teaching Youth to Critically Read and Create Media” and how their graduates and students applied Critical Media Literacy (if at all) in the high school Humanities courses that they taught. The history of Critical Media Literacy is steeped in contention and ambiguity (Kellner, 2012). Like the product of splicing, Critical Media Literacy was cultivated from the once siloed fields of Philosophy, Psychology and Rhetoric. By describing how UCLA's Teacher Education Program instructors, graduates and students understood and used Critical Media Literacy, this study aimed to inform educators about Critical Media Literacy and how to integrate its powerful concepts into their own classrooms.

Chapter Two

Narrow minds devoid of imagination. Intolerance, theories cut off from reality, empty terminology, usurped ideals, inflexible systems. Those are the things that really frighten me. What I absolutely fear and loathe.

(Murakami, 2005)

Review of the Literature

This literature review briefly examines each of the terms, “Critical,” “Media” and “Literacy,” beginning with “Literacy,” as it is the oldest of the terms and most controversial in light of high-stakes testing and No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Following is an examination of empirical research on Critical Media Literacy implemented in educational settings and teacher education programs. The data in this review consistently revealed that Critical Media Literacy improves students’ critical thinking skills, makes classroom material relevant for students and encourages students to foster social justice; therefore, the latter section of the review is organized into sections, “Critical Thinking,” “Relevance,” and “Social Justice.” The review concludes with an argument for further research addressing Critical Media Literacy in teacher education and Higher Education.

The history of critical media literacy.

Critical Media Literacy, which enables students to read media with the analytical awareness to identify various forms of stereotyping and discrimination, is a rapidly developing interdisciplinary field. With roots planted in Philosophy and Literature, Critical Media Literacy has blossomed and branched into fields such as Cultural Studies, Psychology and Business. It is relevant throughout the Humanities. The Internet’s rapid expansion, the globalization of markets,

and the westernization taking place within the past thirty years (Di Giovanni et al., 2008) has encouraged many educators to add a critical thinking component to “Media Literacy,” which traditionally informed students merely about mass media and advertising techniques (Amerika, 2004; Berenstein & Berenstein, 1984; Kellner & Share, 2005; Tsitouridou & Konstantinos, 2011). UCLA’s Critical Media Literacy course emphasizes the central dimension of Critical Media Literacy – critical reading – while analyzing media representations and using new media to produce original messages (Giroux, 2008; Hobbs, 2011; Kellner & Share, 2007).

This review chronicles Critical Media Literacy’s development and examines how scholars have studied the teaching and assessment of Critical Media Literacy. Precisely because media information and entertainment inundate students, many educators have become increasingly cognizant of the value of incorporating Critical Media Literacy into their courses to enable students to think critically about the messages they consume (and produce) (Fisher, Harris, & Jarvis, 2008). “The 21st century is a media-saturated, technology dependent and globally connect world” (Share, 2006), and because this “impact[s] directly on the terrain of lived experience[s]” (Fisher et al., 2008), Critical Media Literacy belongs in the classroom.

Literacy.

According to the United Nations Educational and Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), “Literate societies enable the free exchange of text-based information and provide an array of lifelong learning opportunities” (2006, p. 13). This narrow definition of literacy does not include aural or visual messages that students regularly encounter. The National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) (2005) defines literacy as operating within two spheres: “task-based” and “skills based” (White & McCloskey). The “task-based” definition of literacy includes, “the ability to use printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one’s goals, and to

develop one's knowledge and potential,” while the “skills-based” definition includes, “word-level reading skills” and, “higher level literacy skills,” such as inference and summary (White & McCloskey, 2005). The NAAL enumerates various levels of literacy, yet restricts its definition to the comprehension of words and sounds.

The Center for Media Literacy, based in Malibu, California, defines “literacy” as, “basic higher-order critical thinking skills – for example, knowing how to identify key concepts, how to make connections between multiple ideas, how to ask pertinent questions, formulate a response, and identify fallacies” (Jolls & Thoman, 2004, p. 181). This definition proposes that readers and consumers challenge the information they encounter by asking questions. It also expands the definition of “text” to include, “any message form – verbal, aural, or visual – (or all three together) – that is issued to create and then pass ideas back and forth between human beings” (Jolls & Thoman, 2004, p. 181). This nuanced definition of “literacy” accounts for the various ways people read and write in the 21st century, namely through new media and new technologies, but limits the definition of reading as merely a reciprocal act. “Back and forth” and “between” (Jolls & Thoman, 2004) denote communicative acts to and from people (within a common temporal context); however, modern acts of literacy, communication and discourse do not only occur “between” people. They occur “among” people and “of” people; they can span time; and because of new technologies, sometimes they do not involve people at all. Most importantly, however, language itself exists within a cultural milieu (Hall, 2006) or ideology (Gramsci, 2006); every word has associations, histories, connotations and varying degrees of relevance to different populations and cultures:

It is not, after all, from the dictionary that the speaker gets his [sic]
words! . . . Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and

easily into the private property of the speaker's intentions; it is populated—overpopulated—with the intentions of others.

(Bakhtin, 2001 p. 1215)

While the Center for Media Literacy expanded the definition of “literacy” by adding the element of inquiry, it has not addressed the issues of power, identity and association (all facets of discourse) that are inextricably linked with words, pictures and sounds. Using this definition, an educator could ask students to identify “key concepts” in a “Boris the Burglar” sign that they might see daily.

“Boris the Burglar,” created during the Cold War, could provide students with a good example of Foucault's expanded definition of Bakhtin's notion of discourse. Foucault (2001) added that a text was, “not originally a thing, a product, or a possession, but an action situated in a bipolar field of sacred and profane, lawful and unlawful, religious and blasphemous” (p. 1653). For Foucault (2001), “Boris the Burglar” could represent the “absolute singularity of our moral-legal system of punishment” (p. 1663) and launch a discourse about what is “simply generally accepted” (p. 1661). Simply put, communication does not exist in a vacuum; attached to the communicative act and “literacy” are denotations and connotations (Hall, 2006), variegated arbitrariness (Hebdige, 2006), and markers of economy, particularly Capitalism (Jameson, 1991). “Boris the Burglar” signs, abundant in students' neighborhoods, denote the Russian as sinister, connote the coat and hat as concealing, and mark anyone resembling “Boris,” such as an Orthodox Jew, as anti-American and therefore anti-Capitalist and ominous. This critical analysis of the sign is predicated upon challenging the sign's representation of power. “Literacy” in Critical Media Literacy refers to more than the ability to recognize letters, words and images – it asks students to problematize power.

These three iterations of the term “literacy,” from UNESCO to NAAL, from Foucault to the Center for Media Literacy, depict a noun in dispute. Drawing from UNESCO, NAAL, the Center for Media Literacy, Hobbs (2011), and Kellner & Share (2007), this study defines “literacy” as the ability to use a culturally recognized sign system (whether visual, aural, or physical) to recall information, understand new information, spread information, and create and critique information as it is connected to power.

Media.

Just as the term, “literacy” is in flux, so too is the term “media.” Although, the Center for Media Literacy adds that critical component – analysis, its definition of “media” is time-bound because it targets the mass media, namely television and print news (Bennett, Kendall, & McDougall, 2011). While these traditional media have historically delivered messages to viewers and readers, new media today are more complex.

Critical Media Literacy entails not merely the study of “the media” or mass media. Rather, it encompasses all messages and representations of identity that students encounter, from neighborhood watch signs to Facebook profiles. The reader/observer/consumer of information today is a “prosumer,” (Bennett et al., 2011, p. 7), simultaneously consuming and producing information, or creating dialogue about information. Critical Media Literacy is situated in a post-positivist framework of thinking critically about all of the various media students access, consume, “prosume,” view, read and create (DeVoss, Cushman, & Grabill, 2005; Gognon, Jacobs, & Holmes, 2010; Iyengar, Silvestri, & Cosper, 1995; Iyengar & Reeves, 1997; Larson, 1988).

Technology has radically altered the ways in which people, even the “subalterns” (Gramsci, 2006; Guha & Spivak, 1988; Morton, 2007) produce communication(s), and the

concept of media has transformed from that of “information provider to that of culture producer” (Kellner & Share, 2007, p. 4). Extracting from Bennett (2011), Kahn and Kellner (2006), and Popescu (2010), this study defines media as the means by which cultures correspond through any mediated communication.

No longer do readers passively receive information from media, as Adorno and Horkheimer argued: “the power of industrial society is imprinted on people once and for all,” (2006, p. 45). Instead, people may do this “imprinting” themselves by “inform[ing]” and “generat[ing] solidarity” around various issues, trends and political movements around the world (Kahn & Kellner, 2006, p. 705). Adorno and Horkheimer’s framework for considering media was traditionally espoused by the Frankfurt School, composed of German intellectuals during World War II, who “concerned their reliance on socially constructed cultural hierarchies” (Ouellette, L. 2013, p.10). Today, new forms of media and technology can empower the masses (Popescu, 2010) as much as marketers and sellers of propaganda can try to dictate people’s actions and decisions by suggestion, false promises and fear (Fischer, Greitemeyer, Kastenmuller, Vogrincic, & Sauer, 2011; Hackbarth et al., 1995; Larson, 1988; Popescu, 2010). Yet, Critical Media Literacy does not take this “protectionist” stance against media (Share, 2006, p.10). Critical Media Literacy, aligning itself with the theory that emerged from the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, approaches media through a post-structuralist framework (Ouellette, L. 2013, p.167). This perspective emphasizes the critical analysis of the ways in which various media construct identities – positively or negatively. It is no wonder then that, at the heart of Critical Media Literacy (called “transdisciplinary,” or even “counterdisciplinary” by some) (Zou & Trueba, 2002, p. 111), is critical analysis.

Critical analysis.

Scholars such as Barthes, Adorno, Hall and Foucault scrutinized every aspect of the written and spoken word, making critical inquiries about messages. This discourse has spanned decades and grown to include theorists whose foci were not merely Literature or Rhetoric, but Education. Among contemporary educational critical theorists are Freire, hooks and McLaren, who initiated and developed the theories behind critical pedagogy, the application of which in Critical Media Literacy will be explored further in this literature review.

Foucault (2007) argued that critique is a serious endeavor by which, “the subject gives himself [sic] the right to question truth on its effects of power and question power on its discourses of truth” (p. 8). It is this sense of searching for power, or truth, “validity or a practice of freedom” (Butler, 2000, p. 11), that Critical Media Literacy espouses. These theorists assert that the act of thinking critically can empower citizens to “challenge oppression and strengthen democracy” (Kellner & Share, 2007, p. 8), ultimately opening opportunities for them. “Critique must be linked to possibility” (McLaren, 1998, p. 298). This research draws upon McLaren (1998), Foucault (2007), and Kellner & Share (2007) to define “critical analysis” as the way in which any message is assessed, evaluated, or appraised in terms of its validity, and its potential to oppose or reinforce a cultural normative.

At the core of Critical Media Literacy education are the hopeful spirit of inquiry and the impulse to teach students to ask questions concerning cultural “truths.” Therefore, what follows is a review of some influential thinkers of critical pedagogy and their impact on the growth of Critical Media Literacy.

Critical pedagogy.

Critical pedagogues seek to create a space of opposition within the “Fordist” educational model that has dominated America and other industrialized countries since the early twentieth century (Antonio & Bonanno, 2000; Durham & Kellner, 2006). Among the most prominent criticisms waged against the American educational system by critical pedagogues is the argument that neither should teachers be distributors of information, nor should students be mere passersby on the metaphorical conveyor belt of information reception.

Critical pedagogy creates a space for educators to subvert (to destabilize in its weakest form of the term, or to sabotage in its extreme mode) the status quo of the American educational system. Critical pedagogy seeks to transform this factory-based educational system that has changed very little since its inception. Dewey (1916) warned:

All communication is like art. It may fairly be said, therefore, that any social arrangement that remains vitally social, or vitally shared, is educative to those who participate in it. Only when it becomes cast in a mold and runs in a routine way does it lose its educative power. (p. 7)

The “mold” into which the American educational system has been cast no longer accounts for the range of students’ communication and connections via new media and the ways they have changed students’ culture. The American educational “mold” was cast in a cultural milieu unconcerned underrepresented student populations, such as students of color, students with disabilities, students living in poverty and others. Since the turn of the 20th century, three waves of feminism have crashed since on education’s metaphorical shores; two world wars have been fought; segregation has been banned (legally); students with disabilities have been integrated

(theoretically); yet today's classrooms look remarkably similar to those of the fin de siècle, or turn of the 20th century.

Critical pedagogy confronts the educational system's indoctrination of students into various political and economic ideologies. Critical pedagogy resists the notion of a "pluralism" or "diversity" that strips female (Luke, 1992), ethnic and underrepresented students of their "cultural capital" (Gonzales et al., 2011). Instead, it seeks to transform the educational system into one that criticizes, "the effects of global capitalism . . . [and] renounce[s] and contest[s] the production of race, class and gender injustices through capitalism's terroristic logic of production and consumption linked to the commodity form" (McLaren, 1995, p. 235). Critical pedagogy tasks educators with inspiring students with "will" (hooks, 2009, p.8).

Critical pedagogue, hooks, calls this "engaged pedagogy." "Engaged pedagogy is a teaching strategy that aims to restore students' will to think, and their will to be fully self-actualized" (2009, p. 8). hooks (2009) argues that educators ought to practice "radical openness" (p. 10), by demonstrating the act of learning in front of their students. This requires educators to admit what they do not know, and to learn from their students.

Critical pedagogues display critique in action as they think critically about their own rhetoric that may reinforce stereotypes. Calling critical pedagogy "radical pedagogy," Luke (1992, p.25) argues that even critical pedagogy has been dominated by men giving lip service to the liberatory aspect of critical pedagogy, while failing to "critique masculinist theoretical narratives" (p. 29). To support her point, Luke critiques fellow critical pedagogue, Freire (2005), who stated:

We can legitimately say that in the process of oppression, someone oppresses someone else; we cannot say that in the process of

revolution, someone liberates someone else, nor yet that someone liberates himself, but rather that men in communion liberate each other. (p. 128)

Luke highlights that Freire himself criticized the use of language that benefits the speaker as oppressor, yet failed to notice his own default use of the third-person masculine reflexive pronoun, “himself.” Freire (2009) was cognizant that “the colonizer goes to great lengths toward the preservation of that language as a power presence” (p. 180); however, he himself used androcentric language that gives women “internalized assumptions about their lack of a right to, or even capacity for, the exercise of authority” (Kenway & Modra, 1992, p. 153). These critical analyses typify critical pedagogy. Stated simply, “critical pedagogy is about power and empowerment” (McLaren, 1998, p. ix).

Critical pedagogy challenges educators to consider the advantages and disadvantages that educators and students face regarding class, gender, race, sexual orientation, ability, and religion. Critical Media Literacy incorporates critical pedagogy to capitalize upon various media in order to develop students’ critical thinking skills and to advocate for social justice.

Critical media literacy.

Hobbs (2011) explains that some high school teachers tend to “vilify media industries for their profit-seeking motives in attracting large audiences” (p. 118). This view, commonly referred to as the “protectionist approach” (Share, 2006, p. 10), critically challenges media, yet encourages students merely to fear media, rather than to inquire habitually about representations of power and ideology depicted by them. Although the common interpretation of Marx’s definition of “ideology” was once, “they do not know it, but they are doing it,” today “ideology” is more commonly defined as, “they know it, but are doing it anyway” (Simons, 2010, p. 245).

Learning in environments that are “branded” by corporate philanthropy and courted by vote-seeking politicians, students may have lost the independent space in which to practice their critical thinking skills, or their autonomy (Barkan, 2008, p. 2). The educator who utilizes media to help students regain their autonomy teaches more than “Media Literacy.”

Masterman (1993) emphasized the importance of the media instructor, “to develop in pupils enough self-confidence and critical maturity to be able to apply critical judgments to media texts which they will encounter in the future” (p.18). Hobbs (2011) developed Masterman’s definition of critical autonomy as that of “enough self-awareness and critical maturity to be able to apply critical judgments to media texts which they will encounter in the future” (p. 119). Hobbs’ emphasis on self-awareness is crucial. Fine-tuning this unique definition of the “critical” aspect of Critical Media Literacy, Hobbs (2011) “valorize[s] the importance of questioning assumptions, asking questions, and reflecting on one’s own process of interpretation” (p. 119). The fusion of Hobbs’ (2011) and Masterman’s (1993) Critical Media Literacy definitions leads to a concise definition of Critical Media Literacy as “the ability to decipher and challenge messages in media texts (whether visual, aural or physical).”

This study examines how UCLA’s TEP Critical Media Literacy instructors, as well as their graduates and students understand Critical Media Literacy, therefore, it draws the definition from the course syllabus, which defines Critical Media Literacy as, “a critique that challenges the relativist and apolitical notion of most media education in order to guide teachers and their students in their explorations of how power, information and media are linked” (Share, 2006, p.28). This combination of self-awareness, inquiry and reflexivity of the readers or “prosumers” captures the essence of Critical Media Literacy and the core philosophy behind the UCLA

Teacher Education Program course as not just one that teaches skills, but rather as one that encourages political activism towards a more just society.

UCLA's teacher education program's critical media literacy course.

The UCLA Teacher Education Program's course on Critical Media Literacy, "Critical Media Literacy: Teaching Youth to Critically Read and Create Media," began in 2007 as optional. As of the fall 2012 academic quarter, the course became mandatory for all Teacher Education Program students, as it fulfills their technology requirement for graduation. The course aims to help "educators teaching K-12 students to explore their relationships with media by critically questioning media representations and creating their own alternative media messages" (Share, 2011, p. 1). This course asks students to analyze, "new digital media as well as traditional print-based means of communication" (Share, 2011, p. 1). For many educators, this course is an introduction to new media and the various ways that they can be utilized for teaching. Some of the students taking this course are experienced and credentialed, returning to school for their Master's degrees, while some are inexperienced college graduates earning their credentials and/or Master's degrees simultaneously. This course drives UCLA's Teacher Education Program students to think about the representations of identity and messages that media may promote, while familiarizing them with innovative technologies to create new media.

Empirical Research on Critical Media Literacy.

This project's purpose was twofold: 1) to describe the UCLA Teacher Education Program instructors' understandings and methods of teaching Critical Media Literacy; 2) to describe the UCLA Teacher Education Program's graduates' and students' experiences of integrating Critical Media Literacy into their high school Humanities classrooms. There was no standard in the U.S.

for teaching Critical Media Literacy as of 2012. This study was necessary and timely as educational scholars had recently begun to assess the Media Literacy and the Critical Media Literacy of K-12 students and teachers, and because UCLA's Teacher Education Program required its Critical Media Literacy course. Critical Media Literacy is a newer nuance borne of Media Literacy. Therefore, this review considered the findings of empirical research using both terms.

Whereas Canada, Australia and Britain have defined Media Literacy or Critical Media Literacy and assessed it among their students and educators, the United States Department of Education has neither defined Critical Media Literacy nor delineated the means of its assessment. Some American advocates of Critical Media Literacy education have described the effect of media on students' reading habits, values and the ways in which Critical Media Literacy reinvigorates learning in American classrooms. Others, aimed at studying mass media effects, have assessed the Media Literacy of K-12 students. International studies, however, have enumerated Critical Media Literacy standards, assessed its impact, and argued for innovative methods for measuring and reporting students' critical literacy in media. This literature review describes their findings, and the directions of further inquiry opened by them.

Critical media literacy fosters critical thinking.

Attempting to display the correlation between the implementation of Critical Media Literacy in a classroom and students' increased analytical skills, Hobbs and Frost (2003) trained teachers at Concord High School to develop their 11th graders' Media Literacy acquisition. Seven teachers trained to teach a year-long Media Literacy course framed around the following five questions:

Who is sending this message and what is the author's purpose?

What techniques are used to attract and hold attention?

What lifestyles, values, and points of view are represented in this message?

How might people interpret this message differently?

What is omitted from this message? (Hobbs & Frost, 2003, p. 337)

The study's limitations included its lack of diversity among the faculty (three white males and four white females), its inability to assign the treatment and control groups randomly (totaling 300 students combined), and the conservative ideologies of some faculty, exemplified by one teacher, who did not want to discuss the Clinton/Lewinsky scandal with her class. She said, "I'm struggling with how much lurid material we have to look at. Do we have to look at it to talk about it? I want to find some other little more safe terrain. That's the conventional side of me" (Hobbs & Frost, R., 2003, p. 338). Despite these limitations, the data indicated that the null hypothesis could be rejected. The treatment group demonstrated the effectiveness of the Media Literacy curriculum within the context of its English course.

The students who focused on Media Literacy skills within their English curriculum, after controlling for their varying grade point averages, significantly outperformed the control group on a test measuring their analytical skills. Hobbs and Frost (2003) urged high school teachers to "be less fearful of making use of a wider range of multimedia fiction and nonfiction texts as study objects when their primary goal remains the development of students' skills of reading comprehension, interpretation, message analysis, and writing" (2003, p. 350). This research suggests that, "further research should explore differences among teachers' instructional methodologies for integrating media-literacy instruction with English language arts" (Hobbs &

Frost, 2003, p. 352). To date, no such studies have been conducted. Aside from increasing reading comprehension, Critical Media Literacy has demonstrated its potential to augment students' critical thinking skills.

Studying students' critical thinking skills in Maryland, Kubey and Serafin (2001) created Critical Media Literacy modules for their teachers to cover in their courses. The teachers' eighth-grade students answered critical thinking skills questions at the beginning and conclusion of the school year. Students who had covered the Critical Media Literacy lessons correctly answered more critical thinking questions at the end of the academic year than did their control peers. The study found that they "obtained an increased and appropriate skepticism about the claims of advertisers and increased caution with regard to the veracity of information found on the Internet" (Kubey & Serafin, 2001, p. 2). While the researchers acknowledged that some of the gains in scores could have been attributed to maturation alone, they noted that the magnitude of gains could not be explained by the mere passage of time or instruction as usual, especially in the post- No Child Left Behind (NCLB) climate, in which most educators have little autonomy to customize their curricula by including media.

Some scholars have argued that NCLB and its repercussions have stifled K-12 educators who might otherwise have the freedom to adapt their own curricula creatively according to their students' needs (Allender, 2000; Hanushek & Woessmann, 2005; Hobbs, 2004; Ravitch, 2010). Flores-Koulish (2006) argues that because Critical Media Literacy "provides a gateway for students to establish an inquiry stance in the world to potentially bring back aspects of creative, original thought" (p. 240), teacher education programs should require Critical Media Literacy.

Flores-Koulish's study investigated the effects of engaging 25 female pre-service teachers (enrolled in a Critical Media Literacy course at Loyola College) in the critical analysis

of Madonna's "Material Girl." This study found that the subjects learned how to read Madonna's video critically as a text and to identify ways in which they could translate this into lessons for their own future students (Flores-Koulish, 2006, p. 247). Based upon these findings, Flores-Koulish (2006) stated:

Perhaps the biggest question that remains is: Can Critical Media Literacy education thrive amid the current accountability movement in the US? . . . There is very little empirical research in this area [teacher education], and hopefully this study will encourage more visibility to this emerging field. (Flores-Koulish, 2006, p. 248)

Flores-Koulish asserts that the new accountability movement, predicated upon standardized testing, may stifle educators' creativity, making Critical Media Literacy an increasingly important component of teacher preparation.

Concerned about the effects of broad-scale standardized testing on minority students, a small teacher education program in rural New England created a hybrid (partially online) Critical Media Literacy course and then explored its effects during the 2006-07 academic year. The course, "Critical Issues in Literature for Children and Adolescents," (Woodcock, 2009) addressed issues of diversity and equity among K-12 students. The course utilized online lectures, asynchronous chats, live chats, discussion boards, and monthly in-person class sessions. The major themes that emerged from the participants' discussions were "gender stereotyping, breadth of exposure, and negotiations of power" (Woodcock, 2009, pp. 103-110). The course emphasized the importance for teachers to facilitate among their students controversial conversations, as they foster critical thinking skills. "Equally important, however, was [that it]

provid[ed] a meaningful way for teachers to explore their own critical lens” (Woodcock, 2009, p. 110). This study’s findings, while relevant to this research project, may not translate to larger teacher education programs, such as UCLA’s. It had a small population (five males and five females); every participant was Caucasian; the researcher was the course’s creator and instructor (Woodcock, 2009, pp. 100–102). Despite its limitations, this study is relevant and significant, as its participants worked in multicultural classrooms, as do most UCLA Teacher Education students, and because so few empirical studies have concerned Critical Media Literacy and teacher preparation in the U.S.

Critical media literacy is relevant to students and teachers.

In Australia, the Ministry of Education has long harnessed the power of popular culture and new media to engage its students. A 1993 study in Western Australia by Quin and McMahon examined a group of high school students trained to analyze media critically. The study assessed 1,425 students who had studied Media Literacy for a minimum of three years under the Western Australian curriculum (Quin & Mc Mahon, 1993, p. 17). Its findings indicated that the females consistently outperformed the males (Quin & Mc Mahon, 1993, p. 18). The researcher concluded that Media Literacy was a crucial component for educators promoting equity, as females and minorities must be attuned to the masculine discourse of Western society’s media because they have much at stake in critiquing it (1993, p. 19).

The researchers stressed the importance of engaging students with media to strengthen their critical thinking skills and to keep the curriculum relevant to their lives beyond school:

We want students to be competent and critical users of the media -
not competent and critical for one school year and long enough to
pass the examination, but people who will continue to be

competent and critical users of media long after they have left our care. (Quin & Mc Mahon, 1993, p. 22)

The implications of this Australian research can advance the Critical Media Literacy agenda in the U.S. Certainly, all educators seek to teach their students lifelong critical inquiry skills, yet they may struggle to connect the classroom material to the students' lives outside of school. The Australian researchers succinctly defined the value of teaching Critical Media Literacy:

If at the end of their schooldays the students can talk and write intelligently only about the attitudes and values of the texts they have studied in school but cannot apply their knowledge to other media products, then as teachers we have failed. We need to develop strategies that will encourage students to link what they do in the classroom to the world in which they live. (Quin & McMahon, 1993, p. 22)

Recommending more methodical teacher training in Media Literacy, the researchers suggested that teachers use more “radical texts” that move students through initial discomfort and elicit vibrant classroom conversations addressing political and societal inequities (Quin & Mc Mahon, 1993, pp. 23–24).

