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THE EFFECT OF MEDIA ON THE
LEARNING BEHAVIORS OF STUDENTS

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Abstract

The media impacts many students in today's world. A common theme across literature is that the media makes a significant impression upon children. Children make associations from the media, sometimes correct, and sometimes incorrect. All forms of media affect student learning in some way. Students bring a variety of impressions, generated by the media, with them when they come to school. This can hinder the education process by leading to behavior issues, self-confidence problems, health issues, or misinformation that needs to be overcome. Participants in this study were administrators and teachers from area North Country schools K-12. Participants ages ranged from 23-65 and were employed at the following school districts: St. Regis Falls, Indian River, Beaver River, and Lyme Central Schools. Data was gathered using an internet based survey. Literature shows the media has significant negative impact on children, it also shows teachers are incorporating instructional methods to turn the negatives into positives. However, the statistics from this study show that teachers are not proactive in teaching positive media usage, and teachers and administrators see the negative impacts of media occurring in North Country school systems.

CHAPTER I

Problem Statement

Many students in today's world are impacted by the media. This has the possibility of creating conflict between information received from media and what is learned in the classroom. Because information is presented so powerfully by the media, it undermines the education process by dissolving what they have learned and creating roadblocks to what they will learn.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to find out how teachers and administrators see the media affecting the learning behavior of their students. Since the media has become such a powerful instrument of learning as well as enhanced digital technology, it is becoming more challenging to discriminate what is factual. Because of these unique challenges more information on how the media is affecting students is important to develop new instructional strategies.

Problem Question

How do teachers and administrators see the media affecting the learning behavior of their students?

Rationale

It's becoming more and more difficult to "fight" student's perception of what is factual and what is fantasy in the educational setting. There are numerous media outlets that represent fallacies as facts. It is difficult for children to accurately perceive reality when under these influences. Time is at the premium in the classroom and valuable time is lost when having to backtrack to correct misconceptions. Media is endangering the student teacher relationship and going as far as replacing it. They appear to be learning by watching, no longer by doing.

Assumptions

The following assumptions will be made throughout the study to determine how the media affects the learning behavior of students:

- Children have access to media

- Children are seeing media as factual

- Teachers and administrators are interested in this problem

- Media is creating conflict

Definition of Terms

Comic Violence: violence that is glossed over with the pretext of comedy or humor

Digital Technology: Computer oriented media

Energy Balance: the amount of energy intake (calories) compared to the energy expenditure (physical activity). (Anderson, 2006)

Gratuitous Violence: violence where one can identify with both the antagonist and protagonist, violence for the sake of violence

Homophily: the amount of similarities people who interact share such as beliefs, education, and social status. (Eyal, 2003)

Magic Bullet Myth (aka hypodermic needle model): "predicted immediate, direct, and uniform effects upon everyone who received a media message" (Martinson, 2006, p. 16)

Media: Television, radio, internet, magazines, newspapers, video games

Media Dependency Theory: the theory that a person's idea of social reality as gained from mass media will decrease as their personal experience with the idea increases. (Shapiro, 2004)

Perceived Reality: "The degree of perceived similarity between mediated characters and situations and real life characters and situations." (Shapiro, 2004, p. 677)

Retaliatory Violence: violence which is generated from a grudge, getting even

Social Cognitive Theory: learning through observation and experience with cognitive filters that determine what events are observed, what meaning is attached to them, the extent of the effect, emotional impact and motivation, and whether those behaviors will be imitated.

Social Learning Theory: learning that can be achieved through direct experience and observation of a variety of models. (Pike,2005)

Transgressive Violence: violence which may contain narratives, is morally questionable, followed by retribution

Limitations

This study will be limited by:

- Knowledge, skills, and experience of the researchers

- Researchers are the research instrument and will be limited by personal bias

- Limited by time and locations

Delimitations

This study will be further defined by:

- How the media impacts students' perceptions of reality and its impact on their behavior

- This study will only look at the effects of media in both the elementary and high school level in classrooms in the St. Regis Falls, Indian River, Beaver River, and Lyme school districts.

- It will only question teachers' and administrators' views concerning media impact on students' perception of reality and behaviors

Summary

The purpose of this study is to find out how teachers and administrators see the media affecting the learning perceptions and behaviors of their students. Because the media has become such a powerful instrument, it challenges teachers to develop new instructional strategies to better the learning perceptions and behaviors of their students.

