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Becoming a Critical Consumer of Media:
Developing Media Literacy and the Value of Positive Stereotypes

by Marielle Matheus, 2017 CTI Fellow
Irwin Academic Center

This curriculum is recommended for English Language Art, grades 3rd-5th

Keywords: media literacy, stereotypes, race, gender, propaganda, social identity, subliminal manipulation, talent development, personalized learning,

Teaching Standards: See Appendix 1 for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

Synopsis: This curriculum unit will focus on teaching media literacy and promoting positive stereotypes in the media they will create. Third grade students are expected to access, analyze, evaluate, and create their own media. Throughout the unit, students will explore various forms of media including, television shows, newspapers, magazines, advertisements, etc. Students will analyze the forms of media objectively and evaluate their messages. Students will learn how to recognize stereotypes that are perpetuated in media. This unit will teach students how to be critical viewers and understand how to digest the media they consume every day. They will also get to develop ways to improve the media or make their own where positive stereotypes are promoted within context. This unit should promote critical thinking skills, challenge students to evaluate media, and to express themselves creatively in producing their own forms of media. Learning media literacy will help them be productive citizen in a digital world full of media messages.

I plan to teach this unit during the coming year to 19 third grade students in Talent Development.

I give permission for Charlotte Teachers Institute to publish my curriculum unit in print and online. I understand that I will be credited as the author of my work.

Introduction

Media Literacy and the Value of Positive Stereotypes is a unit plan designed for a third grade classroom as a result of my participation in the seminar "Media and Minorities" led by Professor Debra Smith. Through this seminar, we have analyzed various forms of media and the lasting impression it leaves on people that digest it every single day. We also discussed stereotypes that are being formed in the media. The purpose of this unit plan is to understand the importance of teaching media literacy, ways to teach the components of media literacy, and also to analyze stereotypes that have been formed to transform students into critical consumers of media.

I have been teaching for nine years. I am originally from Cleveland, Ohio but was raised in Columbia, SC. This is my second year in Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools. Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools is located in Charlotte, NC. The school district is a very diverse district with over 178 schools. I currently teach at Irwin Academic Center. Irwin is the only CMS full magnet program for Learning Immersion (K-2) and Talent Development (Academically Gifted-grades 3-5) students. Both programs are accelerated and offer students rigorous and academically challenging curricula. At times we go through two extremes where students are excelling two-three grades ahead while others are lagging behind academically. In addition to the academic ability there is also a disparity in the financial aspect. Some students come from very affluent families while others students are living impoverished. We do have a very supportive parent involvement despite these differences. Throughout my teaching experience, I feel that my students have been stereotyped in numerous ways because of their race, gender, culture, or even their intelligence. There is a need for them to understand that stereotypes exist and by understanding media literacy, they will have a better understanding of why these stereotypes exist in media.

Rationale

In the 21st century, teaching media literacy is essential to thrive in a digital world. These are skills needed to be a productive citizen. According to Common Sense Media Zero to Eight study, states that children eight and under spend an average of two hours and 19 minutes on with screen media. Children are not only consuming this media from television but also from the internet, radio, magazines, books, etc. Students are being exposed to the media images every day. Media invades our lives even when we do not want it to. Over exposure to media, not just on the conscious mind but also the unconscious mind. It is up to the consumer to accept the message or not. All media has its biases. Students should look at media as skeptics. Do these children know how to interpret media? Do they know how to fully know how to consume these images and digest this media? I see the need for teaching students media literacy each day in my classroom. Students are one to one with Chromebooks in the classroom and many also have other devices such as tablets, cell phones, laptops,etc. at home. Students also consume media through watching television as well. Through all of the media outlets they are being exposed to advertisements, mass media, cartoons, etc. My third grade students are identified as academically or intellectually gifted. These students perform or show the potential to perform at substantially high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experiences or environment. Even with this high level of intelligence I often wonder if they have the capabilities to interpret all the media they are consuming each day. In my classroom, I teach them how to think critically, analyze, and problem solve. There is a need for teaching media literacy in the

elementary classroom because of the media consumption at this age level. In my unit I would like to focus on electronic media such as television,internet, radio, and advertising. The power of the media and the amount of control it put on what they do, what they want their parents to buy for them, and how they view themselves.