Australia has not only used Critical Media Literacy to enrich its traditional K-12 curriculum, but also to re-engage students who have dropped out, or risk dropping out, of mainstream public school. “YouthWorx” is a partnership created in 2008 among Youth Development Australia, the Salvation Army, Northern Melbourne Institute of Technical and Further Education, SYN (Student Youth Network) Media, and the Swinburne University Institute for Social Research. It serves youth (ages 15-24) who are homeless, or deemed to be,

“at risk,” and who share, “a common history of disengagement from formal education, un- or under-employment and a lack of opportunities for personal growth and development” (Hopkins, 2011, p. 185). It provides them access to a fully equipped multi-media studio and social workers who teach them how to use the technology in it. In addition, the youth have the opportunity to earn certificates that enable them to gain employment in the entertainment industry once they leave “Youth Worx.”

A recent study of “YouthWorx” found that because media make education engaging and cultivate students’ critical thinking, they are critical educational components for reincorporating disenfranchised, or at risk, youth into the educational system:

There are two processes at work in the development of non-formal learning opportunities around media production – based on the one hand on media as an area of interest with which to engage young people and, on the other, using the development of critical media skills as a key tool in empowering active citizens, able and willing to contribute to the democratic process. (Hopkins, 2011, p. 183)

The ethnography of “YouthWorx” examined three youth enrolled in the program. The most significant weakness of the study was its small number of subjects, which is a challenge inherent to studying a population difficult to find and track (Hopkins, 2011, p. 189). The findings indicated that by utilizing culturally relevant material (that of media), “YouthWorx” re-engaged at-risk youth with the educational system and democratic society. By “actively encourage[ing] the acquisition of skills to help individuals surmount barriers to participation, through the hook of creating content which is pleasurable and rewarding,” “YouthWorx” placed young people

back in school and into jobs (Hopkins, 2011, p. 191). The data from this study linked Critical Media Literacy instruction to a renewed vibrancy among students and educators.

The 2001 study in Maryland that recorded a dramatic increase in students' critical thinking skills also recorded a dramatic response from the teachers who learned the Critical Media Literacy modules for teaching that year. Of the 78 K-12 Humanities classrooms that participated in the Maryland study, 50% of the teachers stated that they were "more enthusiastic about teaching" (Kubey & Serafin, 2001, p. 4) and 62% reported that they had shared this curriculum with other teachers (2001, p. 4). More significant was their finding that 93% of the teachers reported, "Media Literacy is a tool that helps students with learning other tasks" (p. 5). Their enthusiasm seemed contagious. Ninety-three percent of the teachers agreed that, "Media Literacy activities enabled them to make the subject they taught more interesting" (Kubey & Serafin, 2001, p.5). Yet, the researchers could not speculate as to whether the new media material increased students' engagement, or if the teachers' enthusiasm for the new media engaged the students (Kubey & Serafin, 2001, p.6). Moreover, as the study used quantitative methods, the researchers (Kubey & Serafin, 2001) could not decipher whether or not students gave socially desirable answers. The teachers, however, did participate in interviews and they frequently commented that they needed more training with Media Literacy. Fifty-percent of the teachers stated that, "they wished the teacher training on the media modules had been longer and more intense" (Kubey & Serafin, 2001, p.9). Further research is needed to discover what kind of training teachers want regarding Critical Media Literacy.

One study that did gather detailed qualitative data from teachers' perspectives was conducted in 2009 by DeAbreu. This case study examined three high school teachers (teaching Science, English and Social Studies) and their processes of incorporating Media Literacy into

their classrooms. The teachers had recently completed training in Media Literacy of their own volition in order to enhance their pedagogy. DeAbreu (2009) utilized interviews, lesson recordings and educational artifacts from each participant in order to report their experiences (p. 61).

The two most common themes that emerged from this research were “Constructivist Approach” and “Relevancy/Real Life Connections” (DeAbreu, 2009, p. 112). DeAbreu (2009) quoted Flores-Koulish to emphasize the need for this research: “Very little research has been done to find out how those teachers who have received training have been able to implement this knowledge when they return to the classroom (p.1). The data collected in this study remained largely theoretical, focusing on the teachers’ enthusiasm, rather than reporting specific methods they used to teach media material. Future investigations with larger sample populations and links between theory and application are needed.

Flores-Koulish (2006), urged scholars to conduct more empirical research examining teacher education programs and how they teach teachers to integrate Critical Media Literacy across their curricula. Although data demonstrate that educators and scholars find Critical Media Literacy to be a relevant educational component, few empirical studies have reported how educators incorporate Critical Media Literacy into their pedagogy while meeting state educational standards.

In their most current edition, the California English Language Arts Common Core Standards (2010) recommend that students use “seminal” texts (pp. 34–39), and more specifically, that they should:

analyze seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and nineteenth-century
foundational U.S. documents of historical and literary significance

(including The Declaration of Independence, the Preamble to the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address) for their themes, purposes, and rhetorical features. (p. 22)

While these seminal works should have a place within the curriculum, research shows that students learn best when they personally resonate with or relate to the material they study. What better way to help students learn basic critical thinking skills than to help them critically read texts (of various media) with which they are familiar and which seem relevant to their lives outside of school? Today's students know television, radio, Internet and film. By incorporating Critical Media Literacy, educators would neither ignore the core standards, nor neglect important historical events; however, they could begin to incorporate modern media representations of these historical accounts as well.

A recent study conducted by Kimber and Wyatt-Smith (2010) examined educators using new media to make History relevant to today's students (n = 984). The findings suggested a strong correlation between the incorporation of online student collaborative e-designs and their improved ability to analyze messages critically, communicate respectfully and avoid plagiarism (2010, p.617). Similarly, study of 1,118 students who played "Mission U.S.," an online history game, found that the students using the digital medium scored significantly higher on the exam than those limited to studying History textbooks. "Mission U.S.," a digital game created by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) and the American Civics and History Initiative (ACHI), was part of the "Flight to Freedom" (2012) program created for middle school students. The Education Development Center, Inc (EDC) assessed students' critical analysis of historical documents before and after playing the game by comparing them to a control group of peers who studied History solely from textbooks.

The students who had played the game displayed a more critical awareness of issues pertaining to Blacks, Loyalists and Women in history (PR Newswire, 2012). The teachers in the study noted that the participatory nature of the medium encouraged their students' inquiry and made the material more relevant. Of the 41 teachers whose students used the game, 37 reported that their students "were more deeply engaged in classroom activities and discussions than the control students (PR Newswire, 2012). These findings suggest that U.S. classrooms might benefit from using digital media in History courses, particularly in high schools, where, according to the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Report (2010), students have shown no statistically significant improvement in the last decade (p. 3).

Critical media literacy promotes social justice.

Critical Media Literacy can be an engaging tool for underrepresented and disenfranchised students. Boske and McCormack (2011) investigated the effects of incorporating Critical Media Literacy among Latino students belonging to Texan high school media club moderated by a Latino teacher (p. 173, 2011). The thirteen students, aged 14-16, volunteered to meet after school to view a total of 25 clips of the 2006 movie, *Happy Feet*, and then to answer critical thinking questions regarding the film. The researchers challenged the students to think about what messages the film tried to send, what its assumptions about the audience were and what it said about the nature of power (Boske & McCormack, 2011, p. 168). The study was limited in its findings due to the demographics of its participants – they all volunteered because they were already interested in critically analyzing media; the subject pool was small (n=13) and homogenous by being low income, urban-dwelling, and Latino (Boske & McCormack, 2011, p. 173). Despite these limitations, the qualitative data attest to Critical Media Literacy's power to promote social justice in the classroom.

One participant's comment highlighted the importance of using Critical Media Literacy, as well as the stigma that some educators have attached to Media Studies:

We never talk about this kind of stuff in school. If we have a movie in class, it's because the teacher doesn't want to teach that day. I think more kids would want to come to school and learn if they had chances like this to really think about what is going on out there. (Boske & McCormack, 2011, p. 175)

Using a Critical Media Literacy approach to "Happy Feet," this student began critically thinking about society and justice. The students in this study practiced their critical thinking skills and engaged with the material because it was relevant to them. They turned their attention outward to their broader society while contemplating justice and injustice, as mediated by a contemporary film.

At the Department of Language and Literacy Education at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada, researchers sought to discover the advantages and disadvantages of using a modern technological medium in an educational setting. Engaging pre-service teachers in wiki (asynchronous) platforms, the study tried to identify, "social negotiations . . . [or] the interrelations and negotiations that take place amongst individuals in the form of their establishment of social hierarchies and their negotiation of authority" (Vratulis & Dobson, 2008, p. 286) while using the Internet. The researchers observed 95% of the coursework and wiki activity of 800 pre-service teachers, who were divided into cohorts of approximately 36 (Vratulis & Dobson, 2008, pp. 287–289).

After completing the year-long program, the participants answered open-ended questions about their participation. The findings indicated that the wiki helped the pre-service teachers

develop a sense of community, negotiate roles, hierarchies and authority (Vratulis & Dobson, 2008, pp. 289-293). The students, who admitted to relying typically on their instructors to create a sense of community in their physical classroom, were challenged to create their own sense of community within the wiki. “We were supposed to make the connections on our own. That is tough when you are used to teachers telling you exactly how [many] ‘hoops to jump through’” (Vratulis & Dobson, 2008, p. 290). They learned about hierarchies and negotiating authority by deciding how to distribute responsibility for different components of assignments. They also collaborated to find impartial methods of distributing course work and fair methods of giving one another feedback. Only one person can edit a wiki at a time, so the students had to work deliberately, which led to initial frustration, but significantly positive results. “Over 90% of interviewees described it [the wiki project] as highly valuable, some remarking that it was one of the most profound learning experiences of their formal education” (Vratulis & Dobson, 2008, p. 292). The pre-service teachers in the wiki study became cognizant of the “challenge central to teacher education,” which is “the need to translate theoretical ideas into classroom praxis” (Vratulis & Dobson, 2008, p. 293).

The lessons learned from this study, however, cannot transfer directly to American teacher education programs for one significant reason: Canada’s Ministry of Education has named Media Literacy as a priority for its students since 1989 (Center for Media Literacy, 2012). Canadian educators now attending a Canadian teacher education program would have been taught throughout their own primary school to consider the “5 Key Questions” when reading any text for school: “1. Author (‘constructedness’); 2. Format (and techniques of production); 3. Audience; 4. Content (or message); 5. Motive (or purpose)” (Jolls & Thoman, 2004, p. 23). The participants already understood that using a wiki platform was not about learning to use new

technology as a means to an end (Vratulis & Dobson, 2008). Instead, they learned how technology facilitated the kind of critical thinking about social hierarchies and social justice that their educational system had already fostered through national Media Literacy campaigns. American pre-service teachers learning about Critical Media Literacy are likely encountering new terrain, as their primary and secondary education rarely, if at all, analyzed media representations. While research regarding Critical Media Literacy has traditionally examined film and Internet media, a creative study by Gauntlett and Holzwarth (2006) used Legos to explore the relationship between media and children's perceptions of equity.

Gauntlett and Holzwarth (2006) tasked 100 children, ages 7-11, to construct visual representations of themselves using Legos (p. 82). They then asked them to explain why they constructed their identities the ways that they did. The findings suggested that:

They have knowledge about themselves and the ways in which other people live their lives – informed in part by the media – and they are affected by social constraints (such as access to resources and money, and perhaps to knowledge) and by social forces (which means, basically, other people's expectations). (Gauntlett & Holzwarth, 2006, p. 88)

Gauntlett and Holzwarth (2006) argued that the impact of media cannot be singled out and measured, but that "media effect" can be witnessed indirectly through creative play (p. 82). Moreover, "media effect" need not be categorically negative. This study's participants reported having a sense of global connection with other youth through new media and sensed having "multiple belongings" (Gauntlett & Holzwarth, 2006, p. 83). The researchers predicated their theory on Foucault, who argued that critique can "change things positively" (Gauntlett &

Holzwarth, 2006, pp.88-89). Gauntlett and Holzwarth (2006) asserted that visual and tactile media could play a significant role in assessing students' perceptions of social justice. Gauntlett (2006) explained why the assessment of Critical Media Literacy can and should incorporate multi-media:

In media studies terms, this approach avoids treating individuals as mere 'audience' of particular products. Rather than defining people as 'soap opera viewers' or 'magazine readers,' this approach recognizes that people receive media messages from all kinds of places, all day long, and that they somehow process all of these but do so as a whole person. (p. 3)

Gauntlett and Holzwarth (2006) demonstrated how Critical Media Literacy open educational research to new horizons of promoting social justice.

Critical media literacy deserves a place in the curriculum.

A growing body of evidence suggests that teachers working in media vacuums (educational settings that refuse to incorporate media into the curriculum) may distance themselves from their students and teach less effectively. After conducting a nation-wide review of various implementations of Media Literacy by K-12 educators in the U.S., Hobbs (2004) concluded that one of the biggest barriers to incorporating it into the K-12 standards is that "many instructional leaders [fear] that Media Literacy is not rigorous or academically challenging" (2004, p. 46). This stigma has been challenged in Maryland, as well as Texas, where "students must pass [a high stakes test] before graduation [that] now includes a component in which students must analyze persuasive techniques in advertising" (Hobbs, 2004, p. 47). By

making advertising analyses mandatory for graduation, Maryland and Texas use familiar media to teach critical thinking skills and shrink the divide between school and “the real world.”

The chasm between the literacy required in school and the literacies used by students outside of school could only further disenfranchise students. Indeed, a reading of the California English Language Arts Common Core Standards (2010) reveals that this rift is not merely anecdotal. According to the Core Standards (2010):

Students’ narrative skills continue to grow in these grades [6-12].

The Standards require that students be able to incorporate narrative elements effectively into arguments and informative/explanatory texts. In history/social studies, students must be able to incorporate narrative accounts into their analyses of individuals or events of historical import. In science and technical subjects, students must be able to write precise enough descriptions of the step-by-step procedures they use in their investigations or technical work that others can replicate them and (possibly) reach the same results.

(p.55)

Technology is so rapidly changing the way in which we write and create narratives, that in many careers today, the ability to utilize and analyze web domains, links, wikis and blogs is of paramount importance. Furthermore, new technologies have changed the way scholars deliberate about what is considered “historical import.” If California’s high school graduates today are only capable of synthesizing others’ ideas and writing documents that others can read, then they are in danger of facing stark prospects in collegiate opportunities and employment expectations.

A 2012 study, conducted by Penuel, Bates, Gallagher, Pasnik, Llorente, Townsend, & Hupert, suggested that Critical Media Literacy can and should start during preschool. This randomized controlled trial, which collected data on 436 preschoolers enrolled in California and New York, found that, with the proper training and technology, preschool educators can help students become critically literate (Penuel et al., 2012). The data indicated that low-income students watched considerably more television than did their peers of a higher socio-economic status (Penuel et al., 2012, p. 116). Therefore, television is a medium that saturates many students' realities, one upon which schools could capitalize to teach students vital critical thinking skills.

Christianakis's 2011 ethnography of urban fifth-grade students found that canonical literature, which predicates curriculum standards, "can maintain hegemonic literacy boundaries based in antipopular ideologies" (p.1133). "Antipopular ideologies," according to Christianakis (2011), are frames of thinking which assert that popular culture has less academic value, and these frames further alienate urban and underrepresented students. This ethnography (Christianakis, 2011) attempted to analyze how the "children used hybrids [musical narratives, including rap music] to negotiate literacy boundaries in their standards based environment" (p. 1135). Critical pedagogue, hooks (2009), asserts that the inclusion of rap into the K-12 curriculum is important for three reasons:

(1) hip-hop music [is] culturally relevant to the lives of the students because they [listen] to rap music, [write] rap songs, and [imitate] hip-hop artists; (2) the issues discussed in most rap songs could be used to talk about a variety of topics, determine how these issues [affect] the students, and increase student engagement; and

(3) students [need] illustrations of how to master a variety of writing styles for academic success. (p. 72)

Christianakis' study tasked fifth grade students to incorporate and analyze rap lyrics into their own original works of poetry regularly throughout the academic year. Their students' instructor wanted the students to incorporate popular culture and poetry into their own assignments, yet struggled with his assumptions about various artists (Christianakis, 2011, p. 1153). For instance, he allowed one student to recite a poem by Emily Dickenson, but forbade another to perform one by Dr. Dre (Christianakis, 2011, p.1153). Additionally, the instructor allowed students to read, analyze and mimic poems created by Bob Dylan, whose lyrics often criticized the government, while students were not allowed to utilize the lyrics of social critic Snoop Dogg (Christianakis, 2004, p. 1154).

Christianakis (2011) speculated that, "rap was only helpful insofar as it served to help motivate students and build bridges or scaffolds to canonical texts; rap music was not a text for official classroom study" (p. 1162). Although the instructor had originally intended to challenge the core standards, he faced contention from school officials and students' parents. The students' parents frequently told the instructor that the students needed to learn unfamiliar material [canonical literature] at school, that they were already familiar with rap at home (Christianakis, 2011, p. 1149). Not fully integrated into the curriculum, the rap music was rarely analyzed critically. Additionally, the instructor struggled to enforce Standard American English (as opposed to the vernacular) as dictated by the school's standards. "The rap poems represented compromise between the goals of school and the children's interest in out of school texts" (Christianakis, 2011, p. 1162). Concluding that Media Studies in the American curriculum is only in its nascency, Christianakis (2011) urged scholars to conduct more research to discover

how educators productively incorporate popular culture into the curriculum. “What is more, students and teachers could benefit from dialoguing about what counts as text, whose criteria matter, for which audiences, and for what purposes” (Christianakis, 2011, p. 1163). Similar research has addressed educational uses of music, a medium often overlooked or underbudgeted among American primary and secondary schools.

Educational scholars in the United Kingdom (UK) have tried to harness the educative power of music by combining it with Information and Communications Technology (ICT). “In its orders for the UK National Curriculum, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) recommended that Key Stage 3 pupils [those aged 11–14] should experience ICT using General MIDI [Musical Instrument Digital Interface], sequencing, and cut-copy-paste” (Ward, 2009, p. 155). Ward (2009) hypothesized that including ICTs in music education could “revolutionize the way children create in the classroom because [ICTs help] the children overcome [their] preconceptions” (p.155) regarding their lack of musical talent.

Ward (2009) utilized a convenience sample – 189 of his own students (aged 11-16) enrolled in his music courses. Rather than regarding his position of teacher and researcher as in conflict, Ward took advantage of it. He invited his students to help him develop his protocols, thereby turning his research project into an action research project and a learning experience for his students. Students created original compositions and film soundtracks that they posted on YouTube, completing questionnaires and video diaries throughout their creative processes. Collaborative projects taught the students the value of time management and conflict negotiation (Ward, 2009, p. 161), while the individual projects fostered the students’ creativity and challenged their assumptions about music (p. 162).

Ward (2009) acknowledged the study's limitations as the insufficient duration of MIDI tutorials and his own brevity while giving instructions (p. 165). His key finding was, "that ICT is not an end in itself, but it is an easy route to higher attainment: it is a powerful tool that revolutionizes the creative process, not a toy, and needs to be adopted" as such (Ward, 2009, p. 164). Ward (2009) concluded with an appeal to more educators to use ICT and multi-media projects in their classrooms. Until educators harness the power of these by integrating them into their courses, new media might remain mere distractions to, rather than facilitators of, students' learning.

Groenke and Youngquist (2011) hypothesized that high school students would read contemporary literature critically because of their frequent perusals of non-linear narratives through Internet media (p. 506). However, their findings contradicted this. Their case study (Groenke & Youngquist, 2011) of 25 freshmen reading Myers' *Monster* found that the students were generally unable to understand flashbacks (p. 508), to link images with the narrative (p. 507), and that they held preconceived notions about the lessons the character was "supposed" to learn (p. 510). The data indicated that students have learned to associate school-based reading with traditional linear narratives meeting certain cultural and textual expectations (Groenke & Youngquist, 2011, p. 511). The researchers recommended that teachers frequently challenge their students' technical abilities, as well their value systems, so that students might become less rigid in their beliefs and more receptive to learning new ideas and skills (Groenke & Youngquist, 2011, p. 511). Critical Media Literacy can play an integral role in the development of students' beliefs.

In 2011, Karvonen, Rahkonen, West and Young conducted a cross-cultural comparison of value orientations between 15 year-olds in Helsinki (Finland) and Glasgow (United

Kingdom). The findings from their 4,616 participants indicated that young people who were frequently exposed to commercial media, as in the Glasgow group, “tend[ed] to be both more consumerist and less traditional in their orientation towards sex roles” (Karvonen, Young, West, & Rahkonen, 2011, p. 46). This study’s conclusion noted that the most dominant contributors to value orientations were the local traditions and national values (Karvonen et al., 2011, p. 48), but that increasing globalization through advancements in communicative technologies also influenced young people’s beliefs. Youth who were more invested in consumerist culture promulgated by media were less likely to hold traditional (negative) values, such as xenophobia, homophobia and sexism (Karvonen et al., 2011, p. 38). While this study indicated a positive correlation between children’s media engagement and their values, a recent study in Australia and New Zealand found otherwise.

Researchers Latif, Bhatti, Maitlo, Nazar, and Shaikh (2012) recruited Asian students studying in Australia and New Zealand to participate in focus groups with students native to Australia and New Zealand. Their primary objective was to measure the extent to which media influenced the students’ (n = 200) perceptions of and attitudes towards each other. The recent dramatic rise in the Asian population studying in Australia and New Zealand, and several 1990s studies finding that they were only “mildly comfortable” in their new surroundings made this study important to Australian post-secondary institutions (Latif et.al, 2012, p. 35).

The findings indicated that media portrayals of cultures and their values had a significant impact on the participants’ perceptions of one another. For example, media coverage of Asian-American store owners responding to riots in Los Angeles led some Australian-New Zealanders to believe that Asians were “violent hoodlums” and “second-class citizens” (Latif et al., 2012, p. 36). Conversely, some Asian students referred to media coverage of Australian-New Zealander

athletes, stereotyping them as “athletically gifted” (Latif et al., 2012, p. 37). While this study utilized questionnaires and focus groups, further descriptive studies utilizing one-on-one interviews could uncover more detailed findings and offer more specific recommendations.

Studies such as these indicate the increased need for Critical Media Literacy long before college, so that students practice challenging media portrayals of cultures before they solidify their “formed beliefs and attitudes” (Latif et al., 2012, p. 39). Indeed, media portrayals of identities and cultures affect how students think of and relate to one another. Therefore, Critical Media Literacy deserves a place within the K-16 curriculum and students deserve to be instructed by educators trained to integrate it effectively.

Teacher education curricula.

Few American teacher education programs offer, let alone require, as does UCLA’s Teacher Education Program, a Critical Media Literacy course. Grabill and Hicks (2005) speculate that many teachers cannot incorporate Critical Media Literacy into their pedagogy because they have neither the access to ICT nor the technical skills to do so. To this end, they advocate for teacher development in ICT. “Because teachers of writing expect to intervene usefully to help students with their writing processes, they have to engage in students' production and encourage them to engage with others, all of which is now mostly computer-mediated and networked” (Grabill & Hicks, 2005, p. 306). Grabill and Hicks (2005) contend that the technology standards for most teacher education students, as evidenced by Michigan State University’s, are far too low.

Michigan State University teacher education students must demonstrate their familiarity with e-mail in order to meet the technology standard for graduation. “Writing an e-mail isn't enough; using ICTs isn't enough; critically understanding how these writing technologies enable

new literacies and meaningful communication should also be a core curricular and pedagogical function of English education,” stress Grabill & Hicks (2005, p. 308). The crux of this debate, for many educators, is whether incorporating media and popular culture into the curriculum will somehow weaken it (Abbott, 2001; Bennett et al., 2011; Cervi & Perez Tornero, 2011; Goetze, Brown, & Schwarz, 2005; Hobbs, 2011; Kellner & Share, 2007; McLaren, 1995; Tsitouridou & Konstantinos, 2011; Voss, Kunter, & Baumert, 2011). To the contrary, the University of Minnesota has strengthened its teacher education program by including a major Critical Media Literacy component (Doering, Beach, & O’Brien, 2007).

The University of Minnesota pairs its pre-service teachers with middle school (grades 8-10) students on special projects, such as multi-modal narratives involving literary and/or historical figures in online comic books and essays containing hyperlinks to relevant images, maps, historical data and music (Doering et al., 2007, pp. 45-9). The pre-service teachers and the students regularly discuss how their interaction with these media develop their critical thinking with regard to societal roles and historical accuracy. While this program is aimed solely at the English education students, others have targeted Social Studies teachers.

A 1998 study investigated the media and ICT knowledge of high school Social Studies instructors in teacher education programs throughout Ohio. The researchers hypothesized that instructors informed of media techniques and ICTs would make better high school instructors who more effectively encouraged democratic participation (Hamot, Shiveley, & Vanfossen, 1998, pp. 241–43). Conducted just prior to the explosion of the interactive and ubiquitous Web 2.0, this study focused on “mass media”; however, the five constructs of critical thinking about media closely resemble questions asked among Critical Media Literacy scholars today:

The ability to: 1) uncover hidden assumptions in mass media; 2) distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information in mass media reporting; 3) determine the point of view or bias of a media product; 4) distinguish between fact and opinion in a mass media product; 5) determine the strength of an argument as presented in a mass medium. (Hamot et al., 1998, p. 243)

The study's questionnaire was completed by 40 of the 47 Social Studies teacher education professors, 30 of whom had earned PhDs or EdDs, in Ohio. The findings indicated that while 28 participants thought that "technical acuity" (what is termed today as ICT competency) was an important competency to teach for media understanding, only 18 covered it in their teacher education courses (Hamot et al., 1998, p. 248). While 28 participants regarded teaching the five constructs of critical thinking as important, merely 11 of them included this in their teacher education courses (Hamot et al., 1998, p. 248). These findings caused the researchers to conclude that there was much room for improvement in teacher education programs. "The rethinking of priorities should take on two forms . . . media understanding as a more essential aspect of pre-service social studies teacher education . . . and an increase in emphasis on the application of critical thinking to mass media" (Hamot et al., 1998, p. 249). This 1998 study (Hamot et al.) is relevant to this research project because it exposed the potential for growth among teacher education programs and highlighted the need for a descriptive study uncovering methods through which such programs can teach Critical Media Literacy, especially with the modern technology available to educators today.