The study assumes that children have access to media and are seeing media as factual, teachers and administrators are interested in this problem and media is creating conflict within the educational context. The research is limited by the knowledge, skills, and experience of the researchers as well as by personal bias. The study will research how media impacts reality in the classroom by only looking at the effects of media in both the elementary and high school level students across the North Country in New York State.

The media is seen as endangering the student teacher relationship going as far as replacing it, this study believes that because of these unique challenges, more information on how the media is affecting students is important to develop new instructional strategies.

CHAPTER II

Introduction

The review of literature will examine media influence on student learning. The review includes literature related to violence, health, instructional strategies, television, and other forms of media. The literature will investigate the desensitization to violence in children, misconceptions regarding personal health and how it relates to sexual activity and addictive substances, how the media affects student learning in the classroom, and the various outlets of media that children are exposed to and the impact.

Violence

In reviewing the literature that addresses violence in the media, several common themes resonate. First, many violent acts by children are mimicked from media outlets. Second, there is a cycle of fear and violence which continues over and over. Third, repeated exposure to violence and violent acts lead to a disconnectedness and desensitization of the violence. And finally, how parents and educators can and are responding to this violence.

Every evening, when families turn on the evening news, children are bombarded with stories of crime, killing, violence, and war. But the news isn't the only thing on TV. So we change the channel, put something more 'entertaining' on and sit down to watch. However, those shows which we

would believe to have the least number of instances of violence in fact have the most. In Duncum's (2006) article, *Attractions to Violence and the Limit of Education*, he shows how often children are assaulted with violence from the television:

> "By the age of 18, a child has seen 200,000 violent acts on television, including 40,000 murders. This includes 3-5 violent acts per hour during prime time and 20 to 25 violent acts per hour during Saturday morning cartoons"(Duncum, 2006, p. 22)

In another situation, Kindergarten teacher Fortis-Diaz (1997) took it upon herself to take a look at cartoons and violence. Like many, she believed that cartoons are designed for young children with appropriate themes. What Fortis-Diaz found was that in one cartoon show, there were fifty-six occurrences of violence by the end. Television, however, is not the only source of violence that children are exposed to. Themes of aggression, violence, retribution, and general ill-will to others are expressed in music, movies, video games, and the internet. It was found that children spend over six hours a day engaged in media such as TV, music, video games, and internet (Mersky & Chambliss, 2003).

Also of importance, are the types of violence in which the public is exposed. Four of the most common forms of violence presented in the media are Comic Violence, Transgressive Violence, Retaliatory Violence, and Gratuitous Violence. Comic Violence is violence presented as a spoof or mockery of other violent acts. This is violence presented under the sheath of

humor, being funny as to downplay the violence itself. Examples of comic violence include *The Three Stooges* and Tarrantino's films. Cartoons like *The Coyote and Road Runner* are also presented as funny. The coyote is always getting hurt, and the road runner is always laughing and getting away. Transgressive Violence is violence that is transgressive followed by retribution often presented with narratives. The ongoing storyline is carried out with the triumph of the protagonist over the antagonist, good guys over bad guys theme. As viewers, we identify with the character, and therefore reach an understanding when the main character completes acts of good or evil. Retaliatory Violence is violence with a 'getting-even' tone. Someone has done wrong to another and that makes it acceptable to engage in violent acts to even the score. This is where the element of self-defense comes into play. In video games for example, there is often a good guy trying to settle a score, or save the damsel in distress, but there is usually shooting or violence involved to complete those tasks. Gratuitous Violence is that which the onlooker can relate to either the protagonist or the antagonist at different times. They both become human and either side can be justified. This leads to violence merely for the sake of violence. It is not uncommon for this type of violence to go unpunished on TV and in movies. Examples of this type of violence could be 'slasher movies' such as *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and *Friday the 13th*. (Duncum, 2006)

Children learn their behaviors from what they see. This was the first recurring theme from the literature reviewed. In a kindergarten classroom,

the teacher spent time analyzing the play behavior of her class. Over time, she realized that the students had little interest in the toys provided, such as dolls, building blocks, drawing materials, and other standard kindergarten classroom toys. Instead, the boys especially, would spend their free time running around the room, 'shooting' whoever was the chosen bad guy for the day. The teacher tried to implement different toys into the class, and even tried 'bring your own toy to school day', but the students continued the violent and aggressive good guy/bad guy routine. She decided that the best way to understand the students was to become a more integral part of the play time. During one instance of the good guy/bad guy, shooting and chasing session, she asks the boys to describe what was going on. What she discovered was there is always a good guy trying to bring the bad guy down. There is always a bad guy in the play scenario who is usually armed and has done something wrong. When asked where they got this idea, one boy replied that he saw it on *COPS*, the TV show. In probing further, what she found was a misconception of police officers and their duties on the job. The boys believed that all bad guys had guns, and that all police officers chased down the bad guys and had weapons of their own (Fortis-Diaz, 1997).