Total Media Exposure and Total Media Use

	Total exposure	Multitasking proportion	Media use[1]
Total sample[2]	8:33	26%	6:21
Age			
8- to 10-year-olds	8:05	27%	5:52
11- to 14-year-olds	8:41	25%	6:33
15- to 18-year-olds	8:44	25%	6:31

The goals for my curriculum unit are for my students to learn how to define media, have the knowledge to interpret media they consume, to develop a positive self image despite the influence of the media, and to recreate their own media using positive stereotypes. I chose this topic because I see the need of learning media literacy as being just as important in learning about other areas of study. Students should be taught how to consume and interpret media because of how much media they are exposed to on a daily basis. They need to be knowledgeable about how advertisers are guiding their choices, how mass media influences how they think about certain groups of people, and also to promote positive stereotypes to produce a better self-image. This subject interests me because I taught Pre-k students for five years and I think about how excited they got about watching videos and how it helped them learn. Moving up to the third grade where students are more independent and see how they gravitate to technology and electronic media, I often wonder how all this media they've been exposed to throughout their lifetime has an effect on their lives and the choices and decisions they make each day.

School Demographics

       Our enrollment is about 550 students. Irwin is the only CMS full magnet program for Learning Immersion (K-2) and Talent Development (Academically Gifted-grades 3-5) students. Both programs are accelerated and offer students rigorous and academically challenging curricula.

Demographics:
 The racial groups of students include 56% African American, 23% White, Asian 15%, Hispanic 3%, Two or More Races- 1%.

Standardized Test Scores :

Reading
85%
State avg: 57%
Details
Grade 3
88%
State avg: 59%
Grade 4
83%
State avg: 59%
Grade 5
83%
State avg: 53%
Math
82%
State avg: 58%
Details
Grade 3
84%
State avg: 62%
Grade 4
75%
State avg: 56%
Grade 5
88%
State avg: 58%

Based on these demographics, I will plan my
unit to be culturally diverse for all students.

Curriculum

I teach in a third grade full Talent Development classroom. Students learn through a rigorous curriculum using critical thinking skills, problem solving, and greater depth through more challenging lessons and differentiated activities. The Curriculum is accelerated to include above-grade level material (when appropriate), advanced pace of learning, and integrated 21st century learning. The TD strategies that I use in the classroom include: multiple intelligences, Bloom's Taxonomy, Paideia Seminar, Higher Order Thinking Skills & Questioning, Reading Workshop, Writing Workshop, Inquiry & Problem Based Learning, Project Based Learning, Cooperative Learning, and Creative Thinking. We also utilize personalized learning which aims to develop the whole child and empower them to take ownership of their learning by providing them with multiple pathways to demonstrate mastery learning in order to be successful and productive 21st century citizens in an ever-changing world. This unit will engage my students by allowing them to think outside the box and use those critical thinking skills to analyze the media they consume.

Unit Goals

- Define media literacy and other media vocabulary terms
- Understand the purpose of media and be able to identify the different forms of media
- Students will be able to distinguish between programs and advertising and fantasy versus reality
- Detail and express stereotypes that they have experienced in their own lives'
- Express how stereotypes faced have impacted their own perceptions on different minorities
- Create a safe environment where they can openly discuss their own stereotypes
- Watch various children's media and commercials and openly discuss their feelings regarding the stereotypes.
- Create their own piece of media that promotes positive stereotypes
- Digitally represent and present their published media piece.
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These topics will be discussed using various books, videos, and advertisements. The overarching theme of this unit is to ultimately teach students to be critical thinkers. Teachers should facilitate learning for students by asking them various questions, where ideas reveal themselves to the students. They should be able to research alternate perspectives.