The turn of the twenty-first century brought with it a renewed surge in interest among educators seeking techniques for introducing Critical Media Literacy into their courses. In

“Hypermedia authoring as critical literacy,” Myers and Beach (2001) provide an extensive source for educators seeking to apply Critical Media Literacy in their classrooms. One such source is a tutorial for teachers on how to incorporate hypertexts in a document. By integrating hypertext into their reports, students can link ideas across the curriculum and challenge the common representations that they see in texts. Myers and Beach (2001) explained that hypertext links could help students offer alternative endings, plots, and characterizations:

Important to the construction of a critical consciousness is how these technology tools allow students to focus on specific symbolic words and actions and to explicate how our uses of texts construct the ideologies underlying social worlds. With this awareness comes the hope of greater consciousness and agency in interpreting and authoring texts, and thus the ability to transform future social worlds to achieve higher levels of social justice and equality.

(Myers & Beach, 2001, p. 541)

Myers and Beach (2001) acknowledged that some students initially create hypermedia texts simply to use links and connections aligned with their own beliefs and attitudes, rather than to seek a critical stance (p. 453). Although this is a legitimate concern, the use of hypermedia nonetheless encourages students to seek the media that represent their values. So, at the very least, they need to define their values while searching for links, which is often a process that reveals values contradictory to their own. The primary learning outcomes of exercises such as these are twofold: first, that students gain technical proficiency and second, that they engage in a reflective process that initiates their own critical inquiry processes. By learning critical inquiry skills, students may be more inclined to promote social justice.

One American high school teacher's account of a Critical Media Literacy exercise described how critical inquiry in the classroom fostered student discussions that were otherwise unlikely to occur. This teacher created a worksheet and grading rubric based on the five key-questions posed in Critical Media Literacy. In one exercise, students examined a photo featuring a young man sitting in a wheelchair. Students made comments such as, "No one likes to be with kids who are hampered by a chair" and, "Kids in wheelchairs sure don't look like Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt or move like Kobe Bryant" (Zambo, 2009, p. 64). After discussing the photo and the stereotypes associated with children in wheelchairs, the students explored the Internet to find information on people with disabilities. They discovered websites, made by sports organizations and extracurricular groups, designed specifically for uniting children in wheelchairs. The students then discussed how media portrayals (or the lack thereof) of people in wheelchairs had led them to make erroneous assumptions. This kind of discussion might not have been possible without the thoughtful rubric and guidance of the teacher, who found a low-cost way to incorporate Critical Media Literacy into the classroom. Empirical descriptive data are needed to capture the various ways in which educators use Critical Media Literacy to inspire their students to think critically.

Summary of the Review of the Literature

At UCLA's Teacher Education Program, the Critical Media Literacy course is required for all Teacher Education students. They are required to demonstrate particular technical proficiencies by using hypertexts, editing graphics with computer programs, and "culture jamming" – appropriating popular cultural symbols for the purpose of manipulating them for irony, or representing something other than their intended meanings. The Critical Media Literacy course is a survey course of critical pedagogy, critical theory and Media Studies, offering ideas

on practical classroom application. This study gathered empirical data to report how the course instructors understood and taught Critical Media Literacy and how, in turn, their students integrated it into their high school Humanities classrooms.

As demonstrated by this review of the literature, Critical Media Literacy is a broad field, one that spans the disciplines. Engaging teachers and students alike in critical thinking, Critical Media Literacy makes classroom material relevant and engaging, and facilitates classroom discussions centered on social justice. A growing body of evidence also suggests that high school students who have experience with Critical Media Literacy will perform better in college, as an increasing number of colleges are require critical thinking courses, and/or interdisciplinary information and media studies projects.

At the root of Critical Media Literacy is this fundamental drive to teach not one specific competency, but to augment students' social awareness and democratic participation. Foucault (1995) once argued that, "the power to punish is not essentially different from that of curing or educating" (p. 303). With the successful integration of Critical Media Literacy, educators may invalidate the very person who spent decades defining "critique" and in doing so, prove that "education, therefore, is a process of living and not a preparation for future living" (Dewey, 1916, p. 78).

Chapter Three

If you don't ask the right questions, every answer feels wrong.

(Difranco, 1994)

Introduction to Methods

Critical Media Literacy marks the dynamic intersection of critical theory and critical pedagogy. Burgeoning with the advent of new technologies, Critical Media Literacy offers educators a unique opportunity to apply theory in their classrooms and to teach their students inquiry skills for the twenty-first century. Scholars now argue that most of what students need to know for the future has yet to be invented and that the most crucial element of their education is not the memorization of facts, but rather the critical thinking skills needed to navigate the future (Gee & Hayes, 2011; Kellner, 1995; Kelly, McCain, & Jukes, 2008).

Many scholars propose nuanced and differing definitions of Critical Media Literacy (Hobbs, 2011; Kellner, 1995; Kellner & Share, 2005; Myers & Beach, 2001) and some educators may face challenges, such as transforming theory into practice, discussing controversial material and incorporating new media or educational technologies, while integrating Critical Media Literacy into their own courses. This research sought to add to the literature regarding Critical Media Literacy by exploring how it was understood and taught in UCLA's Teacher Education Program.

Theoretical Framework

Concepts explored in the review of the literature in Chapter Two, were critical pedagogy, post-structuralism and constructivism. These theories undergirded this research project, which grounded itself in the assumptions that education must promote humanization, not

dehumanization (Freire, 1970); that a progressive political philosophy should support modern acts of critique and inquiry (Butler, 2001; Foucault, 2007); and that human knowledge is never without its biases , but it is constructed and therefore fallible (Phillips, 1995; Piaget, 1980).

Research Questions

The research questions were as follows:

1. What do UCLA Teacher Education Program instructors think they are teaching when they teach a course on Critical Media Literacy and what do they want their students to gain from the course?
 - a. What are the instructors' objectives and processes to help their students learn the material?
 - b. How do they think their students are learning the material?
2. How do UCLA Teacher Education Program graduates and students who took the Critical Media Literacy course describe their experiences in applying Critical Media Literacy to their own classrooms?
 - a. How do they translate the course materials into lessons?
 - b. What obstacles/challenges, if any, have they encountered?

Research Design

This study was a descriptive qualitative study that aimed at studying educators' "conscious experience of their life-world" (Merriam, 2009, pp. 24–25). "To get at the essence or basic underlying structure of the meaning" (Merriam, 2009, p. 25) of how post-secondary educators experience teaching Critical Media Literacy to UCLA Teacher Education Program

students and how those students, in turn, translate their classroom learning into their own pedagogy. The research was comprised of four stages:

- 1) Review of Critical Media Literacy course syllabus;
- 2) Interviews (Appendix A) with UCLA Teacher Education Program Critical Media Literacy course instructors;
- 3) Online questionnaire (Appendix B) delivered to every UCLA Teacher Education Program graduate (2007-Winter 2013) and second-year students of both the credentialing program and the Master's in Education (MAEd only) program who completed the Critical Media Literacy course;
- 4) Interviews (Appendix C) with participants who completed the UCLA Teacher Education Program Critical Media Literacy course and taught high school-level Humanities since doing so.

Qualitative Methods

Qualitative methods were appropriate for this study because they permitted me to conduct personal interviews, to look for the participants' meanings (Creswell, 2008), and allowed for some flexibility in the design. Seeking participants' meanings, I asked them to describe their experiences teaching and integrating Critical Media Literacy. The design was flexible because the online questionnaire respondents decided how they wanted to complete the interviews. Among their options were Skype meetings, online chats, asynchronous chats, phone interviews, personal interviews and email correspondence. Additionally, as they were asked "how" questions that related to personal experiences, qualitative methods suited the project (Creswell, 2008).

Maxwell (2004) has delineated benefits of qualitative research that are relevant to this project. The first is that qualitative methods have the potential to "generat[e] results and theories

that are understandable and experientially credible to both the people you are studying and to others” (p. 21). This aspect of qualitative methods was crucial, as my research, while aiming at developing the theory and the body of knowledge concerning Critical Media Literacy, ultimately sought to increase and improve the application of Critical Media Literacy among Humanities educators. Secondly, Maxwell (2004) has highlighted how qualitative methods help to improve “existing practice rather than to simply assess the value of the program or product being evaluated” (p. 21). While this research project tasked educators to reflect upon their experiences working with Critical Media Literacy, the overarching goal was not to evaluate them, but instead to disseminate knowledge concerning educators’ understandings of Critical Media Literacy and to further the dialogue concerning Critical Media Literacy in Humanities classrooms. Before data from interviews were analyzed, all interview transcripts were sent to the participants for “member checking,” which Merriam (2009) explains is critical to ensure that the participants felt as though their words were accurately transcribed (p.204).

Data collection.

Data were collected in four stages. These stages were a syllabus review, UCLA Teacher Education Program Critical Media Literacy instructor interviews, an online questionnaire, and interviews with UCLA Teacher Education Program students and graduates. What follows is a description of these four stages.

Stage one.

The initial stage of research was the review of UCLA Teacher Education Program Instructor’s Critical Media Literacy syllabi. This review revealed that the UCLA Teacher Education Program emphasized uniformity among its courses. Since its approval by the Teacher

Education Program in 2007, the Critical Media Literacy course syllabus has undergone few changes. An ethical researcher considers a document review an essential component of the literature review (Creswell, 2008) and by reviewing the course syllabus, particularly its outcomes and criteria, I developed general themes of import and specific areas of inquiry for the instructors and students. The findings from this review are included in Chapter Four under the heading, “UCLA Teacher Education Program Instructors’ Understandings of Critical Media Literacy,” as the syllabus reflected a consensus among the instructors about what mattered most to them when teaching Critical Media Literacy to their UCLA Teacher Education Program students.

Stage two.

For the second stage in my research process, I interviewed all five UCLA Teacher Education Program Critical Media Literacy instructors who had taught the course in its entirety. I sought to uncover specific pedagogical practices of these instructors, as well as to report how they generally conceptualized Critical Media Literacy and their roles in teaching it. In addition to approving emailed transcriptions of their interviews, instructor participants all answered follow-up questions via email.

Stage three.

For the next stage of my research, I emailed an online questionnaire (Appendix B) to 168 UCLA Teacher Education Program graduates and second-year students through *Qualtrics*, an online survey host. By delivering the questionnaire through *Qualtrics*, I gave respondents the opportunity to reply at their leisure as I protected their confidentiality. Through *Qualtrics*, I was able to block all personal identity markers from my subjects’ responses. This questionnaire gathered general demographical information, asked respondents to describe what Critical Media

Literacy meant to them, asked them to reflect upon the nature and frequency of their application of Critical Media Literacy in their own classrooms, and to elaborate on their experiences using, or not using, Critical Media Literacy in their own classrooms. The online questionnaire also asked participants to identify the subjects they taught the grade(s) they taught, whether they were willing to participate in follow-up interviews, and their preferred interview method. The study sought to capture a representative population of teachers from each branch of the Humanities, as well as various levels of teaching experience. Respondents who volunteered to participate in follow-up interviews were predominantly in-service teachers (six of ten) teaching Social Studies (five of ten), English (four of ten) and Art (one). The study's lack of data from graduates and students teaching in other Humanities courses will be explored further in the Limitations section in Chapter Five.

Stage four.

The final stage of my research made use of interviews (Appendix C) conducted with UCLA Teacher Education Program graduates and students. Because eight of the ten respondents who fit the study's criteria preferred to communicate by email, while the remaining two listed email as their second choice for interviews (with Skype being their preferred method), interview protocols were emailed to participants. By keeping the data collection consistent among these participants, I hoped to increase the study's credibility. The interview transcripts reflected the participants' voices; only typos were edited. Respondents who wrote answers that required probing were emailed follow-up questions and asked to elaborate as they would have in personal interviews.

Data analysis.

As the data collection occurred in four stages, so too did the data analysis. First, I reviewed the course syllabus looking for codes that referred to the intended course outcomes and criteria, as well as indicators of the types of activities the Teacher Education Program students engaged in to learn Critical Media Literacy. Second, I interviewed all five course instructors, one of whom was the course creator. These interviews were recorded with a digital recorder. Within one week following the interviews, transcripts were emailed to the participants for their approval. The data from these interviews were analyzed with an outside scholar's help. The inter-reader rating was 86% (.86). Third, I analyzed the data from the online questionnaire using *Qualtrics*. The graduate/student questionnaire and interview protocols were pre-tested with nine UCLA Teacher Education students during the fall quarter of 2011. *Qualtrics* provided basic descriptive statistics, such as the number of participants, their educational attainment, their subjects taught and number of years teaching. Fourth, the graduates and students completed interview protocols and follow-up questions via email. Eighteen of the 55 online questionnaire respondents who completed the Critical Media Literacy course taught high school Humanities courses thereafter. Ten of those 18 who were asked to participate in follow-up interviews agreed to do so.

Syllabus review.

Two iterations (Fall 2011, Winter 2013) of the Critical Media Literacy course syllabus were collected from the instructor who created the course and then analyzed for common themes. There were no variations among course syllabi due the standardization policy at UCLA's Teacher Education Program. UCLA's Teacher Education Program mandates that every Education instructor teaching various sections of the same course use the same syllabus. As

explained by the instructors during their interviews, the program tried to ensure that regardless of the course section students took, they received the same instructional material at the same pace as other students enrolled in any other section of that course.

Themes that arose from the analysis of the syllabus were “media,” “technology” and “critical.” Considered in conjunction with the research questions, these themes were used to probe instructors during their interviews to understand what and how they taught and the struggles they encountered while doing so.

Media.

The syllabus emphasized media as a topic more inclusive of “the media” and all of the ways in which media pervade students’ daily lives. The syllabus defined media as “all the different ways humans communicate” (Share, 2011, pg.2). Rather than approaching this course from a Media Studies approach, which focuses on “the media” – mainstream media networks and newspapers – this course aimed to familiarize students with digital and counter-culture forms of media. Among the various media the course considered were posters, word clouds, digital stories and photographs.

Technology.

Rather than emphasizing technology as merely a novelty used to engage students, the syllabus described the need for specific technologies to be linked to specific teachers’ instructional aims and students’ specific learning needs. Aside from emphasizing technology’s capacity to increase accessibility, the syllabus underscored its use as a way to economize teachers’ instructional time and to demonstrate that they valued “what their students bring with

them [to the classroom]” (Share, 2011, pg.2). Most importantly, however, was the emphasis that technology in the classroom be used through a critical framework.

Critical.

The syllabus emphasized the critical use of media and technology to empower teacher education students to develop their own students’ critical thinking skills. According to the course syllabus, critical use means, “to assess the authenticity, reliability and bias of the messages as well as the different medium” (Share, 2011, pg.1). One project reflecting this critical usage of media was called the Digital Narrative. This exercise tasks students not only to create a story using PowerPoint with audio narration, but also to make the story a counter-narrative to common portrayals of identities and relationships as portrayed among media. Thus, while media and technology were key foci of the course, they were rooted in critical consumption and production.

Instructor interviews.

Instructor interviews were recorded digitally and transcribed within five days. The transcripts were then emailed to the instructors to verify as accurate and to edit as they saw fit to protect their confidentiality. The approved transcripts were then analyzed using color coding and an outside scholar to verify the credibility of the coding and analysis. The fast turn-around time for the transcripts increased participants’ recall ability and afforded ample time for the participants to answer follow-up questions.

Two major themes, each with three sub-categories, emerged from the data analysis of the instructor interviews. First, UCLA Teacher Education Program instructors did not see Critical Media Literacy as a subject, but rather as a way of teaching, or a pedagogy. Within this main theme were the following sub-themes: Critical Media Literacy uses media to teach critical

thinking; to teach teachers to create radically open learning environments; and to teach by posing questions. Second, the instructors considered Critical Media Literacy a powerful tool to critically engage their Teacher Education Program students in democracy. Within this second theme were the following sub-themes: instructors help their students to recognize media contributions to, or representations of, social injustice; to analyze messages from within and outside of historical and cultural contexts; and to create and share counter-narratives. As the instructors spoke of these themes and sub-themes, they described pedagogical struggles that included assessing how students grasped the concepts, addressing students with varying degrees of experience with Critical Media Literacy concepts, and fitting Critical Media Literacy into the students' demanding schedules. These pedagogical struggles were incorporated into the findings under the themes with which they were associated. All five instructors stated that assessing their students' learning was a struggle for them. Four out of the five instructors mentioned that engaging their students to think critically about white male privilege was their most significant challenge. Two of the instructors mentioned that their students' demanding schedules posed a significant challenge for them to overcome. The instructors' detailed accounts of these struggles and the ways in which they sought to overcome them are described thoroughly in Chapter Four.

Questionnaire.

As the questionnaire's primary purpose was to identify high school Humanities instructors who had completed the Critical Media Literacy course within UCLA's Teacher Education Program, its data were not analyzed for findings. Basic descriptive statistics were used to gain a sense of whether the participant pool of interview candidates was representative of the larger body of graduates and students. The 55 online questionnaire respondents answered questions to indicate the following: their status as in-service or pre-service teachers; their area of

study and credentialing; the various ways in which they had or had not employed methods taught in the Critical Media Literacy course; what, if anything, hindered or prevented them from including Critical Media Literacy in the classes they taught.

The gender, teaching status, age and ethnicity of the respondents were as follows. Fifty-three disclosed their gender identification, with 43 (81%) responding as female and ten (19%) as male. Of the fifty-three who answered whether they were pre- or in-service teachers, 31 (58%) were pre-service and 22 (42%) were in-service. Twenty-nine (53%) of the respondents were 24-27 years old, while 15 (27%) were 20-23 years old. The remaining 11 (20%) were between 28 and 47 years old. The three main ethnic identities among the respondents were White (21 respondents, or 38%), Hispanic (17 respondents, or 31%), and Asian or Pacific Islander (12 respondents, or 22%); five (9%) declined to state. Twenty-nine (56%), of the 52 respondents who specified the subject(s) they taught, taught within the Humanities.

Of the 29 teachers teaching Humanities courses, 18 taught at high schools, making 32% of the questionnaire respondents eligible for follow-up conversations. All 18 were offered the opportunity to answer additional questions regarding their utilization of Critical Media Literacy and 10 (55%) agreed to do so. The findings from these conversations follow in Chapter Four.

Ethical issues.

The primary ethical issues this study had to consider were those of gaining access to UCLA Teacher Education Program graduates and students, as well as maintaining their confidentiality. To gain access to this site, I began discussing the study with the director of the UCLA Teacher Education Program eighteen months prior to the study's estimated launch date. The director provided the email addresses of graduates and students who volunteered to maintain contact with the Teacher Education Program. Once the study's design was finalized, the director

sent a brief email to the graduates and students to inform them that the questionnaire might lead to future interviews and that participation was voluntary, confidential, and would never affect their grades or graduation standing. Prior to finalizing the study with UCLA's Institutional Review Board, I sent the director a Memorandum of Understanding (Appendix D) to verify that the study's research questions, anticipated data collection timeline, and dissemination of the findings were understood.

Participant confidentiality.

A confidentiality clause was included in each of the questionnaire and interview protocols (Appendices E – G). Instructors were guaranteed confidentiality as their names were replaced with letters from the alphabet that did not correspond to letters in their names. Graduates and students were assured that neither their names, nor their responses would be revealed to anyone employed at UCLA. *Qualtrics* assigned each participant a numerical identifier twelve digits long, so the data were not linked to subjects' names. This study used the letters "A" through "E" to identify the instructors and the numbers "1" through "10" to identify the graduates and students to eliminate bias and to ensure confidentiality.

Credibility.

The primary function of the questionnaire was to reach potential high school Humanities teachers willing to participate in interviews and to gauge whether those interview participants were representative of the larger body of UCLA Teacher Education Program students. To ensure credibility, a consistent coding system was used and an outside reader verified 20% of the interview transcripts. A color- and font-specific coding system aided the outside reader to identify the study's themes and verify the coding. The descriptive statistics from the online

survey indicated that the ten graduates and students who participated in interviews were largely representative of the UCLA Teacher Education Program students, except with regard to their teaching experience. Of the ten, three were male, and seven were female. This was consistent with online questionnaire respondents (21% of whom were male) and the student body in general. Whether these interview and online questionnaire respondents were representative of all UCLA Teacher Education Program students is addressed in Chapter Five under the discussion of the study's limitations. The graduate and student interview participants differed from the general UCLA Teacher Education Population because of the ten, six were in-service teachers. In-service teachers represented 42% of the general graduate and student population who completed the online questionnaire, but only represented 5% of the UCLA Teacher Education Program students during the time this study was conducted. Possible implications of these data coming primarily from in-service teachers are also explored in Chapter Five in the Limitations discussion.

Concerned with my own credibility as a researcher, I examined the biases that I brought to this qualitative study. An advocate for Critical Media Literacy, I would have liked to report findings that illustrated the creative learning transpiring in classrooms integrating Critical Media Literacy. I remembered, however, that much could be learned from data describing the struggles of educators to teach and to apply Critical Media Literacy in their classrooms. To this end, I designed the questionnaire to reduce the frequency of socially desirable responses. A pre-test of the questionnaire in the fall 2011 quarter demonstrated that respondents submitted a wide range of responses, not merely the socially desirable ones. Interview protocols emphasized the study's goal of learning how educators understood Critical Media Literacy and what they considered to evidence their students' learning, as well as what they described as pedagogical struggles.

Summary of Methods

This mutli-modal qualitative study added to the literature on Critical Media Literacy by describing the practice emerging from its theory. The data gained from this study were thorough and descriptive. While the study was small, its specificity allowed me to capture stories, anecdotes, attitudes and perceptions – all of which would be difficult to capture in a large-scale study. By correlating data from the syllabus review, instructor interviews, an online questionnaire and graduate/student interviews, I hoped to help describe what Critical Media Literacy looked like in the UCLA teacher education classroom, as well as in high school Humanities classrooms.

Critical Media Literacy aims to breakdown assumptions, stereotypes and prejudices among all of the messages that we encounter today. Using the letters “A” through “E” to name the instructor participants and the numbers “1” through “10” to identify the graduate and student participants, I sought to make my own dissertation a counter-narrative to countless others that have utilized Aryan pseudonyms, or fictitious names representing the construct of whiteness, to describe their participants. This research and the record of it is one small contribution to a more socially just and equitable educational system.

Chapter Four

Evil does not question itself. Only hope questions itself.

(Ferguson, 2012)

Findings

This study investigated the processes through which UCLA Teacher Education Program Critical Media Literacy instructors engaged teacher education students in the course concepts and material, as well as how those students understood the role of Critical Media Literacy in their own instructional practices. This study aimed not only to help the UCLA Teacher Education Program hear the voices of its instructors, students and graduates, but also to benefit other teacher education programs and educators interested in understanding Critical Media Literacy. All five UCLA Teacher Education Program Critical Media Literacy instructors were interviewed, as well as ten UCLA Teacher Education Program graduates and students who had taught (or co-taught) high school Humanities courses since completing the Critical Media Literacy course. Of the 18 online questionnaire respondents who were teaching, or had taught high school Humanities courses since completing the Critical Media Literacy course, ten (55% response rate) agreed to participate in follow-up interviews. Of those ten Teacher Education Program graduates and students, four were pre-service teachers and six were in-service teachers. Additional data describing specific information, such as participants' ages and number of years teaching were not included in this report, as such data might have resulted in a breach of confidentiality.

I sought to understand the Critical Media Literacy instructors' objectives and pedagogical practices, as well as their students' perceptions of Critical Media Literacy's role in their own

classrooms. This chapter first describes the findings from the UCLA Teacher Education Program instructor interviews, then the findings from the Teacher Education Program graduate and student interviews.

UCLA Teacher Education Program Instructors

Two major themes emerged throughout the UCLA Teacher Education instructor interviews. First, the UCLA Teacher Education Program instructors described Critical Media Literacy not a content area, but rather as a pedagogy itself. They described it as a pedagogy that utilized media to teach critical thinking, to nurture radically open learning environments, and to encourage question posing. Second, the instructors viewed Critical Media Literacy as fostering their Teacher Education Program students' critical engagement in democracy. To this aim, the Critical Media Literacy instructors helped their students increase three aptitudes: to recognize media contributions to, or representations of, social injustice; to analyze messages from within and outside of historical and cultural contexts; to create and share their own unique narratives. While discussing these themes, the instructors described their pedagogical struggles. These struggles included addressing the concept of white male privilege, teaching students with diverse educational backgrounds, assessing how students grasped the concepts, and fitting Critical Media Literacy into the Teacher Education Program students' demanding schedules. I incorporated these pedagogical dilemmas under their corresponding themes.

Critical media literacy as pedagogy.

All five Teacher Education Program instructors stated that rather than thinking of Critical Media Literacy as a content area, they saw Critical Media Literacy as a pedagogy. By this they meant that Critical Media Literacy was not a subject but rather a style of teaching. The

instructors recalled questions they consistently asked their Teacher Education Program students to evoke emotional and visceral responses to specific media representations of controversial topics. They also proposed ways in which Critical Media Literacy could be incorporated not only throughout the Humanities (as was the scope of this study) but also throughout Math and Science. For instance, one instructor advocated a method of teaching the history of Math as it has been both extolled and vilified by media to pursue political agendas. Another instructor suggested how to teach Chemistry students to analyze depictions of molecular reactions and pharmaceuticals in commercials. All of the faculty mentioned that Critical Media Literacy was a way of teaching, insisting that it could not be “turned off,” and that it should be infused throughout the K-12 curriculum. Instructor A summed this up with, “Critical Media Literacy [is] a pedagogical practice, and not a tool. I think many times [the students] think about ‘how do I use Critical Media Literacy,’ like this is something that you turn on and off for a classroom.” The Teacher Education Program instructors wanted their students to use Critical Media Literacy to teach their own students to think about media representations of power and prejudice everywhere. They hoped Teacher Education students who internalized this analytical view would feel ethically obligated to infuse their teaching with it by calling their students’ attention to media portrayals of class, gender, race, sexuality and power.

Critical media literacy as critical thinking.