The next theme that is recurring in the literature review of violence being portrayed by media is the continuous cycle of 'fear feeding violence feeding fear'. One author refers to this as a "chicken & egg" dilemma. Stating that fear and violence are two sides of the same coin; there is a vicious cycle between them. Overabundance of violence leads to fear and

insecurity which leads to violence as a form of protection (Duncum, 2006). This was also confirmed in the Kindergarten classroom (Fortis-Diaz, 1997). Children do not always interpret what they see on television as what it really is. With news covering primarily crimes, murders, and war, children get a misconception of how dangerous the world really is, and they resort to violence as a defense mechanism (Merksy & Chambliss, 2003). Out of fear, comes violence, and with more violence, comes fear. It is unclear which comes first, thereby being referred to as a "chicken & egg" dilemma.

The third recurring theme is the question as to whether or not violence in the media is leading to desensitization towards violence. In several of the articles, the authors set out to prove that there were higher aggression levels and less empathy in children who watched or saw violence regularly. In television shows, often violence is presented with a skewed view. In *COPS* for example, there is much camera time devoted to the chase and to the violence involved in bringing a suspect in. However, very little to no camera time is given to what police officers actually do most of their time. Patrolling, paperwork, and the positive image they provide to the public are not portrayed on the television show (Fortis-Diaz, 1997). Children rarely see the whole picture. In this situation what they take from it is that it is acceptable to be violent if that is part of your job. In addition, the content of a television show depends partly on what time constraints allow. Ninety percent of a show may be about the violence and the chase, where the follow-up and repercussions may be glossed over at the end. They no longer see the

violent behavior of the shows as negative and they rarely see the effects and consequences of those behaviors. Video Games and Internet simulations bring a whole new set of challenges. With television and movies, the children are watching the violent behaviors, whereas with video games and internet simulations they are taking an active role in the violence. The player gets to choose the form of and how much violence is needed to complete the game. Often, the player can choose to be a good guy or a bad guy, giving the impression that it is acceptable to choose to be the bad guy. In the *Grand Theft Auto* series for example, the lead character is rewarded with money and extra points for killing police officers and completing other violent and illegal acts (Duncum, 2006). All of this leads to a desensitization of the violence.

"…violent video games have the added dimension that one creates and participates in violent actions. Such games condone, promote, and justify the use of violence while concealing realistic consequences. Violence is acceptable because it is not real, therefore "victims" do not really suffer. Playing violent video games could contribute to the development of proviolence attitudes because these games normalize violence and desensitize the player to the real-life consequences of violence" (Funk, Baldacci, Pasold, and Baumgardner, 2004, p.26).

Finally, these articles discuss what parents and educators need to do in order to combat the attitudes and acceptances regarding violent behavior. In the Lynch, Gentile, Olson, and van Brederode's (2001) article, they had completed a study on Midwest middle school students in 8th and 9th grades in

urban, suburban and rural school districts. Students were asked about the amount of time they spend playing video games and what is the appropriate amount of violence for those video games. All but 1% of the males said there should be some level of violence in the game. Also asked was "do your parents limit the amount of time you spend playing video games" and "do your parents limit your game playing to certain ratings?" (p.5) Astonishingly, many students said their parents didn't even understand the rating system used on video games, let alone enforce it. Also, many students said they purchased games with an M=Mature rating with their own money. From the parents' perspective, one thing that can be done is to monitor what their children are playing, and to get a better understanding of the rating system to help determine what games their children should and should not be playing from a violence standpoint. Parents along with educators can also spend time with the children, helping them learn the difference between what is portrayed on television and what is reality. When confronted with this dilemma of TV vs. reality and the show *COPS*, the teacher took the time to discuss what the job duties were of a real Police Officer, and then invited an officer into the classroom to talk with the students (Fortis-Diaz, 1997). By communication and clearing up misconceptions the children went a long way in building their understanding and changing their behaviors.