Content Research

In our seminar, we learned about the need for media literacy to be included in the classroom curriculum. Students must be taught media literacy because in schools the expectation is that more and more assignments have to be completed online. In addition to teaching them how to access resources digitally they must also be taught how to determine the reliability of the sources, who created the media, and also how to critically analyze material. Students have to be critical thinkers to fully interpret and understand the media they consume each day. [1] (David 2009) Media is
"..the goal is to offer students practice in becoming critical readers of the world around them of the ads on buses and in magazines; of the movies that they swarm to on weekends and that fill the shelves of their DVD libraries; of the music videos that play nonstop on their televisions; of the advice of talk show hosts and gurus; of the newscasts and newspapers sponsored and routinely censored by a handful of corporate giants." (Hinchey 2003)[2]

Bandura's social cognitive theory suggests that children, adolescents, and adults, alike, learn from the behaviors portrayed in media. Other theorists argue that identification with a media character (or characters) has a critical influence on the beliefs and behaviors of the consumers of that media. While the intensity of this influence and its effect on preadolescents is still unclear the fact that such an influence exists is hardly in dispute. Equally as alarming as the influence that media exerts on pre-adolescents is the form and variety of media readily available for this population to consume. In television alone, the number of commercial television channels available in most homes has leapt from three major networks to over hundreds of networks. Add to that the influence of Internet sources of media, particularly video content sites such as YouTube whose popularity has exploded over the last 5-10 years, and video games, another popular media venue for preadolescents, and it is easy to identify the innumerable sources of media, and potential gender stereotypes, which exist for pre-adolescents. So what do pre-adolescents see and experience when they consume these various sources of media?[3] Children's television can portray many messages about the world to young children, these messages can have a large impact on their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors (Martin 2017) [4]

Research states that the influence and consumption of media may lead to concerns of "." with children being exposed to more and more media everyday we know that this has an effect on their well being (Davidson 2003)[5]. Other research studies suggest that African American stereotypes may give young girls a negative body image and have a negative influence on how they view themselves. There are also studies that discuss how gender roles in media have an effect on the growing minds and whom they identify with in society. This has an effect on their choices and decisions each day.

Based on the film, Media Literacy , it defined media literacy as identifying types of media and understand the messages. The basic concept is that someone created the media and as a consumer you should understand the reason and purpose behind the media. The components of media literacy are:

Access- televisions, advertisements, billboards, radio, newspaper, textbooks, etc.
Analyze- examine media objectively, think about the influence it has on the consumer, and things that define it. Most media is based on the creator's experience. The same way photographers show you what they want you to see. What techniques did they use to create the message? Why was this message sent? Media uses its own language and science just like an other medium. [6]
Evaluate- Why did they choose these characters? Does this stereotype have a lasting effect? What conclusions do you have? Does it have authority in society?
Create- Rewrite the script, students will use editing software, draw storyboards, etc.

Instructional Implementation

In my classroom we utilize personalized learning, where students are assessed, placed in small groups for targeted instruction, and given a post-test. This style of teaching consists of having specialized pathways where students are at the center of their learning and tasks are completed by the best ways they learn. Students have to be self-directed learners and motivated to complete their work. With keeping all of these things into consideration in developing my unit, I will focus on the reading and writing workshop. I plan to use my unit on Media Literacy during the non-fiction/informational text unit, which will go along with the informational and explanatory writing. The duration of the unit will last for two to three weeks.

I plan to do a pretest about their current media literacy knowledge. I would like to gain insight about how they define media. Based on how they do on the pretest will determine their "pathway" and how they will receive various mini lessons using personalized learning. After receiving a mini lesson, they will have to watch videos and complete two to three activities through creating products, writing, or hands-on activities. I will also plan socratic seminar around media clips, where I will ask them high level questioning and they give me meaningful responses based on their opinions and what they have learned about media. In the unit I would like for them to take a closer look and think deeply about how these forms of media may have an effect on their daily lives. I would like to have class discussions that are student led about how viewing certain images may have an effect on how they value themselves and how they may view groups of individuals. They also need to be taught who creates this media for them. They need to be able to identify what certain advertisements want them to do. They could discuss if they identify with any common characters in mainstream television. I would like to have in depth meaningful conversations that will reveal answers to them without explicitly teaching about specific stereotypes. I believe this will be more beneficial for students where the teacher is facilitating the learning versus lecturing these subjects.