While all of the Critical Media Literacy instructors mentioned that they wanted their students to have basic competencies in programs like Word and PowerPoint, as well as familiarity with digital tools such as Prezi and Fotobabble, they emphasized that the “media” in Critical Media Literacy need not be digital, or Web-based. Their main goal was for their students to practice their critical thinking skills. As Instructor A stated, “I’m less concerned with whether

students can make a YouTube video or a podcast or things like that. I'm more concerned with whether they are addressing issues of power – hegemony – as it's reflected in the media.” These instructors fostered the Teacher Education Program students' critical thinking skills by examining common, pre-Internet media, such as films, commercials, billboards and fast-food restaurant menus, as well as new interactive media, such as Facebook and Delicious. By incorporating this wide range of media, the instructors sought to teach what Instructor A described as, “an ongoing disposition, or way of looking at a classroom.” Instructor A's colleagues echoed this sentiment. They described Critical Media Literacy as a means of teaching educators to challenge representations of class, gender and race that are portrayed in media messages which their students encounter in class texts and in everyday life.

Inspired to challenge the normalizing effect of questionnaires, which students frequently complete, Instructor B changed the context of one questionnaire to exercise his students' critical thinking skills. He challenged his students by reversing ideological assumptions:

I do a whole class on ideology where I try to really get people to shift from whatever their dominant frames might be that often make things seem as if they were 'normal.' We start off with a little questionnaire – it is a 'heterosexual questionnaire.' It takes all of these questions that are typically applied to homosexuals and it shifts them and applies them to heterosexuals.

This reversal exemplified the kinds of critical thinking activities in which the instructors engaged their students without using new media or digital technologies. The following is an excerpt of the questionnaire:

1. What do you think caused your heterosexuality?
2. When and how did you first decide that you were a heterosexual?
3. Is it possible that your heterosexuality is just a phase that you may out grow?
4. Does your heterosexuality stem from a neurotic fear of others of the same gender?
5. If you have never made love with someone of the same gender, is it possible that all you need is a good gay or lesbian lover?
6. To whom have you revealed your heterosexual tendencies? How did they react?

He confronted his students' perceptions of "normal," so that they, in turn, would challenge their own students to think critically about the assumptions they make based upon their systems of belief, cultures, experience, or ideological perspectives.

Instructor E explained how Critical Media Literacy teaches students to maintain a, "day to day critical look at media, critical thinking skills." He described an activity in which, following the 2012 Super Bowl, he engaged his Teacher Education Program students in a critical analysis of the controversy surrounding "MIA" (a.k.a. Mathangi Arulpragasam). During her performance with Madonna at halftime, "MIA" flashed her middle finger at the camera. The broadcasting network, NBC, made several apologies for failing to blur the "obscene gesture." Instructor E capitalized on this opportunity to task his students to think critically about obscenity. While "MIA" did stick up her middle finger, she did so in front of a dozen leotard-clad female dancers who were bent backwards, balanced on their hands and feet, spreading their legs to the audience. By juxtaposing a close-up image of "MIA" with one of a greater depth of field, the instructor discussed the messages each might send.



<http://blog.cmdstore.com/tag/football/>



<http://thefw.com/mia-halftime-performance-flips-the-bird/>

According to Instructor E, he and his class, “analyzed it [“MIA’s” performance] critically and focused on the problematics of the messages, unintended messages and what not.” Among the “unintended messages” they discussed was the how the media depicted “MIA” as an “angry” woman of color while neglecting to comment upon the misogynist representations of the backup dancers as mere sexualized props.

Pedagogical struggles of fostering critical thinking.

Engaging students in controversial material, the instructors agreed, was a crucial but challenging aspect of fostering students’ critical thinking skills. A prominent theme that emerged

from all of the instructors was the students' resistance to discussing challenging or controversial topics. While all five instructors spoke about the importance of teaching critical thinking, three described their pedagogical struggles with leading class conversations about racism and white male privilege and two mentioned the difficulty of discussing sexism. In addition to struggling with these topics, the instructors mentioned how the diverse backgrounds, college majors and life experiences of their students challenged them as instructors. Instructor E summed up their struggle with, "It's difficult to have an articulate conversation about pedagogy and instruction when your student doesn't understand something very basic – race representation in media and those controversial topics." Other instructors cited not their students' inability to recognize racism, but their willful ignorance or determination to avoid the topic of white male privilege altogether. Often this combination of ignorance or stubbornness manifested itself around topics pertaining to students' perceptions of gender. Three of the instructors said the varying academic backgrounds and different career trajectories of their students (pre-service or in-service) contributed to this challenge.

Instructor B recalled how a class discussion devolved because of a major gender split among students. He speculated that his students either refused to think critically about gender stereotypes, or simply did not know how. During an emotionally charged debate over a sexualized image of a woman:

A couple [of] guys made comments that were steeped in patriarchy, without, I think, even recognizing it. One man equated the problems of people objectifying him because of his beard with another woman talking about being objectified for her body.

For Instructor B, the challenge was to keep the conversation focused on thinking critically about these emotionally charged topics:

[The student] said something equating the shaving of his beard with her being able to get a breast job, a ‘boob job.’ The whole classroom kind of ignited with that . . . It brought up many contextual issues and we talked about how you can’t compare these things as being equal . . . You start to bring all these other dynamics within this patriarchal system. How many women are being abused, raped and killed based on the objectification of their body? The equating of it was, I think, a really great learning moment for all of us.

Instructor B used this class discussion to probe deeper, enabling his students to create counter-narratives while utilizing new media. Using Voice Thread (a free cloud database allowing members to share videos, music, graphics, pictures and large files, as well as to interact in groups) Instructor B’s students, “created the space to engage in a very productive discussion about race, gender and sexuality.” Instructor B saw Voice Thread as a, “great potential for learning, when students are creating alternative representations and analyzing issues of ideology. The products they produce help generate deeper levels of the discussions we have.” Regardless of the tool or medium they employed, however, instructors consistently noted their students’ resistance to discussing white male privilege.

Four out of five discussed addressing white male privilege as a challenge; however, Instructor E mentioned the ease with which he facilitated discussions surrounding the topic: “I would not say that white privilege or white male privilege were significant challenges in the

course I taught.” He did, however, qualify this with the caveat that, “There were very few white males in my class and out of the handful of white students in my course, several of them had some familiarity with the concepts around Critical Media Literacy.” The gender and ethnic composition of Instructor E’s class, as well as the students’ academic backgrounds, were markedly different from that of the other instructors’.

Instructor D remembered that the students unwilling to participate in conversations about privilege, “happened to be white males. That was the commonality. They did not want to engage in that discussion, so much so that one of the students still finished the class, but he gave excuses for missing the last two classes.” The four instructors who were challenged in teaching about white male privilege surmised that the students who needed to hear about it most were usually the most resistant. Three of them commented that their high school students were more hospitable to controversial discussions. Instructor D summed up their sentiments with:

If you’re surprised by this idea of privilege and dominant narratives, then more than likely it’s because you’ve been receiving the benefits of those types of things. So, it could make you uncomfortable to critically analyze them, but when you bring up some of these things, with my [high school] students, they’re like, ‘Oh yeah, of course.’ They’re not really surprised.

The instructors speculated that the vastly different student backgrounds contributed to this pedagogical struggle. Instructor D said, “This was an ongoing discussion we had while teaching the Teacher Education Program course last year – the kind of marked difference in the discussions between the Teacher Education Program students [pre-service], the Master’s in Education students [in-service], and our ninth and tenth grade students from previous years

[teaching high school students].” As these three instructors struggled to find the root of the resistance among their UCLA education students, they often told stories of how receptive their high school students had been to the same material.

Instructor C integrated “Ayiti,” an online reality game, into his section of the Teacher Education Program Critical Media Literacy course and into his high school level English courses. Challenging players to help Haitian families overcome hurdles at the intersection of racism, poverty and natural disaster, “Ayiti” has been used in various high school classrooms throughout the world. While Instructor C’s high school students typically became absorbed in the game and resulting discussions, “[the Teacher Education Program students’] reactions weren’t as powerful.” Instructor C attributed the Teacher Education Program students’ reluctance to discuss controversies in the classroom to their burdened workloads, saying, “Student teaching, which monopolized the first two weeks we met, was monopolizing their thoughts.” Instructor C, however, believed that generally, “[the UCLA students] were making light of something pretty serious [white male privilege]. Instructor A saw the difficulty of addressing white privilege not as a specific challenge to UCLA, but as a particular challenge to all higher education instructors:

I think that the nature of the university system right now is that it is predominantly suited for white students and I think that white privilege is definitely something that we need to talk about with educators, especially if they’re students who are going to be working with students in urban settings.

Instructor A also believed that the perceived racial and gender identities of the instructors influenced the students’ decision to participate in discussions about white male privilege. Because all five instructors were male, there was no counterpoint regarding this issue from the

instructors. Additionally, the instructors, who were white, or identified as mixed-race, expressed concern that their students viewed them as white and could not speculate as to how their ethnicities (in the eyes of their students) did or did not contribute to this struggle.

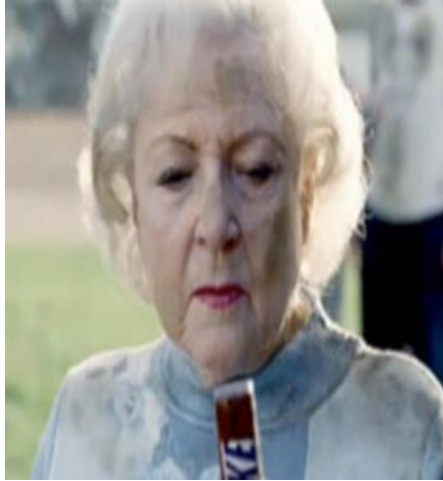
Radically open learning environments.

The more the instructors spoke about their teaching methods, the clearer it was that Critical Media Literacy was not so much a method of delivering information and answering questions, as it was about challenging information and asking questions in order to improve critical thinking skills. The ability to do so, however, rests upon the instructors' ability to foster a radically open learning environment. The term, "radical openness" was coined by critical pedagogue bell hooks (1994), who believes that educators should model learning for their students by learning in front of them.

The Critical Media Literacy instructors admitted what they did not know and modeled learning in front of their students by tackling controversial topics with their students. Each instructor spoke about the need for the classroom to be a space in which students could freely voice opinions, admit misconceptions and feel validated. The instructors all spoke of the pedagogical techniques that they believed help to create a radically open space; such techniques included telling stories about mistakes they made in the past, admitting what academic areas were their weakest and asking their students to help them teach the material. This teaching style often disrupted students' notions of what they thought school should look like. That model, proliferated by media, is one in which the instructor (the full vessel of knowledge) pours information into the student (the empty vessel). The Critical Media Literacy instructors described various methods they employed to help make students engage.

From Instructor C's perspective, Critical Media Literacy instructors must establish a strong sense of trust and mutual respect in order to create a radically open learning environment. His words were representative of all of the instructors'. "I'm creating that sense of community, the trust that we have. I think a lot of that is created through expressing some of my vulnerabilities, or questions, or my naïveté, or when I learned about Critical Media Literacy." By sharing his vulnerabilities, Instructor C modeled for his students how to approach Critical Media Literacy. The instructors consistently revealed how, in sharing some of their weaknesses as students or instructors, they gained the trust and openness of their students. Instructor C's process of creating this open learning environment exhibited this. "We're getting the students to participate in the process of kind of putting in, giving examples of situations where they may interpret these media one way." To encourage the students to participate, the instructors offer their own personal anecdotes of times when they learned to approach media critically.

Instructor C told his students of a time before graduate school when he thought Snickers commercials were merely funny marketing tools. He took his students on his learning journey by examining the recent Snickers campaign, "You're not yourself when you're hungry." He began by showing the students everything these commercials share in common – the main character's hunger makes him whine, fail at sports, and ultimately turns him into an annoying "diva."



<http://www.coloribus.com/adsarchive/online/snickers-youre-not-you-when-youre-hungry-16150255/>



<http://www.coloribus.com/adsarchive/online/snickers-youre-not-you-when-youre-hungry-16150305/>

By eating the Snickers, the protagonist returns to his calm and cool white male persona. Instructor C walked his students through his own learning process, showing them how he changed his perspective about commercials and their societal implications.

The instructors all recalled having shared with their Teacher Education students a memory of misunderstanding a message, or of having not thought critically about a media production. Instructor C introduced his class to Critical Media Literacy by discussing popular product labels.



American Alphabet (Cody, H., 2000)

By doing so, he sought to establish not merely a rapport, but the sense that he and his students would learn together. “Just looking at the brand names of letters and how quickly people are able to recognize the[m] . . . It highlights how all of us are part of this process [of branding].” By discussing the significance within the mundane, Instructor C revealed his similarities to his students (he eats, shops for food and is affected by media), and he invited them to share their seemingly banal experiences to foster openness in the classroom.

Instructor D fostered radical openness by sharing his personal teaching struggles with his Teacher Education Program students. By showing his students movie trailers that he viewed with his high school students and the exercise that followed, he launched a conversation that explored

his struggle to find a meaningful exercise to do with high school English language learners. “I would show them some of the examples [of exercises] we did.” Instructor D presented his Teacher Education students with worksheets passed on to him from other English as a Second Language teachers. He then described his high school students’ poor reception of the worksheets. He asked his Teacher Education Program students to offer suggestions and to discuss what they would do in his situation.

After having a few students role-play the situations, he explained how he increased engagement among his English Language Learners by incorporating Critical Media Literacy. “[We would] list all the nouns that we could think of for this scene [from a popular movie] and then all the verbs and then share that, so [we got] a growing word tree.” He also explained how he began a dialogue among his English as a Second Language colleagues. “[We] were talking about how that right there is an activity that is engaging students, especially students who have language acquisition problems, students [who] are coming out of ESL, if they’re still struggling to be reclassified.” Instructor D saw the classroom not so much as a space to deliver material to his students, rather as a space to converse *with* his students about their common vocation: teaching. The Critical Media Literacy instructors modeled for their students how to learn rather than how to teach.

The UCLA Critical Media Literacy instructors wanted their students to understand that, as Instructor A stated, the classrooms are not “politically neutral spaces.” Four of the five instructors used “Pair Shares” to encourage their Teacher Education Program students to think of the classroom and its relation to power and equity without the pressure of the symbol of power (the instructor). Instructor C described “Pair Shares” as classroom “structures for people to discuss without the weight of the instructor and allowing them to test their own thinking and

ideas with one another.” Instructor E facilitated “Pair Shares” for his students to discuss media representations of presidential candidates during the 2012 election. Because some of his students were “uncomfortable with ‘talking politics,’” he used Pair Shares to ask his students to discuss portrayals of white privilege during the election:

The Pair Shares allow the students to start to create that really open learning environment – to get comfortable with one another one-on-one and then open that discussion back up to the entire class. What they learn from the Pair Shares is really how to open up to deep discussions.

Instructor E described how his students, originally reluctant to delve into a class discussion about white privilege and politics, returned to the discussion after Pair Shares much more willing to engage. “Then they voiced all sorts of opinions about the candidates’ accents and clothes and ethnicities.” While every instructor spoke to the importance of creating these radically open learning environments, they also mentioned specific barriers that occasionally inhibited them from achieving this goal.

Pedagogical struggles of fostering radically open learning environments.

Three of the five UCLA Teacher Education Program Critical Media Literacy instructors said that addressing the construct of whiteness was a significant obstacle in addressing the social justice concepts in the Critical Media Literacy course. They wanted their students to analyze where power lies in America – with white males – and to strive to change that dominance and more evenly distribute power. Two of the three instructors who spoke of this speculated that their students perceived them to be predominantly white and male, and therefore ill equipped to discuss how gender and race collide to benefit some and to subjugate others. Each instructor said

that their students either refused to acknowledge their own privileged positions or that they thought that a white instructor, especially a male one, could not fully comprehend the extent to which this privilege had shaped his life. To counteract these notions, the instructors continually reminded their students that to have received the benefits of privilege does not inherently preclude one from working towards equity.

Rather than seeing his Teacher Education Program students as refusing to engage with him on the topic because of his own race and/or gender, Instructor D said his students were comfortable with their privilege. He speculated that his UCLA Teacher Education Program students came to UCLA from affluent families who were familiar with higher education. Instructor D also described how his own assumptions about his UCLA Teacher Education Program students might have contributed to his struggle to connect with his students about white privilege. “I was kind of going in thinking this is going to be a tight cohort that had talked a lot to each other. But they were in a very different place.” Instructor D had assumed that the cohort he was teaching had the kind of closeness that he and his own teacher education cohort had enjoyed and was reminded that his assumptions could create barriers to effective teaching.

The UCLA Teacher Education instructors were aware that their identities (instructor), gender (male), and race (mostly white) presented challenges to engaging their students with the Critical Media Literacy material. These challenges, however, were also compounded by their students’ varying degrees of exposure to Critical Media Literacy and by their academic backgrounds. This strained the instructors to cover the breadth of material they had hoped to, while exploring it in the depth that they had imagined. Hosting graduate students from a range of majors from Mathematics to Music, UCLA’s Teacher Education Program poses a unique challenge for its Critical Media Literacy instructors.

While Teacher Education Program students from Literature backgrounds might have had more exposure to media and critical thinking, those who majored in Biology might never have considered representations of race, gender or power in a website, musical performance, commercial or magazine. In ten weeks, or one academic quarter, the instructors tried to model Critical Media Literacy pedagogy for their students and to allow time for their students to practice weaving Critical Media Literacy into various subjects. Instructor C expressed the struggle that instructors mentioned during their interviews. “Some people had a very good understanding of Critical Media Literacy coming into this class, whereas other people had zero knowledge about critical frameworks, or very little Communications or Social Studies or Ethnic Studies types of backgrounds.” The instructors must introduce basic Critical Media Literacy concepts, such as how race, gender and socio-economic standards intersect with issues of power and representation among media. After that introduction, they try to teach students to create new media that challenge those representations and erase, or redefine those intersections. Using the same syllabus, but teaching cohorts of Teacher Education students each with their own subject specialization posed unique challenges for the instructors.

Instructor B’s description of the challenges teaching a class with such diverse backgrounds encapsulates the nature of all the instructors’ comments on this topic:

Teaching Critical Media Literacy to new Math, Science and Music teachers is the most difficult, because their content areas are not very open to considering the importance of literacy. Typically, they’re told that their objectives are to just teach about numbers or scientific concepts or how to play an instrument and you don’t need to know about anything else.

He and the other instructors used specific texts to persuade these students that all knowledge, especially its media representations, is connected to power. “All of these things that we do in Math and Science have a purpose and are used and represented by people for many reasons, especially in the media,” said Instructor B. To help the Teacher Education students see Math and Science not as static, objective fields, but rather as powerful tools wielded by influential individuals, Instructor B assigned his Science students to watch Naomi Oreskes’ video (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XXyTpY0NCp0>) about global warming. “She does a fabulous analysis about how scientists have basically used and manipulated Science to attack all sorts of things, from the tobacco industry to acid rain and now the latest is climate change.” To Teacher Education Program students coming from Math backgrounds, Instructor B assigned *How to Lie with Statistics*. “The other is called ‘Proofiness.’ They explore the same idea about how Math can be used in a negative way, a misleading way.” Each professor tried utilizing various media that address different students’ interests and pushed them to expand the way in which they conceptualized their area of concentration and how to teach it. Instructor E described his difficulty in showing each student how to integrate Critical Media Literacy into any subject matter, especially when the academic backgrounds of his students were extremely diverse. “We try to show teachers that the more they directly apply to their practice, the more they have to use in their class –effective worksheets, materials that help teachers. Those are the times [when students come from all backgrounds and interests] I think we struggle most often.” Instructor A described the struggle by saying, “I think it really comes down to the students and their frameworks and being able to really sort of prod and explore a little bit more. I think that’s where things get frustrating.” The UCLA Teacher Education Program instructors explained how they sought to overcome pedagogical struggles by emphasizing the power of question-posing.

Critical media literacy as question-posing.

Every UCLA Teacher Education Program instructor emphasized the importance of teaching through question-posing. All of them referred to the five key questions stressed throughout the Critical Media Literacy course:

#1: Who created this message?

#2: What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?

#3: How might different people understand this message differently?

#4: What values, lifestyle, and points of view are represented, or omitted from, this message?

#5: Why is this message being sent?

These questions, mirroring the questions used by the American Center for Media Literacy and the Ontario Ministry of Education's Center for Media Literacy, provided the framework for every course activity. Instructor B explained:

The inquiry process is one of the ways that I push . . . We use this framework with five questions, five core concepts, or key questions and I tell them that, 'My goal for you in this ten week course is for you to really understand these key concepts; however, in teaching this material, what I expect for you to do is to use the questions and not the concepts. You need to know the concepts to guide your students to deepen their understanding, but the way they're going to come about their understanding should be critical – the posing of these questions.'

The instructors model question-posing so that their students become accustomed to a culture of asking questions and to thinking about different questions they could ask their own students.

This belief in the power of questions was evident throughout each faculty interview. Instructor D explained how the questions engaged the Critical Media Literacy students. “There are different levels of questioning as a way to engage all different learners and keep the broader open-ended questions.” He has been working on developing question banks to use with his high school students and to model for his Teacher Education Program students how they might begin to ask more questions than they answer. He wants his Teacher Education students to be the teachers who critically engage their students to find their own answers, rather than to try to memorize what the teacher thinks the answer should be. “The core concepts in the Teacher Education Program course are what the teacher, the instructor, should really know,” said Instructor D. “For the students, you don’t want them to just memorize these,” he continued. “One of the simplest questions is always, ‘How do you know?’ Pointing it back to you.” Instructor D also wanted to remind educators that by question-posing, tasking the students to reflect on why they think they are making a statement, or creating a hypothesis, the Teacher Education Program instructors promote critical pedagogy. Instructor D emphasized, “You don’t want to make the mistake of opening, or widening, a student’s gaze without kind of giving them the practice of being reflective themselves.” The questions that the Critical Media Literacy instructors repeatedly ask aim to get the students to practice self-reflexivity. This pedagogical technique forces the students to reflect upon their own sets of values, ethics, beliefs and ideologies, in order to understand that everything they learn comes through their own filtering processes.

The instructors ask these questions so that students reflect not necessarily on what is being said to them through media, but instead on how they are represented and/or omitted in media representations that they consume and produce. Instructor B began the academic quarter by using an exercise made popular by Vivian Vasquez (2004) with her kindergarten students. He posed a series of questions that challenge the students to list every component of a Mc Donald's Happy Meal. By depicting all of these components in word web, he questioned his students (using the five key questions) about its representation, messages and techniques. "Look at the complexity here of something that most people don't think critically about," said Instructor B, who revels in leading students to understand a complex theory, like social constructivism, through questioning something as mundane as a menu. He modeled for his students how they might teach an elementary level lesson on Critical Media Literacy undergirded by complex theoretical research:

The fact that they are all choices means that they can all be changed . . . It was a huge power shift, for people to see that –
'Wow, once we start to take it apart, then we can start to put it back together any way we want.'

By asking questions, the instructors pushed the Teacher Education students to ask more questions in their own teaching. "We want to use the questions to help teachers to see how they could use those questions in their own classrooms," said Instructor E.

Using YouTube clips, Instructor D tasked his students to ask questions about student-created productions that mimic, parody, or reflect popular plays and movies. He explained how he starts with the basics, "'What did you see here?' To connect the students' reaction, the critical reaction, or even their emotional reaction to the actual technique of what was used to see what

was meant, or what it is.” After garnering several different emotional reactions from his students, Instructor D then pushes them to explain why they believe they reacted the way they did. He explained that one struggle lies in pushing students past reactions such as, “‘I like this,’ or ‘I don’t like this,’ or ‘I felt offended by this,’ or ‘I don’t think this was well done’” to move into a more critical analysis. For these instructors, as Instructor D says, “Being able to have those discussions of ‘Why do you say this? How do you know? What did you see here?’” is the most important aspect of the instructors’ question-posing. By scaffolding the questions, a process that can take forty-five minutes of conversation, the instructors move their students, as Instructor D’ said, from statements like, “Well I don’t like it because I’m bored by this” to critical analyses, such as:

I don’t like this because . . . it continues the narrative of male dominance over women . . . the male is the protagonist and the girl started out at the beginning of the story being equal to him, but as the story goes on she continues to need to be saved by him.

Instructor D summarized the learning outcome behind question posing as, “empowering them [Teacher Education Program students] with a wider vocabulary so that it becomes a part of their processing.” The Critical Media Literacy Instructors pose questions to their students until they can articulate an analysis or argument supported by evidence.

Critical media literacy fosters critical engagement in society

All of the UCLA Teacher Education Program Critical Media Literacy instructors mentioned that critical engagement with society was an important aspect of the course. According to them, critical engagement meant analyzing messages by shifting historical and cultural contexts; creating unique counter-narratives through various modes of production;

recognizing media contributions to, or representations of social injustice; and participating thoughtfully in democratic processes.

Analyze messages critically by shifting historical and cultural contexts.

Every instructor taught specific lessons to model for their students how to consider different cultural, temporal, or political circumstances that might affect media representations of identity. Instructor A initiated his class with an exercise examining the historical and cultural context of Paulo Friere. “So for example, if we’re reading something about Paulo Friere, we’ll talk about who this guy was, what the context was in which he was writing in the late sixties, and how that translates into what’s happening today.” He asks his students to consider the differences between 1960s and contemporary educational settings. The instructors use Critical Media Literacy to further UCLA Teacher Education Program’s aim at fostering social justice.

The Critical Media Literacy instructors pushed their students not just to think of issues affecting others, but actually to put themselves in the position of being the “other.” Instructor B’s “heterosexual questionnaire” prompted students to consider how Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) people continue to face discrimination and whether that discrimination is represented among media. “We talk about how, today it can be more subtle, but it’s there. Students are dealing with it [discrimination]. Teachers must be able to talk about it,” he explained.

Instructor C worried that his students may not understand how much work is yet to be done to promote social justice, that they may think society has progressed beyond inaccurate media narratives. To illustrate the blind faith with which some people trust media, he showed his students the popular television production, “The Spaghetti Tree Hoax” from the mid-20th century.