Through each of these articles one general theme ran consistently: How can we as educators better understand and combat the effects of the media on today's children? Each of the authors had similar views on how the

media is affecting them, through television, movies, video games, and the internet. Children's behavior is mimicked from what they see and hear; the violence that is acted out for them becomes a part of their play behavior. Some of the violent behavior stems from fear generated by the abundance of violence presented in the media. Also, the repeated influence of violence leads to increased violent behavior and desensitization of the violence.

Health

L'Engle, Brown, & Kenneavy (2006) found in a recent survey that on average children and adolescents spend six to seven hours per day using media – three hours watching television, two hours listening to music, one hour watching video tapes and movies, and three fourths of an hour reading. It is suggested that each home contains on average, three televisions, three tape players, three radios, three CD players, two VCR's, one video game player, and one computer. Two thirds of children and adolescents have a television in their bedroom; almost all have some type of audio system.

The review of literature pertaining to student health and multiple media outlets shows three common health concerns among school aged children. The first concern is smoking. Different media types have quietly promoted smoking among our younger generation. Secondly, media exposes children to sexual content. Third, children become more aware of body image because media sometimes goes to extremes to achieve this image. Many times the different forms of media that students come in contact with leave

out the important information about the possible consequences of these
activities and how to prevent the consequences.

Klein, Brown, Childers, Oliveri, Porter, & Dykers (1993) states
adolescents are society's risk takers. The risks that our children take can
potentially lead to adverse medical and social outcomes. "Adolescents also
are heavy users of media, including television, radio, music, and magazines.
The entertainment industry often has been accused of promoting adolescent
risky behavior through portrayal of unhealthy activities" (Klein et al, 1993, p.
24)

The media that children and adolescents are exposed to may reinforce
their perceptions of their environment. Media protagonists seldom suffer
adverse consequences of their behaviors (Klein et al, 1993, p. 29).

An average of 29% of adolescents smoke cigarettes, about 70% of
adolescents have tried smoking. Gutschoven & Van den Bulck (2005) found
that the relationship between television and smoking age was greater than
the relationship between the dependent variable and gender or parental
smoking. When children watch and observe television, they see the actors
and actresses as role models. Children see these positive depictions of
tobacco consumption and will learn subconsciously that this positive behavior
should similarly be rewarded in real life. Klein et al (1993), have found that
reading materials are also sources of tobacco advertisement. Specifically,
Sports Illustrated has been found to have more tobacco and alcohol
advertisements than any other magazine. This specific magazine is often

read by adolescent boys. *Seventeen, Teen,* and *Ebony* are other examples of magazines in which young readers often indulge. These magazines also contain a high level of alcohol and tobacco advertisements.

Pardun, L'Engle, & Brown (2005) suggest the more sexual material from media that a child is exposed to, the more likely that child is to participate in or anticipate sexual activity. Sexual content covered nudity, relationships, marriage, divorce, crushes, dating, and relationships with unmarried people. Adolescents are curious about their own sexuality. It is new and they turn to media for answers and to seek out those parts of sexuality in which they are interested. Two studies found that it did not matter which type of sexual content the adolescents were exposed to but rather the amount that they were exposed to. When children and adolescents see sexual content in the media, the media rarely portrays the consequences of risky sexual encounters such as sexually transmitted diseases or pregnancy. Also, they are not exposed to healthy sexual messages such as prevention of diseases and pregnancy through condoms or abstinence (L'Engle et al, 2006 and Pardun et al 2005). L'Engle et al (2006) found that 83% of the top 20 Neilson-rated teen television shows contained at least some sexual content, 12% of the sexual content addressed risks or responsibilities. Also found in this study, adolescents who were exposed to more sexual media and perceived support from the media for teen sexual behavior, were found to be more sexually active and were more likely to engage in sexual acts in the near future.

Adolescents are intense information seekers, especially for information about being an adult. There is a lack of information available to adolescents about sexuality and many turn to the media for information. The media does not include all responsibilities associated with sexual content; so adolescents are given only part of the information they need to know in order to make appropriate decisions. The media portrays sexual content in a way that is attractive to adolescents. L'Engle et al suggested that the information adolescents are gathering from the media is diluting the positive impact of school-based sexual health programs and sexual values by adults in their lives.