Teaching Strategies

Turn and Talk

This strategy will allow students to share their ideas with a partner while we watch various video clips. Students love this opportunity to talk and express themselves with a peer near them. The teacher may pose a question and the students will turn and talk to their partner. The teacher may call on specific students to share with the entire class but it's mostly used to give students a break to talk and share ideas.
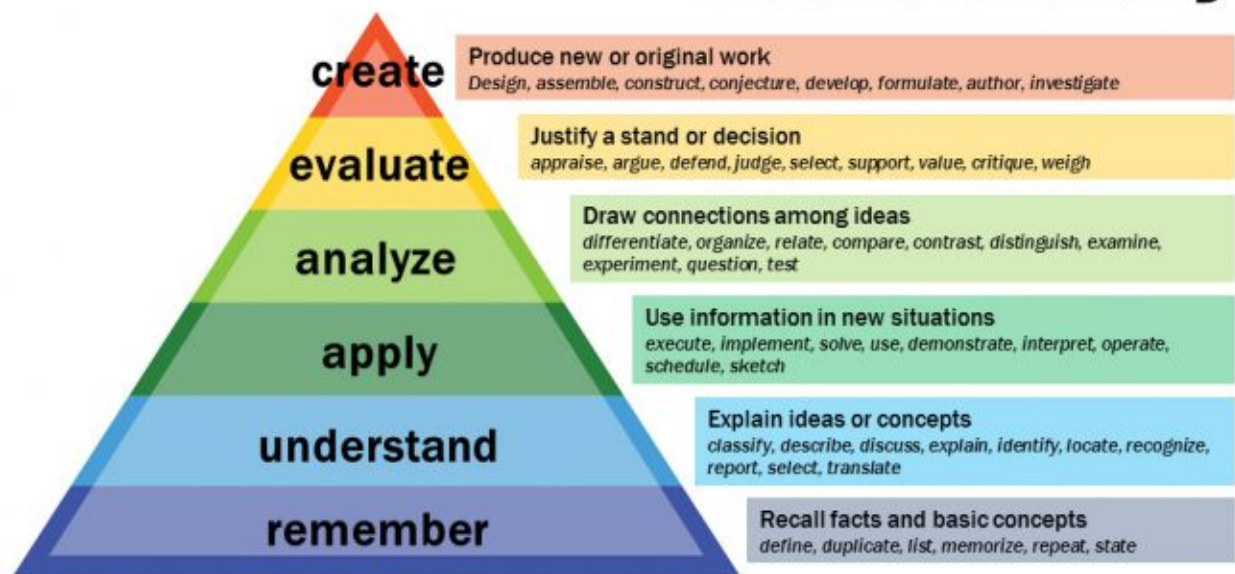
Thinking Maps

The students will use bubble maps to generate ideas, Venn diagrams to compare and contrast different concepts throughout the unit, and flow maps to assist them in creating their own form of media at the end of the unit. The students will also complete a KWL chart. The KWL chart tells what the students know, want to know, and learned about media literacy. The KWL chart will be used at the beginning of the lesson. The students should be learning new ideas about media literacy with each lesson. Therefore, they will revisit the KWL chart at the end of the unit to discuss concepts they learned.

Higher Level Questioning with Blooms Taxonomy

 Throughout the lesson, the teacher will show various clips and will prompt students with questioning. During and after each video clip, the students are asked questions about the video.

Bloom's Taxonomy

create	**Produce new or original work** *Design, assemble, construct, conjecture, develop, formulate, author, investigate*
evaluate	**Justify a stand or decision** *appraise, argue, defend, judge, select, support, value, critique, weigh*
analyze	**Draw connections among ideas** *differentiate, organize, relate, compare, contrast, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, test*
apply	**Use information in new situations** *execute, implement, solve, use, demonstrate, interpret, operate, schedule, sketch*
understand	**Explain ideas or concepts** *classify, describe, discuss, explain, identify, locate, recognize, report, select, translate*
remember	**Recall facts and basic concepts** *define, duplicate, list, memorize, repeat, state*