<http://www.cityfood.com/culture/video/swiss-spaghetti-harvest-1957>

He explained, “We create these other contexts in order to kind of skew or demonstrate how quickly your interpretation of a message may change in the context of a different situation.” After viewing the program, Instructor C’s students discussed how “The Spaghetti Tree Hoax” depicted anti-Italian sentiments and whether programs today make broad generalizations about cultures. Televised media, however, were not the exclusive focus of the instructors, who tried to include a large sampling of media throughout the course.

A poem voicing the perspectives of two Chilean women, one rich and one poor, “Two Women,” by an anonymous author in 1973, elicited lively debates in Instructor B’s Critical Media Literacy class. He used the opportunity to initiate a conversation on Voice Thread.

“Context is involved for all the ways we understand things . . . and if you can shift that context, you can help show and demonstrate and make ideology visible.” To Instructor B, the success of the Voice Thread conversation was apparent by students’ remarks. Instructor B remembered one student saying:

‘Wow, this is such a construction that I was never really aware of and when you change the context, it sort of becomes clear.’ . . . My big goal is to see how we can do that to show the absurdity of the ideology, just by shifting the context.

For Instructor B, one trap into which the social justice-oriented educator may fall is that of relativism, or of “saying everybody’s voice should be heard and they’re all equal.” For Instructor B, this is the critical distinction between Media Literacy and Critical Media Literacy:

[Critical Media Literacy] pushes against the idea that all ideas are equally valid and I don’t think they are . . . it’s very important that everybody gets the chance to be heard, but that we bring it back to the question of, ‘Is this fair, is this socially just?’ . . . it’s very important that we recognize the way that power plays out.

Otherwise, the only ones who benefit from it are the rich or people in dominant positions.

The Critical Media Literacy instructors all agreed that their Teacher Education Program students must learn to use media to create their own unique narratives and to teach their students how to do so. For them, students must find their voices to strive for social justice.

Create and share unique narratives.

All of the UCLA instructors mentioned that one aspect of critical engagement in our democratic society was the creation of unique narratives. While two instructors called this their students' ability to create and share "counter narratives," three of them referred to their students' ability to "tell their stories." According to all of them, students learn the most when they actively use the course's core concepts by creating new media.

Instructor C saw one of his primary roles as undoing years of media training that his students have unwittingly undergone. "It is very easy to become trained as a continual audience member and a consumer, not just buying things, but consum[ing] messages, consum[ing] narratives that are told to you, but not necessarily for you, or about you." By using Scratch.com, a free online game creator made by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Instructor C's students work in small groups to create video games that they believe would be culturally relevant and engaging for their own students. He was concerned that although his students are accustomed to having an online audience, "that doesn't mean that [they] are all naturally becoming creators and producers," especially critical ones. Instructor C hoped that by learning how to use culturally relevant video games, like "Ayiti," in their own classrooms, his students would help their own students to forward social justice. Instructor A summed this up with, "I think that with the 21st century skills, there's so much more about production. It's about being able to produce a critical artifact, being able to create texts that represent various counter-narratives and offer a sort of depth and multi-varied voices." To help his Teacher Education students create counter-narratives, Instructor A showed them an exercise that he conducted with his own high school students.

Instructor A used YouTube clips of high school students' renditions of popular Romeo and Juliet scenes to illustrate contemporary stereotyping. By critically analyzing the scenes, especially the Tybalt and Romeo fight scenes, they discussed how creative narratives were not always counter-narratives. While discussing exercises such as these (analyses and counter-narratives), the UCLA Teacher Education Program Critical Media Literacy instructors often voiced their concerns about assessing students' learning.

Pedagogical struggles of assessment.

The instructors unanimously cited assessment as a pedagogical struggle. When asked about assessment methods, they mentioned using “authentic assessment” (Janesick, 2006), by which they meant that they assessed students' projects, not exams and papers. More importantly, however, they sought to align the means of assessment with the mode of production in the class. The instructors described labor-intensive assessments that were more challenging for them to grade than standardized tests or summative exams; however, each defended his method of assessment as essential to Critical Media Literacy pedagogy. The instructors wanted their students to demonstrate their learning by creating counter-narratives and offering creative multi-media analyses to their colleagues for discussion.

The instructors combed through students' projects, gave detailed feedback on how the students incorporated, or did not incorporate, the course material, and provided the students with examples of how to develop their projects. This meant that faculty frequently provided students opportunities to edit and add to their course projects.

Instructor B said that he and his colleagues used this more time-consuming method of assessment because, “they [students] have to create something; they have to produce projects so they take that knowledge to their own students in the future to actually make a difference.” The

students may execute complex productions, like counter-narrative Facebook pages and culture jammed projects, as well as simpler ones, like yogurt cartons redesigned for particular audiences.

One student produced a counter-narrative to the traditional portrayal of Goldilocks. Her feminist Goldilocks dramatically renovated the bears' cabin. The bears returned to their cabin pleasantly surprised by Goldilocks' renovations and a note explaining why she had made them. While some students wrote counter-narratives that demonstrated a deep level of critical thinking and integrated the course materials, not all did. According to Instructor B, "Looking at the levels of their projects and then also the reflections about the projects – other people were really kind of superficial, talking about things that didn't have that depth." Instructor B's comment represented the challenge of assessing for critical analysis and evidence of learning.

Instructor C said that assessment for this course requires the instructors to pay close attention not merely to their students' work, but to their comments and conversations. For example, he believed that one of his students indicated that he had deeply reflected on how the Facebook interface surmises profiles in order to market to them effectively. Instructor C overheard his student tell another, "Facebook, the way that they structure their interface is in order to get people to click on these advertisements." Talking with Instructor C later, the student said he had never thought about Internet marketing strategies before taking Critical Media Literacy.

Instructor A reported that his students' effort and creativity varied greatly. While one student impressed him by making a counter-narrative "People" magazine that challenged white privilege, heteronormativity and monogamy, others "actually kept it [the course's final project] as a book report and it didn't have that kind of criticality or counter-narrative to it." Instructor E explained how one of his students who showed disdain for discussing white male privilege

“missed the point” and sidestepped the final project altogether. “He said this Fox news is more, Republican, I guess, and then this news, MSNBC, is more liberal, but everybody has a chance to speak.” This superficiality displays the trap of relativism Instructor B feared. Instructor A considered assigning every student the same final project, while Instructor E believed assignment uniformity to be “completely antithetical to the course.” By giving their students the freedom to choose what they created, the instructors agreed that the media might be more relevant and engaging for them.

Students’ demanding schedules.

Of the five Critical Media Literacy instructors, three said that the demanding schedules of their students their own work difficult. Instructor D explained that by the time the pre-service students (the majority) enroll in Critical Media Literacy, they have just started student teaching, and “that monopoliz[es] their thoughts.” He has heard his students ask, “What am I going to do with these students tomorrow?” Instructor D said he always enthusiastically begins the academic quarter thinking, “this class is going to be awesome.” While his students, having just begun student-teaching were saying, “I have to report to work in time with everything ready to go and I’m figuring out how to make enough copies.” He has heard other teachers, pre-service and in-service alike, say, “Do I even have enough pencils?” and, “What’s my seating chart?” Basic concerns such as these tended, at times, to be more important to the students than the Critical Media Literacy course material.

Instructor E explained that both the pre-service and in-service students struggle with adding Critical Media Literacy to their demanding schedules. While the pre-service students may face the anxiety of starting a new career, he has witnessed in-service students struggle with adding a component of Critical Media Literacy to a curriculum with which they were already

familiar and under a lot of pressure to demonstrate improved standardized test scores. “They [in-service teachers] have their own classrooms, their own material on which their students are being tested,” said Instructor E. “So, the concepts that we’re trying to teach them, just sort of seem like an ‘add-on’ to them; it just adds on to all of the work that they already have.” Both instructors saw the benefits of their course coming to fruition later in the quarter. Instructor D summed it up with, “They slowly started making connections to what was going on in the classroom and seeing, ‘Oh this connects with the struggle I’m going through right now, this actually helps.’” Instructor E and Instructor D, however, expressed concern about the timing of the Critical Media Literacy within their students’ programs, as well as the pacing of the course. For them, Critical Media Literacy was an essential pedagogical component that directly develops the social justice theme of UCLA’s Teacher Education Program, so for some students to call it an “add on” was disappointing. While Instructor B mentioned that his students’ schedules were problematic, he explained that their schedules seem to be an issue regardless of timing of the course. So, whether the Critical Media Literacy course was one of the Teacher Education students’ first courses, or if it was their last, his students’ schedules always seemed nearly too demanding to complete all of the course work in a meaningful manner.

Summary of UCLA Instructors’ Understandings of Critical Media Literacy

The UCLA Teacher Education Critical Media Literacy course instructors described Critical Media Literacy not as a content area, but instead as a pedagogy itself. They described Critical Media Literacy as a pedagogy by relating stories of how, by incorporating Critical Media Literacy, they taught students to teach their own students critical thinking skills. To do this, they modeled radically open classrooms and question-posing. By modeling these pedagogical practices, the instructors intended for their Teacher Education students to engage critically with

democracy by thinking critically about media representations and their contexts, and by creating their own narratives and sharing them through media. Among their frequently reported challenges were those of addressing white male privilege, of assessing students' work, and of contending with students' demanding schedules. Overall, the instructors depicted their teaching of Critical Media Literacy as an endeavor to develop the minds of educators committed to cultivating social justice.

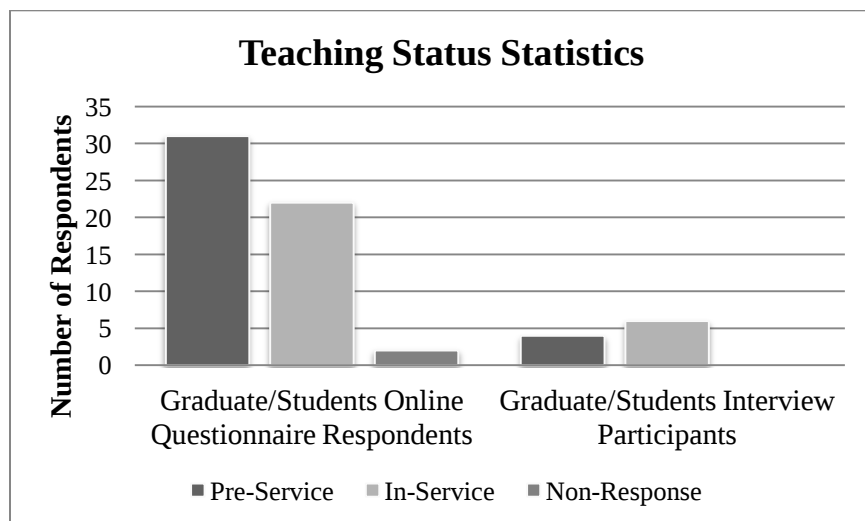
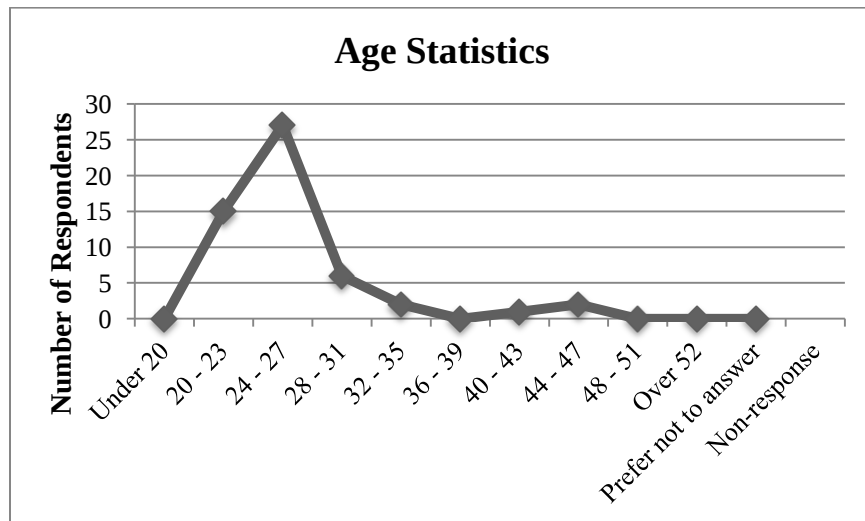
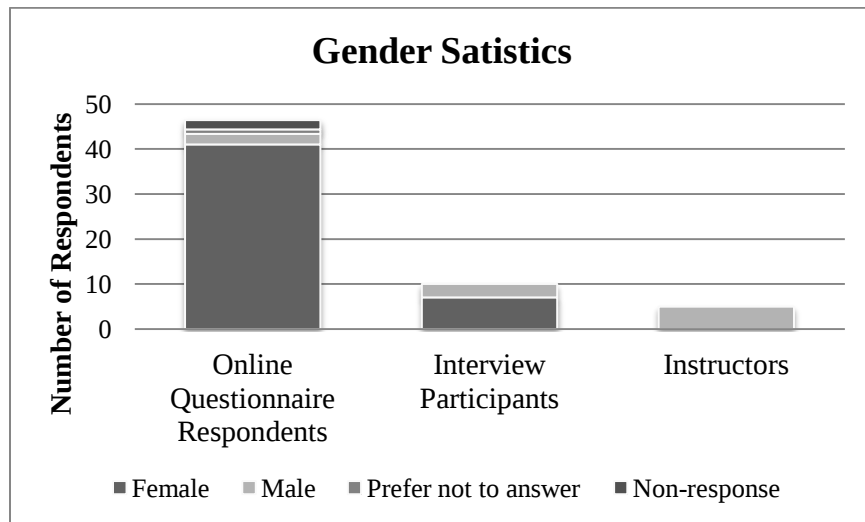
UCLA Teacher Education Program Graduates and Students

Online questionnaire respondents.

I emailed an online questionnaire to every UCLA Teacher Education Program student and/or graduate who had completed the Critical Media Literacy course as of the winter quarter, 2012. The questionnaire's purpose was to garner a wide range of perspectives from UCLA Teacher Education Program graduates and students and to find study participants teaching high school Humanities.

The potential online questionnaire participant pool was 168. Out of the possible 168, 55 completed the questionnaire, making the response rate 33%. Of those 55 respondents, 18 (33%) fit the study's criteria of teaching Humanities courses at the high school level since completing the Critical Media Literacy course. Of the 18 high school level Humanities teachers (pre-service and in-service) who were contacted to complete a more detailed interview, 10 did so, making a response rate of (55%) for the study's specific targeted population. This section will first provide a brief overview of the respondents' demographics before delving into the data mined specifically from high school Humanities instructors.

Comparison of demographics.



Graduate and student participants.

Eighteen online questionnaire respondents teaching Humanities courses indicated that they were employed in high school (grades 9-12) settings since completing the Critical Media Literacy course at UCLA's Teacher Education Program. Of the eighteen invited to participate in follow-up conversations via email, ten (55%) did. Of these ten, six were in-service and four were pre-service teachers. All six of the in-service teachers described how they applied Critical Media Literacy to their curricula to varying degrees. Three of the four pre-service teachers described how they had included Critical Media Literacy in their student teaching to some extent, while one described why she chose not to incorporate Critical Media Literacy.

The predominant theme that emerged from the data was that Critical Media Literacy increased their students' level of engagement by teaching them to challenge their assumptions and to think about social justice. The most commonly cited barriers or obstacles to including Critical Media Literacy in the curricula were the lack of technology and classroom materials, their districts' emphasis on standardized testing, which restricted teachers from customizing their lessons, and the lack of funding for professional development. Pre-service teachers reported two additional barriers. The first was that by virtue of being pre-service teachers, they had little power to alter the curriculum. The second was their concern that Critical Media Literacy might bring into their classrooms controversial media to which their administrators, students and students' parents might object.

Challenging students' assumptions.

Eight of the ten teachers reported using Critical Media Literacy in their high school Humanities classroom to challenge their students' assumptions about various cultures as they were portrayed among media. Six respondents reported that they utilized Critical Media Literacy

to encourage their students to question certain normatives considered “truths,” such as heteronormativity, while three specifically referred to how they asked their students to consider socioeconomic class and its relationship to privilege.

Media portrayals of cultures.

Eight of the ten high school instructors described classroom units or activities they designed to facilitate their students’ critical analysis of media portrayals of urban youth. For example, in-service Social Studies teacher #1 explained, “while discussing the ‘stop and frisk’¹ police actions in New York, students discussed their own personal experiences with law enforcement in their community through a four-corners debate².” Working with high school students in danger of dropping out, Teacher #1, claimed that by asking his students the five key questions of Critical Media Literacy and by organizing the discussion of “stop and frisk” around a four-corners debate, he saw increased levels of student engagement. He reported that his students were excited, “to share their experiences with law enforcement, the data of police abuse, and possible forms of action to remedy police abuse.” According to Teacher #1, what made this exercise so effective was, “that students were able to learn about things that happened to them on a daily basis. I found that the commonalities that they found with one another through discussion and dialogue further engaged them with the material.” His students, all with a history of absenteeism, attended class regularly and engaged with the material. They spoke with one another about what they shared in common with Black and Latino/a high school students in New York. From a Critical Race Theory (CRT) perspective, these students who developed empathy

¹ This policy encourages New York City police officers to frisk people who they reasonably believe to look suspicious. Leading to a disproportionate number of Black and Latino/a New Yorkers being frisked, this policy has come under public scrutiny in media.

² The four-corners debate prompts students to decide whether they “Strongly Agree,” “Agree,” “Disagree,” or “Strongly Disagree” with an issue – in this case, the New York Police Department’s “stop and frisk” policy. The structure of the four-corners debate encourages students not only to explore and explain why they take a position on an issue, but also to change positions on an issue once they have researched each position.

with students in other cultural settings, were more likely to take action to reduce racism and micro-aggressions against them³. Using Critical Media Literacy, Teacher #1 encouraged his students to challenge their assumptions about Blacks and Latino/as in New York and to reconsider how they are portrayed in media coverage of the “stop and frisk” policy.

In-service teacher, Teacher #2, incorporated the critical analysis of media representations of cultural holidays to make English and English as a Second Language (ESL) interesting for her students. She tasked her predominantly Hispanic students to examine representations of cultural icons as depicted by the Library of Congress. For example, during Spring, she created activities surrounding depictions of St. Patrick of the Catholic Church juxtaposed with modern media depictions of the St. Patrick’s Day holiday. She found that her students were able to “look beyond the rainbows, pots of gold, and leprechauns that have been associated with Irish culture and St. Patrick’s Day” and discuss how seemingly benign symbols can perpetuate cultural misunderstandings.



<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2004670083/>

³ Critical Race theorists have long argued that racial micro-aggressions are rooted in assumptions (Parker, Deyhle, & Villenas, 1999; D. Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; D. G. Solorzano, 1998).



downtownmagazinenyc.com/break-out-the-shamrocks-its-st-patricks-day-weekend-in-downtown-nyc/

Teacher #2 said that she chose to study representations of the Irish, because her students were predominantly Catholic, but none were Irish. By framing the discussion around familiar material (a Catholic holiday), she witnessed her students contributing to lively discussions about the differences between religious cultures and ethnic cultures. Moreover, she said using Critical Media Literacy to link “aspects of the curriculum to students’ lives and interests” interested her students, who became excited about the topic and therefore put more effort into expressing themselves through English. Her ESL students, who struggled to learn the grammar and mechanics of English fared better than they usually did with other projects, because “Critical Media Literacy truly engages students in substantive conversations and helps to make the most abstract concepts comprehensible and concrete.” While Teacher #1 and Teacher #2 utilized Critical Media Literacy to facilitate students’ critical thinking about different cultures, others used Critical Media Literacy to help students critically analyze media representations of their own cultures and communities.

By comparing World War II Anti-Jewish Nazi propaganda to contemporary propaganda found within her students’ urban neighborhood, Teacher #3 asked her students to consider what assumptions various media made about and reinforce regarding their neighborhood. Teacher #3,

an in-service Social Studies teacher, incorporated this into her unit on Totalitarianism, asking her students questions, such as “Who should be accountable for aggressive acts towards humanity? Or if you were Hitler, would you have appeased him?” She pushed her students to consider representations of Totalitarianism in their own lives and then to make arguments about what should be done to address it. “I simply want my students to make a judgment and defend it using what they learn.”

While some teachers deliberately created units that incorporated Critical Media Literacy, others found it to be a helpful resource to use as issues arose in their classrooms. Teacher #4, an in-service Art teacher, reported, “Often, students will bring up stereotypes or other assumptions that they come into school with from their homes. I try to address misconceptions to help students to think about their assumptions about identity.” Surprised by students’ homophobic comments in class, she challenged the students to make representations of their identities out of brown paper bags. Using various art supplies, the students decorated the outside of the bags with what they felt represented how people saw them. They made collages and pictures representing their cultures, religions, hobbies and all of the identity markers that would be most noticeable to someone meeting them for the first time. On the inside of the bags, they placed pictures, words and collages of unseen markers. Such invisible components typically included socio-economic class, sexuality, family structure and parental educational attainment. This inexpensive “self-portrait activity that forced them to think about their identit[ies] and how others see them,” visually displayed for them all of the assumptions they made about other people based on stereotypes. The class then discussed where they learned to make assumptions about other cultures and how they could practice thinking more critically about stereotypes to create art that serves as a counter-narrative to those stereotypes.

For Teacher #5, an in-service Social Studies teacher in an affluent district with little ethnic diversity, inspiring the students to challenge their sense of culture rooted in privilege, gender and race was important. He challenged students to consider various categories of identities, “place those categories within the systems of power (oppression and privilege),” and then discuss “definitions of power, privilege, oppression,” as they were portrayed in films such as *Killing Us Softly* and *A Class Divided*. He believed that this exercise helped students “develop their own critical lenses.” Teacher #5 hoped to broaden his students’ sense of “culture,” so that they would consider all of the various elements that contribute to their sense of identity.

Media portrayals of truths.

The most commonly addressed “truth,” was the normality, or normative, of heterosexuality. Four of the ten respondents indicated that it was a priority for them to challenge their students’ assumptions of heterosexuality as “normal.” “Showing clips of T.V. shows from YouTube,” said Teacher #5, “I grouped my students and asked them to evaluate the shows’ representations of stereotypes within the LGBTQ community.” For him, the integration of Critical Media Literacy was “easy, because I have access to all sorts of technology and my students seem very receptive.” Teacher #5 said Critical Media Literacy enabled him to cover “a whole series of identities,” from representations of the LGBTQ population to representations of people of color. He explained that the inclusion of media into his Social Studies classroom was “easy because my school has the tools and my students love it.” By connecting the material from YouTube or Hulia to the class texts, he saw students engage enthusiastically in class.

Social Studies pre-service teacher, Teacher #7, incorporated Critical Media Literacy into a lesson she co-taught with her partner teacher. “[It] involved men kissing men. In some parts of Europe, the act of men kissing men or holding hands is normal. Morocco was one example.”

Initially, her male students refused to discuss the topic. “Several male students at first thought the act of men kissing [or] holding hands was weird.” She explained that the students produced no assignment to demonstrate their learning from the unit, but that the students’ discussions about what made something “gay” or “straight” in America showed that they were thinking critically. “By the end of the lecture, they were surprised to see how one group of people can change a whole nation’s ideas on what is accepted. From their reactions and comments, I think they questioned masculine behavior in their society,” explained Teacher #7. Engaging the teenage males (who initially scoffed at the topic) in non-offensive conversations about masculinity and about what it means to be gay, Teacher #7 deemed this activity a success.

When referring to activities as “successful,” the graduates and students explained that they measured “success” by the tones of conversations in and outside of the classrooms following these lessons and units. Teacher #5 explained that after addressing identity issues, the students’ conversations indicated that they were more receptive to considering differences among cultures (particularly of different races and sexualities). “I know my students are learning when they stop making stereotypical comments about groups they are unfamiliar with,” said Teacher #5. Other cues the teachers reported observing were more subtle.

Teacher #3 explained how she attentively listened to students’ comments before class, as well as those obliquely thrown during class. “When students say inappropriate things due to gender, I definitely stop the discussion and start discussing gender issues like not having equal pay or how just recently women can be in combat.” Seeing anti-LGBTQ attitudes as stemming from gender equality issues, in-service Teacher #3 regularly focused her Social Studies lessons on them. When asked a follow-up question about what specifically influenced her decision not to create a separate learning unit on non-normative sexualities, she said, “I go with the flow. If

something is more important to my students I go with that, then I'll go to other issues . . . I think in the future, I'll have a whole learning segment on homosexuality.” Teacher #3 explained that she wanted to teach her students the Social Studies curriculum (as predicated upon the California state standards) while eliminating biases, and Critical Media Literacy helped her do that.

Addressing class systems.

Socioeconomic class was mentioned by three of Teacher Education Program graduates and students as important to address in the classroom. Teacher #1 used media portrayals of high school drop-outs to initiate student discussions about their perceived socio-economic class and their opportunity for upward mobility. He explained how Critical Media Literacy helped him to think differently about his students' class and their potential to change it. “Educators need to know where their students are coming from, in terms of their communities, cultural, and sociopolitical contexts, to deeply understand how to create a curriculum that they find engaging and [that] pushes their thinking.” By re-engaging his students, Teacher #1 encouraged his students to think of social class not as fixed, but as something created by media, and therefore, capable of being re-created, or altogether re-imagined.

Having worked with students in danger of dropping out, and holding credentials in Social Studies as well as English, Teacher #1 shared an interdisciplinary activity centered on Critical Media Literacy that he found to be highly motivating for his students:

We did a silent “chalk talk” to further discuss the meaning of each term [“drop-out” and “push-out”], and came to understanding the assumptions inherent in each term. Next, we concept mapped the places (media, society and family) that these ideas derive[d] from. Finally, students completed a dialectical ‘master narrative/counter-

narrative' paper that asked them to write the master narrative of a high school 'drop-out' using their own experiences as the focal point, in addition to the counter-narrative of 'push-out', again using their own experiences⁴.

Teacher #1's description of an activity targeting specifically students' thoughts on class was the most specific of all of the respondents'. Teacher #2 said that during her class activities, she tries to "remind students that all media is constructed for a particular purpose and a certain type of audience (race, class, etc.)" and that these conversations can be controversial.

Teacher #5 explained how he felt he had successfully initiated conversations about controversial topics. He explained that these conversations nearly always began impromptu, after he heard a student reinforce a stereotype, or make a self-defeatist comment. In a moment like that, he referred to the question-posing from the Critical Media Literacy class and asked questions like, "Why do you think that?" "What makes you say that?" or "What do you think about _____ now, after we've completed a lesson?" The recurring theme of the Teacher Education Program graduates and students was that the Critical Media Literacy course gave them ideas about how to approach challenging topics, such as culture, heteronormativity and socio-economic class. Encouraged to explore new methods of integrating the social justice framework, these graduates and students generally commented on what a positive addition Critical Media Literacy has made to their pedagogy.

Furthering social justice within students' communities.

The UCLA Teacher Education Program graduates and students (four of ten, all in-service) mentioned that by integrating Critical Media Literacy into their classrooms, they helped

⁴ Echoing Lyotard's (1984) "metanarrative" as "master narrative," Teacher #1 sought to teach his students that sense of incredulity toward homogenous human experiences that marks contemporary theory, what, according to Lyotard, is Postmodernity.

their students think about and promote social justice. The educators recounted analytical discussion-based exercises, as well as project-based activities that prompted students to advocate for social justice within their communities.

Analytical exercises promoting social justice.

Six of the ten graduates and students described discussions and activities that engaged their students' analytical skills to help them consider how to promote social justice. Teacher #3 introduced her unit on America's penal system by taking her students through an exercise in which they imagined the "ideal prison." She incorporated Critical Media Literacy by bringing in "newspaper articles to help them think about the 'good' and 'bad' things related to prisons." Her students, many of whom had relatives in prison, had personal knowledge of prison life. She taught them the curricular content (state standards) by covering the historical development of prisons, organizational structures and sentencing for common crimes. By creating multi-media representations of the "ideal prison," her students began to analyze whether the current penal system functions effectively.

An in-service English as a Second Language (ESL) and English teacher, Teacher #2, asked her students to consider any activities that they and their families, or communities, did religiously, "such as watching or playing soccer together on the weekend." By analyzing the nature of religious activities, the students discussed "whether or not people's individual practices are better than others, or just different from others." Striving to change students' outlook from that of ranking and competition to that of learning and appreciation of differences is a hallmark of UCLA's Teacher Education Program.

Teacher #4, working with few technological resources, brought in pictures of people from various cultures around the world and asked her Art students to analyze the differences between

themselves and those depicted in the photographs. “I asked questions like, ‘What do you see? What do you see that is similar? What do you see that is different?’” By posing these questions, she moved the students from making broad generalizations to specific comments. To add another analytical layer to the exercise, Teacher #4 also asked the students to imagine what someone from one of the photographs might notice about them and their culture, if merely presented with their picture. Teacher #5 drew his students toward critical thinking through pictures as well, but he used the pictures and illustrations from his course textbooks.

By drawing his students’ attention to the visual depictions of people from other communities and cultures in his class textbooks, Teacher #5 (an in-service Social Studies teacher working in an affluent, culturally homogenous high school) integrated Critical Media Literacy into his class. A core tenet of Critical Media Literacy is that all messages have a purpose, an intended audience. “We have discussed how different races are drawn by students in the class or are portrayed in texts we read.” By initiating these discussions, Teacher #5 drew attention to facets of a textbook that his students might have otherwise overlooked.

Also teaching in an affluent, mostly white area, Teacher #7 asked her students to analyze popular cartoons from the World War II era to discuss their explicit and implicit messages.

Uncle Sam [is the teacher] and the unruly students in the front row are dark-skinned children each with a country’s name written on them – ‘Puerto Rico,’ ‘Cuba,’ ‘Philippines.’ I asked the students what the picture might say about how people from these countries were viewed.

The students answered that in this cartoon, the U.S. saw these people as uncivilized and uneducated.



<http://umvod.files.wordpress.com/2011/01/cartoon-tr-philippines.jpg>

Several students expressed the opinion that white people always see others as different, or as inferior. This lesson challenged the students to analyze a representation of the U.S., of an educator and of a student, while requiring little technology.

Like others with no budget for materials, pre-service Social Studies teacher, Teacher #8, brought her own materials to her classroom for her students to analyze. Her students' urban community was often depicted as a high crime zone, but she wanted them to consider other factors about their communities, aspects that media often ignored. "I brought in pictures from Google of their community, and then asked them to make observations on how this compares to what they see/what they do not see [among media depictions], and which perspectives may be missing in these photos." Following the class discussion, the students took home interview worksheets to "interview their parents about what they valued and didn't value about their

community, so as to deepen the content” of their discussions. Teacher #8 saw her students “support their opinions with examples and/or facts that they derived from their family interviews or personal experiences.” By reporting their findings to the class, the students participated in true Social Science, discovering how different people could view the same community differently or similarly and how values varied by culture and family structure.

Project-based activities promoting social justice.

Three of the ten Teacher Education Program graduates and students reported incorporating Critical Media Literacy to engage students in projects using cameras, videos, YouTube and Facebook to improve a specific aspect of their community. Teaching his teachings about the New York “stop and frisk” policies, Teacher #1 allowed his students (all of whom were in danger of dropping out) to choose what kind of action they would take to increase public awareness about police brutality and racial profiling. “As a result of their thinking, they have produced Facebook posts, community proposals, letters, and some have expressed the need to create presentations for the community to inform them about police abuse and ways to resist it.” He described his students’ experience with this exercise as liberating.

His students came to him nearly disengaged from the public secondary school system and by integrating pieces of media with which they engaged outside of the classroom, Teacher #1 has seen students reawaken their academic potential. After completing their “stop and frisk” project, many of his students “expressed that they would want to document their experiences and stories through film.” Teacher #1 described the project-based, social-justice oriented activities as “very powerful for the students.” While Teacher #1 found project-based, social-justice activities helped to reinvigorate the academic drive among students who had nearly lost it, another teacher

described how by incorporating Critical Media Literacy into her classroom, she saw her students use their personal technological devices for learning.

Instead of asking her students to shut off or silence their Smartphones during class, Teacher #8 told them to use them. She wanted her students to collaborate to create “propaganda photographs, posters, and audio recordings.” While using Smartphones and other devices in the classroom made the activity fun, “figuring out how they would promote their ideologies made the assignment [difficult].” Teacher #8 knew this project was a success because as she walked around the classroom, “I could see what was on a student’s phone screen. It was material relating to the class – no texting, no emailing. They were looking up terms, hunting for propaganda and discussing what they were finding with their team members.” Teacher #8’s most significant observation about this project was that before students could proceed with making their photographs, posters and audio recordings, they first needed not only to understand the course material, but also to reflect on it and understand what they thought about it.

As these anecdotes reveal, only three of the ten teachers used Critical Media Literacy to engage students with media production, although media production was heavily emphasized in the UCLA Teacher Education Program Critical Media Literacy course. To uncover the possible struggles, barriers, or obstacles the teachers had while trying to integrate Critical Media Literacy into their classrooms, the interview protocol asked these teachers to reflect upon difficulties they encountered while implementing Critical Media Literacy.

Graduates’ and students’ pedagogical struggles.

Eight of the ten graduates and students cited the following as barriers or obstacles to incorporating Critical Media Literacy into curricula: the lack of technology and materials in the classroom; the districts’ emphasis on standardized testing, which restricted teachers from

customizing their lessons; and the lack of funding for professional development. Pre-service teachers (three of four) hesitated to include, or to imagine including Critical Media Literacy into their curricula because of their students' attitudes toward controversial topics, as well as their students' parents' potentially negative reactions.

Lack of technology and materials.

Incorporating Critical Media Literacy into a lesson on religious holidays, in-service Teacher #2 wanted her students to produce cartoons similar to those featured during March for St. Patrick's Day. "Students would have been more engaged if the cartoon would have been recorded. They like to do new things." She found, however, that there was no technology on her school's campus that would have allowed for this activity. Instead, her students combined their own drawings with pictures from magazines to create collages representing "religious" activities (club and sports events). She often spent her own money to ensure that her students had access to scissors, glue sticks and magazines. "The Library of Congress is an excellent online resource for teachers. For inexpensive supplies," she recommended, "try the Dollar Tree."

Seven of the ten teachers specifically mentioned that they needed to have a computer in their classroom. "Need at least ONE computer," wrote one teacher. Another mentioned that an iPad and a camera were necessary tools for projects, while another said, "I wish all my students had Smartphones." While seven of the teachers mentioned the importance of technology, six of them said that their teaching would be much easier if they merely had more print materials and classroom supplies. Such materials and supplies were newspapers (cited by six teachers), magazines (cited by five teachers), and glue sticks (cited by two teachers).

Emphasis on standardized testing.

Five graduate and student respondents said that the pressure to prepare their students for standardized testing, specifically the California Standards Testing (CST), was a significant obstacle to their time management and thus their including Critical Media Literacy. All five of these teachers were in-service teachers. While teacher #6, a new in-service English teacher, said, “I honestly haven’t had the time in my curriculum,” the other four tried to incorporate Critical Media Literacy despite their test preparation challenges.

Teacher #3 recommended to teachers, “try to incorporate it [Critical Media Literacy] into your own courses. It’s a challenge especially with testing and other pressures, but it’s definitely possible.” An in-service teacher, Teacher #3, said that integrating Critical Media Literacy happened fluidly, in small increments. She incorporated Critical Media Literacy into the CST preparation by initiating discussions based on textbooks and encouraging her students to use their Smartphones to verify the accuracy of information. According to Teacher #3, “As long as you know your students, you should be able to mention controversial topics in a sensitive manner” while addressing the standard curriculum.

Lack of funding for professional development.

Three of the ten teachers said that they could better incorporate Critical Media Literacy into their curricula if they had more training or professional development opportunities, but that limited funding prohibited them from doing so. None of the instructors claimed to have access to outside funding or professional development that helped them to improve their practice. The only teacher who elaborated on this question was in-service Teacher #2, who wrote, “District, or outside funding? HAHHAHAHA.” This response tersely summarized the data concerning the teachers’ anemic budgets.

Pre-service teachers' pedagogical struggles.

Three of the four pre-service teachers described pedagogical struggles unique to their positions as pre-service teachers. First, as service teachers, they felt powerless to add to or change their curricula while they were teaching with partner teachers. Second, they were concerned about the potential reactions of their students and students' parents to controversial conversations that might transpire in their classrooms if they incorporated Critical Media Literacy.

Powerlessness.

Teacher #7, who led her Social Studies students in an exercise to address media stereotypes of masculinity, said, "I have been told that as a pre-service teacher it is inappropriate to bring up such complex issues." She chose not to disclose who told her this, but did reveal that she planned to integrate Critical Media Literacy into her classroom once she was credentialed. "I think that once I have my own classroom it will be much easier to implement Critical Media Literacy activities into my curriculum and daily/weekly routines." Pre-service teacher, Teacher #10 explained that she did not think she would use Critical Media Literacy in her English classroom because of her, "own fears of what [the] classroom environment could turn into." She feared that students might become unruly with excitement and that she would be unable to regain control of the discussion.

Reactions to controversy.

Teacher #9, a pre-service teacher, described her fear of stirring up controversy. "Many students in the community I work in are very homophobic. I'm nervous about the comments they are going to make, and how I'm going to navigate the conversation without offending the[m]."

I'm afraid of what their parents might say." Although she listed several fears with regard to incorporating Critical Media Literacy, when responding to a follow-up question about them, she responded with, "I am hesitant to include things on sexual orientation, however I will. I have been a gay rights activist in the past, and I believe firmly in educating students on acceptance." Another pre-service teacher had a different view on navigating the water of controversy and parental reactions.

Teacher #10 said, "I have omitted certain subjects because I am not sure how parents would receive it." Responses such as these indicate that pre-service teachers were making conscious decisions not to incorporate Critical Media Literacy. These decisions were not made based on curricula, but rather on personal perceptions.

Summary of UCLA Graduates' and Students' Experiences

Seven (six in-service and one pre-service) of the ten UCLA Teacher Education Program graduates and students reported that since completing the Critical Media Literacy course, they have integrated Critical Media Literacy into their curricula in a meaningful manner. They stated that by using Critical Media Literacy, they challenged their students' assumptions about what was considered "normal," that they tasked their students to think critically about media portrayals of cultures and "truth," and that they witnessed their students become engaged in the process of promoting social justice through analytical and project-based assignments. Their most commonly cited barriers were the lack of technology and materials, the districts' emphasis on standardized testing, and the lack of funding for professional development. Pre-service teachers (three of four) expressed anxieties surrounding Critical Media Literacy, such as feeling powerless to change the curriculum and sensing that Critical Media Literacy might stir up too much controversy for the high school environment.

Chapter Five

Prose has taken all the dirty work on to her own shoulders; has answered letters, paid bills, written articles, made speeches, served the needs of business-men, shopkeepers, lawyers, soldiers, peasants.

(Woolf, 1925)

Key Findings and Recommendations

This study's most significant finding was that the UCLA Teacher Education Program instructors consistently referred to Critical Media Literacy as a pedagogy, while their students described Critical Media Literacy as a content area competing for their time as California Standards Tests (CSTs) loomed over their heads. Also significant was the finding that the UCLA Teacher Education Program pre-service teachers hesitated to include, or to imagine including Critical Media Literacy in the classrooms they co-taught, as well as the classes they would teach after becoming credentialed. In this chapter, I discuss these findings, as well as offer recommendations to address them.

Critical media literacy as a pedagogy.

The UCLA Teacher Education Program instructors described Critical Media Literacy as a pedagogy that fosters radically open learning environments, poses questions rather than delivering material, and uses media and technology to foster critical thinking skills. Moreover, they described Critical Media Literacy as a lens through which any content could be taught. While this study focused only on integrating Critical Media Literacy into the Humanities, the instructors all expressed their belief that Critical Media Literacy should be used to teach all curricular content.

While the UCLA Teacher Education Program Instructors described Critical Media Literacy as a pedagogy, a way of teaching, a lens through which to view the world, as do Kellner & Share (2005) and Ouelette (2013), their students predominantly described it as a content area. Furthermore, those students approached Media Studies through a protectionist framework – one that fears media and “media effect.” To see their hopes of Critical Media Literacy employed as a pedagogy throughout the curriculum, UCLA instructors need to work with other Teacher Education Program instructors to discuss how they can integrate Critical Media Literacy into every course. By integrating Critical Media Literacy throughout its curriculum, UCLA’s Teacher Education Program would demonstrate to its students how they might create radically open educational spaces and pose questions as pedagogical practices. This solution, however, is one that would require the Critical Media Literacy instructors to, in essence, co-teach with every Teacher Education Program instructor, and therefore might not be feasible due to time, budget and structural constraints. If such restrictions, however, are met with a portion of the creativity and passion the instructors demonstrated during their interviews, then this transformation could take place relatively quickly. The overall impression given by the questionnaire respondents and interview participants was that they wanted to incorporate Critical Media Literacy into their classrooms, but that they felt their time was consumed by content delivery and CSTs preparation.

In-service teachers’ struggles with california standards tests.

The graduates expressed much anxiety surrounding the CSTs and the lack of wriggle room those exams allow them. Compounded with their understanding of Critical Media Literacy as a content area, this tension often led them to believe that they did not have enough time to prepare students for the CSTs while engaging them with Critical Media Literacy. They described test preparation booklets, according to one questionnaire respondent, as taking, “time away from

other potential, enlightening material coverage.” Because the reality for teachers today is that the majority of them are strained under the demands of NCLB requirements and standardized testing, the Critical Media Literacy instructors must confront these issues with their students, building test preparation into their curriculum.

The UCLA Teacher Education Program Critical Media Literacy instructors should explicitly align their course assignments and classroom discussions with CSTs. This recommendation is one that would likely apply to other teacher education programs. Teachers must understand the reality of the environment in which they are about to be employed. While other research has and will continue to research the validity of state-mandated standardized testing and its effect on educational settings, testing is, nonetheless, a significant component of teachers’ professional experience. Without seeing this direct connection to standardized tests, the teachers often struggled to incorporate Critical Media Literacy. They feared that in trying to integrate Critical Media Literacy, they would neglect crucial content their students needed to master for the CSTs. This finding ultimately relates to this study’s most significant finding: the differences in the ways the instructors and their students understood Critical Media Literacy. This distinction must be made clear by the instructors: they are not teaching a subject but rather a means by which educators could teach any subject, including material for standardized tests.

Pre-service teachers’ reluctance to confront controversy.

While in-service teachers touted the benefits of integrating Critical Media Literacy into their classes, pre-service teachers described their fears of doing so. Those fears included the potential negative reactions of school administrators and students’ parents. They, like the pre-service teachers in Floures-Koulis’s 2006 study nervous about studying Madonna’s *Material*

Girl, did not want to introduce controversial media into the classroom. Some felt that the class discussions might become too unruly, or that school administrators, or students' parents would complain. There is no known singular method of facilitating controversial discussions; what each teacher education cohort considers controversial may differ by their demographics, their histories and their belief systems. To prepare for these variations, the UCLA instructors could deliver anonymous online surveys prior to the beginning of each quarter to "diagnose" each class's primary anxieties. This data collection might give the instructors the information they need to model how to broach controversial topics and how to relate them back to the curriculum.

In addition, the UCLA Teacher Education Program instructors should invite UCLA alumni teachers using Critical Media Literacy to speak with their students about how they have addressed pedagogical struggles. Interactions with veteran instructors using Critical Media Literacy might allay pre-service teachers' fears. No data indicated that any teacher using Critical Media Literacy has faced dissension from administrators, students or students' parents.

The Critical Media Literacy instructors must remember that pre-service teachers bring to class with them fears and expectations that are not grounded in the reality of teaching, but rather in their own histories and assumptions. The more opportunities the instructors provide pre-service teachers to interact with veteran teachers, the less fear they will likely bring with them on their first day of teaching as credentialed teachers. In order to further their social justice agenda, the UCLA Teacher Education Program instructors need to capitalize upon every opportunity they have to model for their pre-service teachers how Critical Media Literacy can be incorporated into any curriculum without negative professional consequences.

Discussion

Critical Media Literacy is an engaging progressive pedagogy and UCLA's Teacher Education Program is pioneering an entirely new way to think about teacher education by requiring this course. This study's data were informative not only for UCLA's Teacher Education Program, but also for other teacher education programs and educators interested in incorporating Critical Media Literacy into their practice. The data collected from the instructors could serve to improve the course and to help UCLA's graduates to reimagine Critical Media Literacy in their classrooms.

This study affirmed many of the themes gleaned from the Review of the Literature in Chapter Two. Namely, the UCLA Teacher Education Program instructors, graduates and students described Critical Media Literacy as means of teaching critical thinking, making the classroom relevant and promoting social justice. Where the study's data diverged from the Review of the Literature was in the educators' accounts of pedagogical struggles. The research to date commonly cited teachers' struggles as stemming from the lack of training or technological know-how. This study, however, found that teachers knew how to use technology, but did not have it in their classrooms.

Technology's role in the critical media literacy classroom.

Although the UCLA Teacher Education Program's Critical Media Literacy course is a special topic course fulfilling the curriculum's technology requirement, the Critical Media Literacy instructors all emphasized, ironically, that technology was its least significant component. They agreed that new technology has increased students' potential to create exciting new media, but that teaching their students to use new media was not a means to an end. Rather, they believed that the technology was one tool that they used to make material relevant,

engaging, and thought provoking. The UCLA Teacher Education Program instructors cannot provide its graduates and students with technology enhanced classrooms where they teach – it is beyond their reach; however, they can help their students adapt to teaching in “low-tech” environments.

As argued in the Review of the Literature in Chapter Two, today’s classrooms are increasingly disconnected from the outside world. The majority of teachers and students are connected, through Smartphones, iPads and laptops, to one another and to global networks of information and socialization. Their classrooms however, tend to be technological vacuums. The UCLA Teacher Education Program instructors should aim to find a way to help their students connect their “low-tech” classrooms to the technology and media of the world outside of their schools. Without this connection, students will not see the relevance and direct applicability of their education to their lives. As evidenced by Groenke & Youngquist’s 2011 study, high school students have already begun to think differently about school-based reading (which is low-tech) and reading for pleasure outside of school (increasingly done using digital or new media). As this disconnect grows, it threatens to burden educators increasingly to answer students’ questions such as, “But how does this apply to the ‘real world?’”

The Critical Media Literacy instructors could reduce their course’s emphasis on technology while still meeting UCLA’s Teacher Education technology requirement. As the Review of the Literature evidenced in Chapter Two, experts today agree that teachers need to be able than do more than send an email; however, what “more” means is up to interpretation. The challenge for the UCLA Critical Media Literacy instructors lies in finding that “Goldilocks” comfort zone – where the technology component of the course is “just right.”

By teaching their students to create PowerPoint presentations that re-envision popular narratives, UCLA's Teacher Education Program instructors update their students' technology skills while teaching them to write counter-narratives. Teacher #1, using student Facebook projects that grew into grassroots community improvement projects, similarly engaged his students in the art of writing counter-narratives. They learned to use Facebook as a way to promote community growth around issues that mattered to them. Their Facebook campaigns became counter-narratives to the typically individualistic, and often egotistical, self-promotion that occurs on Facebook. Projects such as these show Critical Media Literacy as a pedagogy in action. Teachers do not need technology in the classrooms to spearhead these types of projects, as most schools now have websites, student and teacher emails, as well as online "Blackboards." Because the data consistently indicate that students participate more in class when familiar technologies and topics are utilized, it is paramount that educators begin to discuss creative ways of integrating new media and social networking into classrooms that lack technology.

Assessment of critical media literacy.

The UCLA Teacher Education Program Critical Media Literacy instructors saw assessment as a challenge. As Kubey and Serafin's 2001 study illustrated, "Critical Media Literacy Media Literacy is a tool that helps students with learning other tasks." (p. 5) How can one assess to what degree a student has grasped core concepts based upon a digital narrative or a Facebook page? Can an educators truly know whether their students are utilizing the core concepts of Critical Media Literacy to analyse a message, or if they are merely parroting buzzwords and key phrases they have heard during the academic quarter? The key to answering these questions may lie in the students' reflective essays.

The instructors require that students write reflective essays in which they analyze projects they created in the Critical Media Literacy course. This process of reflecting upon one's learning, or metacognition, is an important aspect of a progressive pedagogy, but the downfall of it is that there is no standard, or benchmark, for students to aspire to reach. Perhaps this is an instance in which more guidelines and limitations, not fewer, would help the students produce creative projects that demonstrated their critical awareness of Critical Media Literacy issues.

While Instructor A's suggestion of assigning each student the same final project would make assessment easier (at least, more uniform), Instructor E's caution rings true. How can the instructors justify using uniform assignments in a course predicated upon creativity, critical analysis and counter-narratives? Perhaps this issue, like the struggle to balance the amount of technology in the course, is one that requires the instructors to communicate about their expectations. When students work to produce similar projects, they can call on one another to brainstorm, edit and develop new ideas. The instructors should work together to develop projects for their students that task them to create similar products while allowing and encouraging the students to individualize them. The UCLA Teacher Education Program Critical Media Literacy instructors might benefit from meeting frequently not only to discuss challenges they encounter (as they already do), but also to practice collectively assessing students' work. Just as standardized test essay graders engage in norming, so too should the UCLA Teacher Education Program instructors practice grading projects such as VoiceThreads and counter-narrative Facebook profiles.

Limitations

Among this study's limitations were its narrow scope, its number of participants and their respective fields of teaching, teaching experience and the modes of data collection. Because this study focused specifically on UCLA's Teacher Education Program, the instructor and graduate/student participants may not have represented the larger community of instructors and teachers nationwide. UCLA's focus on developing social justice oriented educators and educational leaders sets it apart from other teacher education programs without that focus, or without the critical aspect incorporated into their educational media and/or technology special topics courses. Teacher education students who attend UCLA have self-selected to join a social justice movement within education, and therefore, come to the program, in all likelihood, willing to promote social justice and equity in education. Lastly, this study's focus on a required special topics course at a teacher education program could have merely produced findings that represent a trend in teacher education special topics courses, rather than characteristics unique to Critical Media Literacy teacher education instructors and their students.

Narrow scope.

This study sought to describe how the UCLA faculty understood Critical Media Literacy and how their Teacher Education Program graduates and students teaching high school Humanities courses integrated Critical Media Literacy into their own classrooms. I hoped that by describing the understandings and experiences of such a small and specific population, I could provide rich and detailed data that could be generalized to larger populations among educators. Although every UCLA Critical Media Literacy instructor was interviewed, the total was only five. Moreover, these instructors were not representative of the majority of teacher education program instructors, as four of them were graduate student instructors teaching with Master's

degrees, not Doctorates. These four Critical Media Literacy instructors, while veteran teachers at various K-12 levels, were inexperienced at the post-secondary level. Therefore, it could be argued that their pedagogical methods and struggles were not the same as those that junior or senior faculty members would report in a similar study. This instructor participant pool, with one exception teaching with a Doctorate, was new to teaching at the post-secondary level, which generally includes a host of factors that make it markedly different from teaching at the K-12 levels.

Few fields within humanities.

Not only was the scope of the population narrow, but so too was the breadth of subjects that the study's population taught. I narrowed the study's scope to examine only high school Humanities teachers for three main reasons: 1) the extant literature on Critical Media Literacy primarily addressed Critical Media Literacy's role within the Humanities; 2) each UCLA Critical Media Literacy instructor's background was in the Humanities, as is my own; 3) recent data affirm that high school is often a critical intersection in which students, particularly those of underrepresented populations, decide whether to continue their education at the post-secondary level.

Although the study intended to gather data from UCLA Teacher Education Program graduates and students who taught high school courses throughout the vast scope of the Humanities, the graduates and students who volunteered to participate only taught Social Studies (5), English (4) and Art (1). Thus, the data might not have represented methods used and struggles faced by high school teachers incorporating Critical Media Literacy throughout other Humanities subjects, such as Economics, Foreign Language, or Music. Possible explanations for

Social Studies and English teachers' higher response rate are: 1) English and Social Studies teachers have more experience negotiating subjective and controversial material because of their educational backgrounds and the nature of the subjects they teach; 2) English and Social Studies teachers have greater familiarity with communicating in narratives and therefore volunteer at higher rates than their colleagues to participate in qualitative research; 3) These particular respondents were from specific UCLA Teacher Education cohorts who resonated with Critical Media Literacy for personal reasons and therefore engaged more with the material than did other Teacher Education Program cohorts. Descriptive data that might have answered these questions could not be revealed, as they might have breached the participants' confidentiality due to the study's small number of participants.