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Socratic Seminar

This is an excellent way to get students discussing concerns and issues while treating each other with respect and this type of seminar teaches them how to interact with others when you agree and when you disagree. According to the National Paideia Center , Socratic seminar is a "…structured, formal discussion that requires critical thinking, and focuses on texts related to ambiguous issues and values." (What is Paideia Seminar? 2015)[8] After watching specific video clips students will address and discuss them in dialogue. The classroom must be set up in a way that all children can see each other because they must be able to look at each other in the eye when speaking to each other. For example, they should sit with desks in a circle or chairs should be arranged in a circle. There should also be norms in place so that all students know the

expected respectful behaviors that they will need to display in order to participate. Lastly, the teacher must have at least one guiding question for the children to discuss. As they discuss, the teacher should guide discussion if it needs guidance, but the purpose is for students to critically think and lead the discussion They learn how to ask relevant questions and participate within a whole group without much guidance and facilitation from the teacher.

Classroom Lessons

Students will take Pre Test then assigned various pathways based on their results.

Lesson Opening (Day One):

·   Have a discussion with students as to what they think the media is and what different types of medias they know about. Turn this into a KWL chart of what they know, what they want to know, and what they have learned (at the end of the unit).
The students will rotate around each station after exploring the materials for 20 minutes.

- The print media station will have child appropriate magazines, newspapers from various locations, and pamphlets from organizations.

- The electronic media station will have a television playing recent news broadcasts from various stations, and radio news broadcasts from different radio sources such as NPR or other opinionated radio operations.

- The new age media station will have an article or video about cell phones and texting/internet usage on capable phones, and a computer with news websites already brought up for them to investigate.

- The alternative media station will include famous photography that the students may be familiar with, books on the same topic from different sources and pictures of billboards that can be found around their area.

Students will complete worksheet with the following questions:
What media station are you at?
What is at your station?
Write one thing new you learned about this media type.
Why do you think we have this type of media?
How does this type of media help people (or not help people)?
Draw a picture of what your media looks like.
Do you like this media? Why or why not?

If you were presenting this media, what would you keep the same? What would you change about it?
Closure
Once the students are done we will have a class share of what their favorite types of media were not only because of quality but because of content.
Here we will discuss more formally and concretely the different types of media, their purposes, and why people use certain medias. Watch Media Smarts video- https://youtu.be/bBP_kswrtrw

Exit Slip: The students will fill out an exit slip answering three questions: "What is media? Why do we have media?"

Day Two: Media are Constructions

-Students will watch Media Smarts video https://youtu.be/baftkjc5gKs, discuss the meaning of media as a construction and relate it to how to understand the purpose of media.
-Students will explore different magazine advertisements and point out parts that stand out. They will generate ideas on what they all have in common and what makes them different. What kind of "text" is it?
What are the various elements (building blocks) that make up the whole?
How similar or different is it to others of the same genre?
Which technologies are used in its creation?
What choices were made that might have been made differently?
How many people did it take to create this message? What are their various jobs?
-Students will also participate in Socratic Seminar beginning with the guiding question of, in magazines do they have anybody that looks like you? Everyone should be represented in advertisements.

Day Three: Audiences Negotiate Meaning

-Students will watch Media Smarts video https://youtu.be/goyXz1VmhWA and discuss the idea that the media targets different audiences to get different responses even if it is the same product.
-Students will use the Turn and Talk strategy to discuss their favorite products and commercials. They will also reflect on liking something based on the advertising.
-Students will use a Venn diagram to compare two video advertisements "The Official Moon Sand Construction" http://bit.ly/175cihs "The Official Moon Sand Ocean Princess" http://bit.ly/17wlNR7 discussing ways they are alike and how they are different.
-Conduct a class discussion about media products and how they are targeted to specific genders. Talk about what qualities the advertisements usually include when targeting these genders. It should be revealed to students that the media tells us about gender.

Day Four: Media have Commercial Implications

-Student will watch https://youtu.be/RdkH0GwJy6A video and discuss how the media may benefit from certain ads.
-Students will explore several websites and work in groups to decide what the main purpose of the websites- to entertain, to inform, to educate or to persuade? They will also discuss the techniques they might use.