Teaching experience.

One quality that set the majority of this study's respondents apart from the general pool of UCLA Teacher Education Program graduates and students was that, by and large, they were older, more experienced teachers. Even the questionnaire, which was utilized to find high school Humanities teachers, garnered a 23% response rate from in-service teachers, while in-service teachers generally comprised 5% of the overall UCLA Teacher Education Program. The interview participant pool became more divergent from the overall student body, as the study's selection process narrowed the participants down to high school Humanities teachers. Six of the ten teachers who completed interviews were in-service instructors. Thus, the majority of this study's data were captured from the program's minority of students. Recent studies have suggested that more research be done on the reflections and experiences of pre-service teachers (Wall, S. & Anderson, J., 2013; Lux, N. & Waterton, N., 2013) as does this study. It is

impossible to speculate whether pre-service teachers participated less as a result of lower self-efficacy, the lack of time, or other factors.

Modes of data collection.

This study used phone interviews for the initial data collection for UCLA instructors and email for follow-up questions. To collect data from UCLA Teacher Education Program graduates and students, the interview protocol and subsequent follow-up questions were emailed. These modes of communication had their limitations and each will be addressed.

Phone interviews.

Utilizing phone interviews to collect data from the UCLA instructors, I could not see or try to analyze the participants' body language. The most pragmatic benefit of conducting phone interviews was that I plugged a microphone directly into my cellular phone while sitting in a quiet room. While transcribing the interviews, I noticed that the recordings had clarity that surpassed the recordings of the pre-testing interviews, or any other interviews I had conducted. This clarity allowed me to transcribe faster and more accurately. Within one week of conducting each participant's interview, I emailed them transcripts for their verification as well as some initial analysis and follow-up questions. This interview method allowed for a more rapid turnaround time and greater immediacy in feedback and further inquiry.

Email interviews.

The UCLA Teacher Education Program graduates and students unanimously chose to complete the study's interview and follow-up questions online. The decision to proceed with the interviews in this format was not made lightly. Emailing my interview protocol, neither would I would have the opportunity to see the participants reactions, nor would I have the personal

interaction that often reveals unexpected data. While I saw these as significant disadvantages, I was also excited to try this new research mode. I had offered my subjects a choice and they had overwhelmingly responded. My own review of the literature never found a study that had allowed its participants to vote on their preferred mode of communication. Even Gauntlett and Holzwarth (2006), social justice advocates who pushed the boundaries of data collection by using Legos, did not allow their participants to choose the medium of their identity representations – that is, they decided their subject would use Legos. Thus, I proceeded to email the interview protocol while preparing myself for the follow-up email in which I might have had to stipulate that said the study would require an in-person interview.

Much to my surprise, I found many benefits in sending the participants the interview protocol. I could not change a word of my interview protocol, as it was approved by UCLA's Internal Review Board (IRB). Whereas personal interviews necessitate extra dialogue by means of transitioning from one set of questions to the next, or by the participant asking the interviewer questions during the interview, this mode of interview was transparent. I could not couch my language, use colloquialisms or euphemisms; the participants read the questions as they were written. Moreover, I, as a researcher, was never given the opportunity to make assumptions based upon accent, skin color, or manner of dress, as to the participants' locations of origin, race, ethnicity, income level, political ideologies, or any other identity markers. What I have are transcripts of interviews written by the participants themselves. Whereas I expected to feel a greater sense of detachment from these participants, a different sense of authenticity emerged.

The participants, expressing gratitude for not needing to interrupt their busy schedules by meeting with me for the study, offered to chat through additional follow-up emails and asked for

information as to when my study would be available for them to see. Eight of the ten graduates and students sent me emails, after completing interview protocol and answering follow-up questions, merely to ask about the status of my study and to thank me for conducting the research. It was as though the participants were cognizant of the different nature of this study – a study that invited its participants to express their preferred mode of communication. I cannot generalize to other research fields, but for research conducted on Critical Media Literacy, research that prides itself upon exposing the counter-narratives, these modes of data collection seemed apropos to the project.

Implications for Future Research

This research uncovered several areas in need of research within not only teacher education programs, but also within higher education and K-12 education. Teacher education programs, of all higher education curricula, need to have their definitions and expectations transparently communicated to their students, because those students are responsible for carrying out the programs' missions in their surrounding communities. This is especially crucial in the case of a teacher education program at a land-grant university like UCLA, where the curriculum is thoughtfully tailored to make the most positive impact on its surrounding environment. More importantly, the data indicate that the students in those urban environments stand to benefit most dramatically from exposure to Critical Media Literacy. Future projects must examine how teacher education programs know whether their students are learning what they think they are teaching. What the UCLA instructors saw as pedagogy, their students interpreted as a content area.

Another area for inquiry opened by this research is that of Critical Media Literacy in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, or STEM. As this study focused on the UCLA Teacher Education Program instructors and their graduates and students working in the Humanities it ignored data relating to STEM. The UCLA instructors reported struggling to communicate constructivism to their students teaching Math and Science teachers, and the online questionnaire captured data from those individuals.

Two online questionnaire respondents, who taught Mathematics and Science at the high school level, described techniques they used to help their students approach Math and Science critically. A high school Math teacher described an exercise he conducted with his students involving the analysis of high school drop-out rates. His students “had to use their [drop-out] data and form an equation that would best represent the data.” This teacher demonstrated for his own students how they could use Mathematics to conduct research that validated or repudiated media hyperbole concerning high school drop-out rates. With the nation’s recent emphasis on STEM fields, à la “Race to the Top,” the U.S. Department of Education’s initiative to enhance STEM education in America, STEM subjects appear to be glorified among media as the saviors of a bad economy and the wave of the future in global market competition. Future research should investigate what Critical Media Literacy instructors, K-16, are doing to challenge the current fetishizing of STEM.

Finally, this study opened new avenues of inquiry regarding how educators teach through facilitating controversial discussions, namely those centered on race and gender. While the UCLA Teacher Education Program instructors sought to unpack the construct of whiteness and white male privilege with their students, the topic seemed too incendiary at times, while too

foreign at others. White male privilege was a topic that each instructor mentioned, with four out of the five naming it as a significant challenge to their instruction. The UCLA Teacher Education graduates and students repeatedly mentioned gender and sexuality as significant topics in their classrooms, but not the intersectionality of race and gender. Future research should investigate how the personal characteristics and experiences can color the lenses through which educators view their processes of instruction and the topics they choose. Such research might uncover methods through which educators could truly reimagine a curriculum.

Research conducted by Jupp and Slattery (2012) suggests that the answer to creating culturally relevant pedagogy lies not in providing students with teachers who mirror their demographics, but instead in acknowledging the disproportionate representation of whiteness in educational settings. Jupp and Slattery (2012) argue that race consciousness is a critical aspect of progressive pedagogy (p.307). By broaching the topic of white male privilege, the UCLA instructors faced a critical issue in education, but may have skipped some steps along the way. The UCLA instructors only have ten weeks to cover the material they consider essential. The graduates and students reported that their high school students were still using the term “gay” in a derogatory manner. The high school students’ needs, in terms of critical pedagogy, were less sophisticated than graduate students’ needs. Thus, careful consideration must be made by the UCLA Teacher Education Program instructors as to whether they teach their course to graduate students, or to graduate students seeking to apply this material directly to their own teaching of K-12 students. Further inquiry into this field is needed. While some research has examined the racial and gender disparities between the K-12 system and higher education, more is needed to understand the ramifications of this discrepancy.

Conclusion

Describing Critical Media Literacy as material to be taught, as well as the means by which to teach it, UCLA's Teacher Education Program instructors have, paradoxically, unraveled the very tenets of this study. A critical pedagogue could not have asked for anything more. In the process of trying to answer research questions, this study generated more questions than it answered. Moreover, Critical Media Literacy is challenging educators to take a stance to struggle not for equality, but equity, in the classroom. Creative educators are integrating it into their curricula, from Mathematics to Music. In the face of so much media rhetoric focusing on "evidence based practices," and "objective inquiry," this study sought to bring forth the voices of educators and to remind us all that, "the educator has the duty of not being neutral" (Freire, P., 1990).

Reflections

While gathering background information on UCLA's Teacher Education Program's Critical Media Literacy course, I attended it. Because I was considering conducting research on the course, I did not attend every consecutive class for one quarter. I did not want to disrupt the course, or build relationships with students who might have eventually participated in my study. Instead, I attended various class sessions of different class sections during two academic quarters. It was this experience that cemented my decision to study the course's instructors and students. This course is like none other I have witnessed.

The course is a unique experience because of its instructors' absolute commitment to question-posing and to guiding students toward their own understandings, interpretations and arguments. I noted, on several occasions, when an instructor asked a student questions until that student stated an opinion, or argument, supported by a fact. My most memorable example of this

process occurred after one Critical Media Literacy instructor showed the class (most of whom were Asian females) quotes of “positive stereotypes” about Asians. Two were, “Asians get into the best colleges because they’re so smart,” and, “All Asians can play the violin and the piano because they are so hard working.” These phrases, projected overhead on a screen in the front of the room, were initially read with laughter. Then the laughter subsided to uncomfortable giggling. Then silence blanketed the class.

When the instructor inquired about the gradual cease in laughter, one student tried to articulate her thoughts. She said, “Well at first, I thought it was funny, because I get it a lot. Then, I thought, ‘Well it’s stuff like this that makes it harder for us.’” The instructor, modeling a technique to draw out of students articulate arguments supported by evidence, asked the student questions for approximately fifteen minutes. The student narrated her personal experience with racism in America, her family’s migration history and citizenship status, her own journey through high school as an Asian earning mediocre grades, to her academic turning point in junior college. All of this the instructor diligently processed and used as material to ask more questions that guided the student back to the topic of the positive stereotyping of Asians. Finally, as though an oven’s timer alarmed, the student eloquently pronounced that:

Stereotypes like these, even ‘positive ones,’ only promote fear and misunderstanding. It’s because of stereotypes like these that I’ve been embarrassed to talk to anyone about academic struggles.

Some students were intimidated by me just because I was Asian.

This student, rather than objecting to a stereotype because of a vague discomfort, articulated a well-supported argument as to why even “positive” stereotypes can be harmful. That was a

successful exercise in modeling question-posing. Not all question-posing exercises went so smoothly. At times, the instructor had to maintain focus in the face of students' immaturity.

During one course section on photography's power of suggestion, an instructor displayed for his students a photo of a man leaving a restroom labeled "Women." The instructor asked a key question regarding the purpose of the picture. He waited for snickering to wane, and then repeated his question. No one answered. He then asked why students had giggled. One student then said she and her colleagues had laughed that they "must have been in a social justice oriented program too long, because [they] just figured the man was transgender." This lesson, addressing not only the power of photography, but also the ways in which society constructs gender, was especially grueling, as the students appeared to have no background in the core concepts of constructivism, or an interest in discussing feminism and gender issues that may arise among their own students. As the instructors stated in their interviews, they do indeed contend with a broad spectrum of students and their lack of exposure to, or interest in, critical theory and/or critical pedagogy.

The Critical Media Literacy course was unique for its marked peaks and valleys of enthusiasm and engagement among students. The course largely depended upon its students' histories and comfort level with engaging in controversial material. The instructors' radical devotion, however, to the notion that they teach students how to teach was impressive. Indeed, I never witnessed an instructor bypass a student's question, belittle a student, or simplify a complex idea in the interest of saving time. If anything, these instructors put in more out-of-class hours than any instructors with whom I have personally worked. They often met with students for an hour after class had ended and answered emails from students who had already graduated.

Their graduates also recalled instances in which they had reached out to their former Critical Media Literacy instructors for advice on making a PowerPoint presentation interesting, working through issues of homophobic comments made in the classroom, or creating narratives that addressed illegal immigration. The stories they told did not relate to one of my research questions, per se, but illustrated the depth of some of the relationships that had been forged between the Critical Media Literacy course instructors and their students. All of this though, only adds to the literature concerning the enigmatic nature of instruction, particularly at the post-secondary level.

This research had a positive impact on my own students at a small Liberal Arts university. While conducting research for this project, I not only incorporated techniques to develop radically open learning environments in my classes, but I also created a course on Critical Media Literacy. By asking more questions than I answered, I saw my students engage with one another in scholarship. They used their laptop computers to fact check, rather than to chat. They debated controversial topics, like funding for Planned Parenthood, respectfully. I admitted what I did not know and I researched questions and definitions with them. I engaged them in four-corners debates and pair-shares. My classroom became a pedagogical laboratory and it was successful. Instead of taking hours before class to “prepare a lesson,” I devoted time to thinking of possible questions a student could ask and how I could answer that question with a question. I used the extra time I then had to update threads on my students’ Google group chats and Wordpress blogs. My courses became much more engaging and dynamic for everyone involved. The pedagogy I practiced in my Critical Media Literacy course is now infused throughout all of my courses. I often joke that no one can take one of my courses unless they have read the entire Hannibal Lector series, watched several episodes of *South Park*, or studied

1980s films. Although my students may laugh at this joke, they quickly learn that I will take media material – commercials, magazine articles, even headlines from *The Onion*, to drive home a point about composition or critical analysis. Media make class material memorable. It is unfortunate indeed that a course covering material so imbedded in our culture, so commonplace, so unavoidable, is relegated to the “special topics” category in teacher education.

While conducting the study, I discovered that the field of educational research has little to say regarding special topics courses and teacher education. This dearth is surprising, considering that special topics courses are generally the ones pioneering new content and new pedagogies. Conducting research on post-secondary instructors who taught in a teacher education program was fascinating for me, as a post-secondary instructor myself. The task of these instructors, to teach people how to teach, to teach people what to teach, is a precarious one. So much of the future of Critical Media Literacy and other innovative fields like it, depends upon the instructors feeling supported and having the resources they need to continue to hone their craft. It is my hope that this research has supported their mission and will open new avenues of inquiry among other educators and scholars.

Appendices

Appendix A UCLA TEP Critical Media Literacy Course Instructor Interview Protocol

I'd like to begin by asking some basic background questions, so that I can get to know you a little.

- 1) Please tell me how you came to be an instructor of the Critical Media Literacy course at the UCLA TEP.
 - a. Prior teaching experience?
 - b. Educational background/college major(s)?
 - c. Teaching on-campus, or off-site?
- 2) What would you describe as being one main objective, or a couple main objectives of this course on Critical Media Literacy?
- 3) Keeping those (that) objective(s) in mind, what exercises and/or activities have you found to be helpful in getting students to understand that (them).
 - a. Are there particular processes you use to teach the material?
 - i. Could you give me an example of what you recently you had the students do?
 - ii. Could you give me an example of something your students produced while using the key concepts of Critical Media Literacy?
 - iii. I'd like you to please walk me thorough what that looks like while it's happening in your class (how is it done?).
- 4) Do you facilitate any activities for your students that challenge them to think about their own embedded assumptions about various identities (such as ageism, classism, racism, sexism, sexual orientation, family structure, etc)?

- a. What do(es) that(those) activity(ies) look like?
- 5) Do you facilitate any activities for your students that challenge them to think about embedded assumptions about identity (such as ageism, classism, racism, sexism, sexual orientation, family structure, etc) as they might be represented among media?
 - a. What do(es) that(those) activity(ies) look like?
 - i. Among textbooks they might use to teach?
- 6) How can you tell when your students are learning the material?
 - i. What kind of questions are you asking them to verify that they are learning the material?
 - ii. What kinds of questions are they asking you that confirm that they are learning the material?
- 7) What have you found to be most helpful in teaching your TEP students Critical Media Literacy?
 - a. Specific technology?
 - i. New/interactive media?
 - ii. Specific programs?
 - b. Specific material?
 - i. Books/articles/advertisements/programs/websites?
 - a. Which ones?
 - c. Specific authors or theories?
 - i. Kellner/Share/Hobbs?
 - ii. Others?

Thanks for describing your teaching practices. This next question is designed to describe, what, if any, barriers or obstacles you've encountered while teaching the course. As an educator myself, I understand that sometimes it can be difficult to recall and describe moments in the classroom that have not been as productive as we had hoped. However, by describing moments such as these, you would help this study tremendously and allow other educators to learn from your reflections.

8) In your experience teaching the course, have you come across barriers or obstacles, such as delicate, emotionally charged, or controversial topics, to teaching the course material?

a. If so, please elaborate.

i. What was the topic?

ii. How did you keep your students focused on the topic and facilitate productive conversations?

b. What topics have been difficult for you to discuss with your students?

i. How did you handle it, what happened as a result

c. Any other barriers or obstacles?

i. Technology barriers?

d. Is there anything that you wish you had done differently to address that barrier (those barriers)?

e. What advice do you have for your TEP students, or educators, as to how they might avoid a similar situation?

9) Considering your experience teaching the Critical Media Literacy course for UCLA's TEP, and now reflecting upon the conversation we had, how do you define Critical Media Literacy?

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your time. I just have one more question for you.

10) What advice, or recommendations, do you have for other educators who might be thinking of introducing Critical Media Literacy into their own classrooms?

- a. High school teachers?
- b. College instructors?
- c. Teachers working throughout the curriculum?
 - i. Art, History, Language, etc?

Thanks again for your time. Within one week, I will email you a transcript of this interview. I'd like you to look it over and reply to the email to confirm that it accurately reflects our conversation today. Should you feel that there is any discrepancy in the transcript, desire to remove some of your answers, or even withdraw yourself from this study, you will have the option to do so.

I will also notify you when this study is published as my dissertation, so that you'll have access to it. It is my hope that this study enables educators to continue reflecting upon their practice of teaching and incorporating Critical Media Literacy into their various fields.

Thanks again for helping me to bring this study to fruition. I truly appreciate your help.

Appendix B Critical Media Literacy Online Questionnaire

Q1. What is your age?

- ☐ under 20 (1)
- ☐ 20-23 (2)
- ☐ 24-27 (3)
- ☐ 28-31 (4)
- ☐ 32-35 (5)
- ☐ 36-39 (6)
- ☐ 40-43 (7)
- ☐ 44-47 (8)
- ☐ 48-51 (9)
- ☐ over 52 (10)
- ☐ prefer not to answer (11)

Q2. What is your gender?

- ☐ Male (1)
- ☐ Female (2)
- ☐ prefer not to answer (3)

Q3. What is your race or ethnicity?

- ☐ Black, non-Hispanic (1)
- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native (2)
- ☐ Asian or Pacific Islander (3)

- ☐ Hispanic (4)
- ☐ White, non-Hispanic (5)
- ☐ Other (please write below) (6) _____
- ☐ prefer not to answer (7)

Q4. Degree(s): Please write all degrees **completed** since high school. Include minors, certificates and credentials.

Q5. Please write degree(s) **currently in progress**. If none, write "N/A."

Q6. Are you a pre-service or an in-service teacher?

- ☐ Pre-service (1)
- ☐ In-service (2)

Q7. Please write the name of school(s) where you are currently employed.

Q8. Please check all course(s) or subject(s) you are teaching, or have taught, since taking the Critical Media Literacy course within UCLA's TEP. Please check all that apply.

- ☐ Art (Visual, Performance or History) (1)
- ☐ Economics (3)
- ☐ English (4)
- ☐ English as a Second Language (ESL) (5)
- ☐ Foreign Language(s) (6)
- ☐ History (7)

- ☐ Music (Theory, Performance or History) (8)
- ☐ Philosophy (9)
- ☐ Political Science (10)
- ☐ Religion (11)
- ☐ Other (12) _____

Thank you for providing the researcher with some general information. The next portion of this survey will try to gain a better understanding of how UCLA TEP students and graduates understand Critical Media Literacy.

Q9. In your own words, please explain how you define Critical Media Literacy. (You will have the opportunity to change, modify, or add to your answer later in this questionnaire.)

According to the instructor of UCLA's TEP Critical Media Literacy course, Critical Media Literacy focuses on "challenging representations of class, gender, race and other media portrayals with the aim at deconstructing," or undoing the injustice or inequity that they often (knowingly or unknowingly) depict (Share, 2011).

Q10. To what degree do you agree or disagree with this statement?

- ☐ Strongly Agree (1)
- ☐ Agree (2)
- ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- ☐ Disagree (4)
- ☐ Strongly Disagree (5)

Q11. Having read the instructor's definition of Critical Media Literacy, would you like to change, modify, or add to your own?

☐ Yes –

☐ No

Some educators have reported various ways in which they have tried to incorporate Critical Media Literacy into their classes (lectures, discussions, activities and/or homework). Some educators report that, for various reasons, they do not have the opportunity to incorporate Critical Media Literacy concepts into their classes.

This following set of questions will ask you about the ways in which you may, or may not have, incorporated Critical Media Literacy into your own teaching. Please remember whether you have, or have not, used Critical Media Literacy in your teaching, your answers are valuable to the researcher.

During the time you have been teaching, since completing the Critical Media Literacy course in UCLA's TEP, please indicate the frequency with which you have incorporated Critical Media Literacy into your classes (formally, or informally, in lectures, activities/discussion or homework) in order to stimulate students to think about ...

Q 12 ... their own worldviews (or assumptions, biases, ethical principles, morals, beliefs, etc) ...

Never	Seldom	Occasionally	Frequently	Daily
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q 13 ... the embedded assumptions, or representations of identity (such as ageism, classism, racism, sexism, sexual orientation, family structure, etc) embedded in **course texts** ...

Never	Seldom	Occasionally	Frequently	Daily
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q14 ... the embedded assumptions, or representations of identity (such as ageism, classism, racism, sexism, sexual orientation, family structure) values represented in televised, broadcast and film media...

Never	Seldom	Occasionally	Frequently	Daily
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q15 ... the embedded assumptions, or representations of identity (such as ageism, classism, racism, sexism, sexual orientation, family structure) values represented on the Internet...

Never	Seldom	Occasionally	Frequently	Daily
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q16 ... the embedded assumptions, or representations of identity (such as ageism, classism, racism, sexism, sexual orientation, family structure) values represented in print media, such as newspapers, magazines and comic books...

Never	Seldom	Occasionally	Frequently	Daily
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q17 ...the embedded assumptions, or representations of identity (such as ageism, classism, racism, sexism) among portrayals of candidates in political campaigns and advertisements...

Never	Seldom	Occasionally	Frequently	Daily
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q19. If you have used Critical Media Literacy to stimulate students to reflect upon representations among media not listed above, please describe here:

Q20. If you have not used Critical Media Literacy in your classroom as often as you would have liked, please explain, please explain what you believe to be the main reason(s) for not doing so.

Q21. Please indicate whether you would be willing to assist the researcher in the following ways to discuss your answers in this survey by checking the appropriate box and then giving your preferred contact information.

	Yes (1)	No (2)
Email Correspondence (1)	☐	☐
Online Chat (2)	☐	☐

Skype Interview (3)	☐	☐
Phone Call (4)	☐	☐
Personal Interview (5)	☐	☐
Focus Group (6)	☐	☐
Future Survey (7)	☐	☐

Q22. Because this survey is confidential, the researcher will not be able to contact you without your contact information provided below.

Email address:

Phone number:

The researcher would like to thank you for your time and energy spent on this questionnaire.

Should you wish to be entered into the drawing for a Kindle Touch, please provide the email address where you prefer to be contacted (if you have not already). This email will never be used to contact you regarding this questionnaire, or for any other purposes, unless you previously in this questionnaire consented to be contacted for a follow-up discussion.

Appendix C UCLA TEP Graduate and Student Interview Protocol

First of all, I'd like to sincerely thank you for taking the time to meet with me to discuss your experiences with Critical Media Literacy. I am a doctoral candidate student in the Educational Leadership Program at UCLA and for my dissertation, I am studying the students who have and are taking that course. More specifically, my study aims at describing how you understand Critical Media Literacy and how you use it in your own classrooms.

May I have your permission to record our conversation in order to have a more accurate record of your answers?

Thank you.

At this time, to ensure your anonymity, I'd like for you to choose a fictitious name. This name will be used in lieu of your own to protect your confidentiality when I analyze my data and report the findings.

Thank you.

I'd like to begin by asking some basic background questions, so that I can get to know you a little.

1) Please tell me about your own educational journey so far – what you’ve studied and for how long you’ve taught.

- a. Are you credentialed and if so, in what subject(s)?
- b. What is your highest degree earned so far?
- c. What, if any, degrees do you have in progress?
- d. Where do you teach?
- e. What subject(s) do you teach?
- f. What grade(s) do you teach?

Thank you. This next series of questions will specifically address the UCLA TEP Critical Media course and your experiences in it.

2) When you took the UCLA TEP course, “Critical Media Literacy,” was it mandatory, or did you volunteer to take it?

- a. If you volunteered, what motivated you to do so?
- b. Prior to taking that course, what experience, if any, did you have with Critical Media Literacy?
- c. Since taking the course, have you had additional formal or informal training in Critical Media Literacy?
 - i. If so, what?

Thank you. These next questions will ask you to recall and describe how you have incorporated what you learned about Critical Media Literacy into your own teaching. I’ll be looking for you to describe for me the various methods you’ve used to teach Critical Media Literacy in your

classroom(s). Please keep in mind that it is equally important for my research to describe barriers, or obstacles, that have prevented teachers from incorporating Critical Media Literacy into their curricula. The more you can describe your practice and your challenges, the more you can help educators and students in the future.

3) Do you facilitate any activities for your students that challenge them to think about their own embedded assumptions about identity (such as ageism, classism, racism, sexism, sexual orientation, family structure, etc)?

- a. What do(es) that(those) activity(ies) look like?
 - i. Walk me through...
- b. What have they produced as a result of thinking about this?
 - i. Papers, blogs, website, pictures, movies, advertisements?

4) Do you facilitate any activities for your students that challenge them to think about embedded assumptions about identity (such as ageism, classism, racism, sexism, sexual orientation, family structure, etc) as they might be represented among media, or the in the course texts?

- a. What do(es) that(those) activity(ies) look like?
 - i. Walk me through...
- b. What have they produced as a result of thinking about this?
 - i. Papers, blogs, websites, pictures, movies, advertisements?

5) How can you tell when your students are learning the material?

- a. What kinds of questions are you asking them to check whether they are learning it?

- b. What kinds of questions/comments are they asking or making that show you they are learning it?
- 6) How do you choose to incorporate Critical Media Literacy it into your class material?
 - i. Were there sensitivities or controversial topics that you chose to include or omit?
 - a. Tell me about your decision to do so.
 - b. Do you have any regrets about your omission?
 - c. Have you thought about how you might include that topic in the future?
- 7) Among those activities involving Critical Media Literacy, which would you describe as having been the most effective and why?
 - a. What do you think made it(them) so effective?
 - b. What recommendations would you make to other educators trying to conduct the same activity(ies) in their own classrooms?
 - i. If you attribute any of this to support you have you received while incorporating Critical Media Literacy into your curriculum, what was that support?
 - a. Personal development?
 - b. Conferences?
 - i. District, or outside funding?

Reflecting upon everything that made that activity, or those activities, so effective, can you elaborate on an activity that you thought was ineffective or less effective than you had hoped it would be?

- c. What do you think made it less effective?
 - i. Was it the topic?
 - ii. Was it a lack of resources?
 - iii. Was it too challenging, or not enough?
 - iv. What recommendations would you make to other educators trying to conduct the same activity in their own classrooms?
- 8) What barriers, if any, have you faced while incorporating Critical Media Literacy into your curriculum?
- a. Controversy?
 - b. Lack of technology?
 - c. Lack of interest?
 - d. Student comprehension?
 - i. Please elaborate on why you have called this a barrier.
 - e. District or school restrictions?
 - f. Parent objections?
- 9) If you had to try to define Critical Media Literacy, or describe how it looks and operates in a classroom, how would you do it?
- a. If you were to teach your own course on Critical Media Literacy, what would you say would be essential to cover?
 - b. What materials and resources would you consider critical to have in your classroom?

10) Is there anything else that you'd like others to know about your experience with Critical Media Literacy?

- a. Taking the UCLA TEP course
 - i. Trying to incorporate it into your own courses

Thanks again for your time. Within one week, I will email you a transcript of this interview. I'd like for you to look it over and reply to the email to confirm that it accurately reflects our conversation today. Should you feel that there is any discrepancy in the transcript, desire to remove some of your answers, or even withdraw yourself from this study, you will have the option to do so.

I will also notify you when this study is published as my dissertation, so that you'll have access to it. It is my hope that this study enables educators to continue reflecting upon their practice of teaching and incorporating Critical Media Literacy into their various fields.

Thanks again for helping me to bring this study to fruition. I truly appreciate your help.

Appendix D Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

10.23.12

TO: Dr. Francois

FROM: Steven Funk

SUBJECT: Memorandum of Understanding between UCLA Director of the Teacher Education Program, Dr. Annemarie Francois and Steven Funk (researcher)

Statement of the problem and need for the study

The expansion of media engendered by new technologies has not only introduced myriad modes of knowledge production and educational tools, but might also change the culture of education and what we educators call literacy. As various media challenge the means by which we consume, encounter and analyze knowledge, many educators advocate for the inclusion of Critical Media Literacy in contemporary American curricula. What is now called Critical Media Literacy sprang from the critical pedagogy movement, which emphasizes the importance of challenging social injustices in education (Freire, 2005; Hooks, 1994; McLaren, 2005; Penuel et al., 2012a). Critical Media Literacy concentrates on challenging representations of class, gender, race and other media portrayals with the aim at deconstructing the hegemony, or dominant power structure, that they often reinforce (Kellner & Share, 2007). The definition of Critical Media Literacy is a disputed one. Because of this dispute, most Critical Media Literacy courses are relegated to the arena of “Media Studies” or “Cultural Studies,” thus undermining their significance by functioning merely as electives for high school and college students.

Acknowledging the importance of Critical Media Literacy’s potential to further its social justice

agenda, the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) has taken a uniquely proactive approach to integrating Critical Media Literacy into its Teacher Education Program (TEP).

The UCLA TEP has implemented a course called “Critical Media Literacy: Teaching Youth to Critically Create and Write Media” (Share, 2011b, p.1). This course defines Critical Media Literacy as the culmination of “cultural studies and critical pedagogy,” critically challenging “media and new technology,” exploring “representations of race, class, gender, sexual orientation and other identity markers,” and endeavoring to create “alternative multi-media messages” (Share, 2011b, p.1). UCLA’s TEP so valued the mission of this course, introduced to the teacher education curriculum as an elective in 2007, that it has made it mandatory for students entering the program in the fall of 2012.

The UCLA TEP Critical Media Literacy course “prepares educators for teaching K12 students to explore their relationships with media by critically questioning media representations” (Share, 2011b, p. 1). This course features an interdisciplinary approach, combining scholarship from social studies, critical theory, critical pedagogy and digital literacy. “Critical media literacy aims to expand the understanding of reading and writing to be inclusive of all types of literacy and all the different ways humans communicate” (Share, 2011b, p. 2). This study aims at describing the practices of UCLA TEP graduates who incorporate skills learned and practiced in this Critical Media Literacy course.

The definition of Critical Media Literacy varies among educational institutions and among countries. Because UCLA has invested many resources in developing its Critical Media Literacy course, the crux of which is largely theoretical, my study aims at defining Critical Media Literacy according to UCLA TEP’s faculty and students who have taken the Critical

Media Literacy course, as well as gathering data that clarify how they transform theory into practice. Specifically, this study will provide UCLA's TEP with data that delineate the application of Critical Media Literacy among its TEP students' and graduates' high school classrooms. More broadly, this study's findings, disseminated in publications and at conferences, will inform other teacher education programs and educators seeking to incorporate Critical Media Literacy into their curricula.

Research Questions

- 1) What do UCLA TEP instructors think they are teaching when they teach a course on Critical Media Literacy and what do they want their students to gain from the course?
 - a. What are the instructors' objectives and processes to help their students learn the material?
 - b. How do they think their students are learning the material?
- 2) How do UCLA TEP graduates and students who took the Critical Media Literacy course describe their experiences in applying Critical Media Literacy to their own classrooms?
 - a. How do they translate the course materials into lessons?
 - b. What obstacles/challenges, if any, have they encountered?

Data Collection Methods and Instruments

- Syllabi review of course, "Critical Media Literacy: Teaching Youth to Critically Create and Write Media"
- Interviews with course instructors

- Questionnaire emailed to current and previous UCLA TEP students who are taking or took the course
- Follow-up conversations (interview, online chat, Skype, asynchronous chat, phone) with participants from questionnaire who volunteer

Agreement about the Collaborative Process

The researcher, Steven Funk will provide Dr. Francois with a monthly progress report (by the first of the month starting on 1/1/13) on data collection. In addition, Steven Funk will submit a draft of the final dissertation to Dr. Francois for feedback before scheduling the defense.

The researcher's dissertation (by Steven Funk)

Chapter One – Description of the problem and supporting data, the research questions, brief literature review and discussion of the research design.

Chapter Two – Review of the Literature

Chapter Three – Methods

Chapter Four – Description of the Findings

Chapter Five – Conclusions/Recommendations

Appendices: Data collection instruments, other

Item	Tentative Start Date	Tentative Completion Date
Chapter 1 Statement of the Problem, Supporting Data & Research Questions	9/1/2011	12/1/12
Chapter 2 Review of the Literature	9/1/12	12/1/12
Chapter 3 Methods	10/1/12	12/1/12
Data Collection		
IRB Approval	11/8/12	11/21/12
Syllabi Review	11/22/12	12/12/12
Questionnaire	12/1/12	12/21/12
Instructor Interviews	12/10/12	1/2/13
TEP Student/Graduate Interviews	1/2/13	2/1/13
Chapter 4	1/1/13	3/1/13

Chapter 5	3/1/13	4/1/13
Edit/Revise Description of Findings	4/1/1	4/14/13
Schedule Defense	4/1/13	4/15/13
Defend	4/15/13	5/20/13

SIGNATURES

Dr. Annemarie Francois

Steven Funk

Appendix E CML Instructor Interview Consent

First of all, I'd like to sincerely thank you for taking the time to meet with me to discuss your experiences teaching the course at UCLA's TEP on Critical Media Literacy. I am a doctoral candidate in the Educational Leadership Program at UCLA and for my dissertation, I am examining instructors of the Critical Media course and their students. More specifically, my study aims at describing how you understand Critical Media Literacy, how you think your teacher education students are learning the material and what practices you use to teach Critical Media Literacy.

May I have your permission to record our conversation in order to have a more accurate record of your answers?

Thank you.

At this time, to ensure your confidentiality, I'd like for you to choose a fictitious name. This name will be used in lieu of your own to protect your confidentiality when I analyze my data and report the findings.

Name:

Thank you.

Appendix F UCLA Student and Graduate Interview Consent

First of all, I'd like to sincerely thank you for taking the time to meet with me to discuss your experiences with Critical Media Literacy. I am a doctoral candidate student in the Educational Leadership Program at UCLA and for my dissertation, I am studying the students who have and who are taking that course. More specifically, my study aims at describing how you understand Critical Media Literacy and how you use it in your own classrooms.

May I have your permission to record our conversation in order to have a more accurate record of your answers?

Thank you.

At this time, to ensure your confidentiality, I'd like for you to choose a fictitious name. This name will be used in lieu of your own to protect your confidentiality when I analyze my data and report the findings.

Name:

Thank you.

Appendix G UCLA TEP Critical Media Literacy Consent for Online Questionnaire

Dear UCLA TEP Student/Graduate

As a graduate or student who has taken, or is currently taking the TEP's course on Critical Media Literacy, you have been selected as a possible participant in a research project being conducted by a doctoral candidate in UCLA's School of Educational Leadership. Your responses to this brief, voluntary and confidential questionnaire could provide valuable data to this project. By completing it, you could help other educators learn more about Critical Media Literacy.

Should you choose not to complete it, you and your academic record at UCLA will not be affected.

This questionnaire should take approximately 5-15 minutes to complete. At the end of the questionnaire, you will have the opportunity to enter into a drawing for a Kindle Touch.

The UCLA researcher thanks you for your consideration.

Principal Investigator: Steven Funk, 909.800.8978, StevenFunk@ucla.edu

Faculty Sponsor: Tina Christie, 310.825.0432, Tina.Christie@ucla.edu

If you have questions about your rights while taking part in this study, or you have concerns or suggestions and you want to talk to someone other than the researchers about the study, please call the OHRPP at (310) 825-7122 or write to: UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program, 11000 Kinross Avenue, Suite 211, Box 951694, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694.

Bibliography

- Abbott, C. (2001). *ICT: changing education*. New York: Psychology Press.
- Adorno, T., & Horkheimer, M. (2006). The culture industry: Enlightenment as mass deception. In Durham, M.G. & Kellner, D. (Eds). *Media and Cultural Studies: Key Works* (41-72). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Allender, D. (2000). *Trends and issues in English instruction*. Urbana, IL: NCTE.
- Amerika, M. (2004). Expanding the concept of writing: Notes on net art, digital narrative and viral ethics. *Leonardo*, 37(1), 9-13.
- Antonio, R. J., & Bonanno, A. (2000). A new global capitalism? From “Americanism and Fordism” to “Americanization-Globalization.” *American Studies*, 41(2/3), 33-77.
- Bakhtin, M. (2001). Discourse in the novel. In Leitch, V. (Ed.) *The norton anthology of theory and criticism* (1186-1219). New York, NY: Norton and Company.
- Barkan, J. (2008). Got dough? How billionaires rule our schools. *Dissent*, 54(4).
- Bennett, P., Kendall, A., & McDougall, J. (2011). *After the media: Culture and identity in the 21st century*. London: Taylor and Francis.
- Berenstein, S., & Berenstein, J. (1984). *Too much tv*. New York, NY: Random House, Inc.
- Boske, C., & McCormack, S. (2011). Building an understanding of the role of media literacy for Latino/a high school students. *The High School Journal*, 94(4), 167-186.
- Butler, J. (2001, May). *What is critique? An essay on Foucault's virtue*. Presented at the Raymond Williams Lecture at Cambridge University, University of California, Berkeley.
- California's common core content standards for English language arts & literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. (2010) State Board of Education.

- Canada offers ten classroom approaches to media literacy. (2012). Center for Media Literacy. Retrieved February 28, 2012, from <http://www.medialit.org/reading-room/canada-offers-ten-classroom-approaches-media-literacy>
- Cervi, L., & Perez-Tornero, J. M. (2011). Changing the policy paradigm for the promotion of digital and media literacy -- The European challenge. In Stergioulas, L. & Drenoyianni, H. (Eds.) *Pursuing digital literacy in compulsory education* (272-304). New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Christianakis, M. (2011). Hybrid texts: Older children, rap music, and writing. *Urban Education*, 46(5), 1131-1168.
- Cody, H. (Artist). (2000). *American Alphabet* [Silkscreen]. Brooklyn, NY: Brooklyn Museum of Art.
- Creswell, J. W. (2008). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Critical literacy. (2009). The Ontario Ministry of Education. Retrieved from http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/Critical_Literacy.pdf
- DeAbreu, B. S. (2009). *The implementation of a media literacy curriculum in the public schools: Three case studies*. (Doctoral Dissertation) University of Connecticut, US.
- DeVoss, D. N., Cushman, E., & Grabill, J. T. (2005). Infrastructure and composing: The when of new-media writing. *College Composition and Communication*, 57(1), 14-44.
- Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education*. New York, NY: The Macmillan Company.
- Difranco, S. (1994). Hell yeah. [Recorded by Ani Difranco]. On *Out of Range* [CD]. Buffalo, NY: Righteous Babe Records.

- Di Giovanni, J., Gottslied, G., Jaumotte, F., Antonio Ricci, L., Tokarick, S., & Yang, M. (2008). Globalization: A brief overview. *International Monetary Fund Issues Brief*, 02.
- Doering, A. Beach, R., & O'Brien, D. (2007). Infusing multimodal tools and digital literacies into an English education program. *English Education*, 40(1), 41-60.
- Durham, M. G., & Kellner, D. M. (2006). *Media and Cultural Studies: Keywords*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Ferguson, Craig. (2006). *Between the bridge and the river*. Vancouver, BC: Raincoast Books.
- Fischer, P., Greitemeyer, T., Kastenmuller, A., Vogrincic, C., & Sauer, A. (2011). The effects of risk-glorifying media exposure on risk-positive cognitions, emotions, and behaviors: A meta-analytic review. *Psychological Bulletin*, 137(3), 367-390.
- Fisher, R., Harris, A., & Jarvis, C. (2008). *Education in popular culture: Telling tales on teachers and learners*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Flores-Koulish, S. A. (2006). Media Literacy: An entrée for pre-service teachers into critical pedagogy. *Teaching Education*, 17(3), 239-249. doi:10.1080/10476210600849706
- Foucault, M. (1995). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Foucault, M. (2001). What is an author? In Leitch, V. (Ed.) *The norton anthology of theory and criticism* (1615-1659). New York, NY: Norton and Company.
- Foucault, M. (2007). What is critique? In Lotringer, S. (ed.), *The Politics of Truth*, trans. Hochroth, L. Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e).
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedgogy of the oppressed*. New York, NY: Continuum.

- Freire, P. & Horton, M. (1990). *We make the road by walking: Conversations on education and social change*. Bell, B., Gaventa, J. & Peters, J. Eds. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Freire, P. (2009). Amilcar Cabral: pedagogue of the revolution. *Critical pedagogy in uncertain times: Hope and possibilities*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gauntlett, D., & Holzwarth, P. (2006). Creative and visual methods for exploring identities. *Visual Studies*, 21(1), 82–91. doi:10.1080/14725860600613261
- Gee, J. P., & Hayes, E. R. (2011). *Language and Learning in the Digital Age*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Giroux, H. A. (2008). Militarization, public pedagogy and the biopolitics of popular culture. In Silberman-Keller, D. Barbules, N., Bekerman, Z., Giroux, H. (Eds.) *Mirror Images*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Goetze, S. K., Brown, D. S., & Schwarz, G. (2005). Teachers need media Literacy, too! *Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*, 104(1), 161-179. doi:10.1111/j.1744-7984.2005.00010.x
- Gognon, M., Daniel Jacobs, J., & Holmes, D. (2010). Governing through (in)security: A critical analysis of a fear-based public health campaign. *Critical Public Health*, 20(2), 245-256.
- Gonzales, N., Coxe, S., Roosa, M., White, R., Knight, G., Zeiders, K., & Saenz, D. (2011). Economic hardship, neighborhood context, and parenting: Prospective effects on Mexican - American adolescents' mental health. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 47(1), 98–113. doi:10.1007/s10464-010-9366-1
- Grabill, J. T., & Hicks, T. (2005). Multiliteracies meet methods: The case for digital writing in English education. *English Education*, 37(4), 301-311.

- Gramsci, A. (2006). History of the subaltern classes; The concept of “ideology”; Cultural themes: Ideological material. In Durham, M.G. & Kellner, D. (Eds.) *Media and Cultural Studies: Key Works*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Groenke, S.L., & Youngquist, M. (2011). Are we postmodern yet? Reading *Monster* with 21st century ninth graders. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 54(7), 505-513.
doi:10.1598/JAAL. 54.7.4
- Guha, R., & Spivak, G. C. (Eds.). (1988). *Selected subaltern studies*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Hackbarth, D., Silvestri, B., & Cosper, W. (1995). Tobacco and alcohol billboards in 50 Chicago neighborhoods: Market segmentation to sell dangerous products to the poor. *Journal of Public Health Policy*, 16(2), 213-230.
- Hall, S. (2006). Encoding/Decoding. In Durham, M.G. & Kellner, D. (Eds.) *Media and Cultural Studies: Key Works*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Hamot, G., Shiveley, J., & Vanfossen, P. (1998). Media understanding in social studies teacher education. *International Journal of Instructional Media*, 25(3), 241-51.
- Hanushek, E., & Woessmann, L. (2005). Does educational tracking affect performance and inequality? Differences-in-differences: Evidence across countries. *The Economic Journal*, 116(3), 63-76.
- Hebdige, D. (2006). From culture to hegemony; Subculture: The unnatural break. In Durham, G.M. & Kellner, D. (Eds.) *Media and Cultural Studies: Key Works*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Hobbs, R. (2004). A review of school-based initiatives in media literacy education. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 48(1), 42–59. doi:10.1177/0002764204267250

- Hobbs, R. R., & Frost, R. (2003). Measuring the acquisition of media literacy skills. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 38(3), 330-355.
- Hobbs, R. R. (2011). *Digital and media literacy: Connecting culture and classroom*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- hooks, b. (2009). *Teaching critical thinking: Practical wisdom*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hopkins, L. (2011). Youth Worx. *Journal of Sociology*, 47(2), 181-197.
doi:10.1177/1440783310386827
- Institute of Education Sciences. (2010). *The nation's report card: U.S. history 2010 national assessment of educational progress at grades 4,8, and 12*. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/main2010/2011468.pdf>
- Iyengar, S., & Reeves, R. (1997). *Do the media govern?: Politicians, voters, and reporters in America*. SAGE.
- Jameson, F. (1991). *Postmodernism: Or, the cultural logic of late capitalism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Jolls, T., & Thoman, E. (2004). *An overview of the center for media literacy*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Jupp, J. & Slattery, G. (2012). Becoming teachers of inner-city students: Identification creativity and curriculum wisdom of committed white male teachers. *Urban Education*, 47(1), 280-311
- Kahn, R., & Kellner, D. (2006). Oppositional politics and the internet: A critical/reconstructivist approach. In Durham, G. M. & Kellner, D. (Eds) *Media and Cultural Studies: Key Works*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

- Karvonen, S., Young, R., West, P., & Rahkonen, O. (2011). Value orientations among late modern youth -- a cross-cultural study. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 15(1), 33-52.
doi:10.1080/13676261.2011.617734
- Kellner, D., & Share, J. (2005). Toward critical media literacy: core concepts, debates, organizations, and policy. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 26(3), 369-86.
- Kellner, D., & Share, J. (2007). Critical media literacy, democracy, and the reconstruction of education. *Media literacy: A reader* (3-23). New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing.
- Kellner, D. (1995). *Media Culture: Cultural Studies, Identity and Politics between the Modern and the Post-modern* (First printing). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Kelly, F. S., McCain, T., & Jukes, I. (2008). *Teaching the digital generation: No more cookie-cutter high schools*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Kenway, J., & Modra, H. (1992). Feminist pedagogies and emancipatory possibilities. In Luke, C. & Gore, J. (Eds) *Feminisms and critical pedagogy* (138-166). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Kimber, K., & Wyatt-Smith, C. (2010). Secondary students' online use and creation of knowledge: Refocusing priorities for quality assessment and learning. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, 26(5), 607-625.
- Kubey, R., & Serafin, G. M. (2001). *Final evaluation of assignment: Media literacy. A Report to the Discovery Channel*. Retrieved from:
<http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=ED479068>

- Larson, C. U. (1988). Breaking through the advertising clutter: A qualitative analysis of broken stereotypes in print and television advertisements. Retrieved from <http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/detail?accno=ED292158>
- Latif, A., Bhatti, N., Maitlo, G. M., Nazar, M. S., & Shaikh, F. M. (2012) Attitude and perception differences among international students and local students: A case study of Australia and New Zealand. *Asian Social Science*, 8(2).
doi:10.5539/ass.v8n2p34
- Luke, C. (1992). Feminist politics in radical pedagogy. In Luke, C. & Gore, J. (Eds) *Feminisms and critical pedagogy* (25-53) New York, NY: Routledge.
- Lux, N. & Waterton, N. (2013). *Intentionality, technology and pedagogy in preservice teacher education*. Presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Conference. San Francisco, CA.
- Lyotard, J.F. (1984). *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Masterman, L. (1993). The media education revolution. *Canadian journal of learning and technology / La revue canadienne de l'apprentissage et de la technologie*, 22(1).
- Maxwell, J. A. (2004). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- McLaren, P. (1995). *Critical pedagogy and predatory culture: Oppositional politics in a postmodern era* (1st ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- McLaren, P. (1998). *Life in schools: An introduction to critical pedagogy in the foundations of education*. New York, NY: Longman.

- Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*. New York, NY: Jossey-Bass.
- Morton, A. (2007). *Unravelling gramsci: Hegemony and passive revolution in the global economy*. London: Pluto Press.
- Murakami, H. (2005). *Kafka on the shore*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Myers, J., & Beach, R. (2001). Hypermedia authoring as critical literacy. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 44(6), 538-546.
- Ouellette, L. (2013). *The Media Studies Reader*. Ouellette, L. (Ed.) New York, NY: Routledge.
- Penuel, W. R., Bates, L., Gallagher, L. P., Pasnik, S., Llorente, C., Townsend, E. & Hupert, N. (2012). Supplementing literacy instruction with a media-rich intervention: Results of a randomized controlled trial. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*. Vol 27(1), 115-127. doi:10.1016/j.ecresq.2011.07.002
- Phillips, D. (1995). The good, the bad and the ugly: The many faces of constructivism. *Educational Researcher*, 24 (7), 5-12.
- Piaget, J. (1980). The psychogenesis of knowledge and its epistemological significance. Palmarini, M. (Ed.), *Language and Learning*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- PR Newswire. (2012). Mission US: "Flight to freedom" immerses middle school students in the history of slavery and abolition in a new virtual experience. Retrieved from: <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/mission-us-flight-to-freedom-immerses-middle-school-students-in-the-history-of-slavery-and-abolition-in-a-new-virtual-experience-137973758.html>.
- Popescu, E. (2010). Students' acceptance of web 2.0 technologies in higher education: Findings from a survey in a Romanian university. *Workshop on Database and Expert Systems*

- Applications (DEXA)* (pp. 92–96). Presented at the 2010 Workshop on Database and Expert Systems Applications (DEXA), Craiova, Romania: IEEE.
- doi:10.1109/DEXA.2010.38
- Quin, R., & Mc Mahon, B. (1993). Evaluating standards in media education. *Canadian Journal of Education Communication*, 22(1), 15-25.
- Ravitch, D. (2010). *The death and life of the great American school system: How testing and choice are undermining education*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Seddon, J. (2010). *Systems thinking in the public sector*. Axminster, UK: Triarchy Press.
- Share, J. (2006). *Critical media literacy is elementary: A case study of teachers' ideas and experiences with media education and young children*. (Doctoral Dissertation) University of California at Los Angeles.
- Share, J. (2011). Critical media literacy: Teaching youth to critically read and create media. (EDU 466 Course syllabus available at University of California, Los Angeles's Teacher Education Program).
- Simons, J. (Ed.). (2010). *From Agamben to Zizek: Contemporary critical theorists*. Edingurgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Tsitouridou, M., & Konstantinos, V. (2011). Digital literacies: Defintions, concepts and educational implications. *Pursuing digital literacy in compulsory education*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Tinsley, H. & Weiss, D. (1975) Interrater reliability and agreement of subjective judgments. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 22(4), (358-374).
- UNESCO. (2006). *Education for all: Global monitoring report*. Literacy for Life. Paris.
- Retrieved from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001416/141639e.pdf>

- Voss, T., Kunter, M., & Baumert, J. (2011). Assessing teacher candidates' general pedagogical/psychological knowledge: Test construction and validation. *Journal of Educational Psychology*. Vol 103(4), 952-969. doi:10.1037/a0025125
- Vratulis, V., & Dobson, T. M. (2008). Social negotiations in a wiki environment: A case study with pre-service teachers. *Educational Media International*, 45(4), 285-294. doi:10.1080/09523980802571531
- Wall, S. & Anderson, J. (2013). Blogging and the development of science teacher identity in preservice elementary teachers. Presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Conference. San Francisco, CA.
- White, S., & McCloskey, M. (2005). National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL). Retrieved February 2, 2012, from http://nces.ed.gov/naal/fr_definition.asp
- Woodcock, C. (2009). Fight the dragons: Using online discussion to promote critical literacy in teacher education. *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education*, 9(2), 95-116.
- Woolf, V. (1985). *Moments of being*. Schulkind, J. (Ed.) Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace & Company.
- Zambo, D. M. (2009). Using visual literacy to help adolescents understand how images influence their lives. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 41(6), 60-67.
- Zou, Y., & Trueba, E. T. (2002). *Ethnography and schools: Qualitative approaches to the study of education*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.