Day Five: Social and Political Implications in Media

-Students will watch Media Smarts https://youtu.be/YZi6s22yktw and discuss social and political views that are in our daily life.
- In a Socratic seminar, the guiding question would begin with pointing out specific examples of things that can be influenced by the media..

-Students will watch https://youtu.be/51BQfPeSK8k?list=PLD201DA4BDE09A4D2
-They will discussion about what is your favorite show? Favorite character? What traits do they have? Do they look like you? How and why do you relate to these characters?
-What things do these characters do to be rewarded or punished?
-Are these characters from a minority or majority member of society?
- Teacher will define stereotypes and give examples in media.

Days Six- Ten: Creating Their Own Media Product

-Students will watch video https://youtu.be/d76X-uCy7No discussing media aesthetics.
-Students will use a circle map to brainstorm ideas about what types of media they would like to produce, think about the medium they will use to spread their messages, and think about it's purpose.
Students will be able to work on their media for the next few sessions creating the media digitally or in print.

Day 11: Spreading the Media

-Students will present the media products with the class.
-Students will complete a final Socratic Seminar discussing the best outlets to spread their media products. Generalizations that were formed based on the unit. Final remarks and conclusions for the unit.

Appendix 1: Teaching Standards

RI. 3.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
Students will have to ask and answer questions pertaining to media they consume and about their prior knowledge. Students will refer back to print and digital media to answer questions.
● RI.3.5 Use text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate information relevant to a given topic efficiently.
Students will examine media for text features and techniques to convey their messages in media products.
● RI.3.7 Use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).
Students will consume various illustrations, photographs, infographics, and understand the messages and purpose of these media products.
● W.3.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
Students will use graphic organizers, write a script, and provide written open response answers to convey their ideas and information learned.
● W.3.1. Introduce the topic or text they are writing about, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure that lists reasons.
Students will provide a written opinion piece about their media product they will create at the end of the unit.

Appendix 2: Media Literacy Pre/Post Assessment

What is media literacy?

How do we access media?

What kind of media do you use on a daily basis?
Which of the following is NOT a type of media? *
 A) newspapers
 B) magazines
 C) billboards
 D) television
 E) radio
 F) video games
 G) internet
 H) apps
 I) computer games
 J) blank paper

3. Which of the following is NOT a tool used in media? *
 A) images and pictures
 B) text and words
 C) music and sound
 D) billboard
 E) graphics
 F) video
 G) interviews

How do you evaluate media messages?

What is the benefit to creating your own media?

Why is media literacy important?

Why is it important to evaluate information you get from online sources?

How can you analyze media?

Appendix 3: Vocabulary List

Media

Media Literacy

Message

Purpose

Audience

Point Of View

Target Audience

Appendix 2: Media Literacy Pathway

Teacher Checkpoint	Choose 2 in each row to complete		
____ RI. 3.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers _____ Small Group _____ Conference	Watch https://youtu.be/QmhhbJIBoNs And https://youtu.be/PS-t78Z1exQ -Use a Venn diagram to compare these two videos -Which one of these videos is to entertain or inform?	In your reader's response journal list the tools used in the media. What was your emotional response? How did the techniques influence your emotional response?	Watch https://youtu.be/xk_hkdGf1tc?list=PLzJRrY4K0TeQmUVVFlssP7Kb1tg08glAr Video and generate three thick questions you could ask to a partner about media.

Student Resources

Newsela- https://newsela.com/read/elem-spotting-fake-news/id/28866
Excellent resource for students to use to research media on their own.

Teacher Resources
Media Smarts website- http://mediasmarts.ca/
This website is a wealth of knowledge about media literacy and resources for project ideas.

Media Lit Website- http://www.medialit.org/educator-resources
This website is good for developmentally appropriate practice for teaching media literacy along with additional lesson plans.

 Media Literacy Now- https://medialiteracynow.org/resources/

Notes

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2015. *What is Paideia Seminar?* https://www.paideia.org/paideia-seminar/. This website gives
more information about the teaching strategy -paideia seminar.