From a young age, children are exposed to multiple forms of media. Many children enjoy reading books, reading stories about fantasies and dreams. Children's literature also has traditionally stereotyped gender roles. Females have been seen as submissive and boys have been depicted as the initiators of action. Children learn that these are expectations for gendered relationships (Wason-Ellam, 1997). She studied students in a primary classroom and chose to read some stories to the children. After reading, Wason-Ellam (1997) asked the students questions. Most questions revolved around the female character becoming beautiful instead of her good deeds. The illustrations also overshadowed the text, students concentrated on the visual impressions rather than putting the text and illustrations together. When questioning a group of girls, they used the story as a way to begin a "girl-talk" conversation. The illustrations represent adult activities and enable

children to imitate adult behavior and assert what our culture assumes to be ideal.

Girls in particular, care a lot about their physical appearance. The media contributes to their identity development and socialization. Females especially are facing risks to their health from increased media pressures to be slim (Hobb, Broder, Pope, & Rowe, 2006). It is known that chronic dieting can lead to other health issues. Some girls were able to critically respond to weight-loss advertisements, where other girls were not able to respond critically to certain advertisements. No girls were able to identify the risks and dangers that may be associated with the weight loss products and techniques (Hobb et al, 2006).

Along with this weight loss problem comes the opposite problem of obesity. There are so many forms of media that consume children's lives, it is possible for young people to become non-active. O'Hanlon & Charlene (2007) did a study to take media to a new level. They have incorporated a videogame and exercise to help promote healthy lifestyles. The *Dance Dance Revolution* game was introduced into a school's physical education program. The goal was to promote a healthy way to exercise while playing a video game. The game required stamina, coordination, and balance. The goal in this study was to prove that individuals could use a form of media in a positive way. O'Hanlon & Charlene's (2007) research has shown that exercise can improve performance on tests and maintain better focus and enable children to be prepared to learn better.

There are many forms of media that can have a negative impact on today's children and adolescents. The media is a good source from which to derive information. Especially among children or adolescents who are beginning to seek information about becoming an adult. Adding more information to messages in the media to encompass all of a subject can help our youth to make better and more informed decisions.

Instructional Strategies

Undoubtedly the media has a major influence on today's society. From the clothes we wear to how we interpret the phases of the Moon we are influenced by the media. It is important for a media saturated society like the United States to be able to analyze and criticize what is pouring into our homes everyday through newspapers, television, magazines, the internet, and even according to the literature, some children's books. There is an emphasis through peer reviewed journals that understanding how the media grasps our attention, the importance of analyzing and critiquing media through inquiry based questions and classes as well as focusing on analyzing media, we can become well educated citizens.

By first determining why media is so influential, we can gain a greater understanding of how to overcome its power. According to Kirschenbaum (2006) neuroscientists have confirmed that colorful visuals are a powerful stimulus to learning. They have also discovered that when we read in black and white many regions of our brain shut down or go into "sleep mode"(Zeekie, 1999). This accounts for much of the media's influence.

Neuroscientists are attempting to prove by adding color and design to our literature we are stimulating more of the emotional centers within the brain. It has been proven on a small scale, through Valerie Kirschenbaum's research of her classroom, that the introduction of color and design into their literature instead of the traditional black and white text increased their test scores by twenty to thirty percent. Lying within one of the "poorest urban districts in the United States" Kirschenbaum (¶ 5) while using this strategy, was able to assist the students in a ninety-six percent pass rate for their Regents Exam in 2005.

The media has known the influence of color and design of the United States' culture for many years using it as one of its greatest advertising tools.

"[a] widely cited study found that adding color [to direct mail advertisement produced] a thirty-four percent improvement in response rite, a twenty-five percent increase in the size of the order, a forty-eight percent increase in repeat orders, a thirty-two percent increase in overall profit, a thirty-five percent improvement in response time" (¶ 9).

It is through knowledge of how to analyze and critique what the media is exposing us to that we can better ourselves as citizens and understand who and what the media is targeting. In this example, the media is targeting people who think they want to better their lives by purchasing these items and because the items look better in color, they are more responsive.

People can be educated on the effects of the media as early as elementary school. Trundle & Troland (2005) analyzed seventy-nine

children's books dealing with the Moon and its phases to determine if it was being represented accurately. They found that very few of the books represented the subject correctly. To correct this issue and still include diverse literature within the classroom, they came up with a strategy to assist teachers in educating their students. Trundle & Troland emphasized analyzing and critiquing the literature. They suggested having the students compare photographs and other realistic interpretations of the Moon such as a "Moon calendar" to what they had read in other fictional literature through inquiry based questions. Examples included were "How are the illustrations similar and how are they different from the Moon data you collected?" OR "Do crescent Moons really grow in size (as if the Moon were coming closer to us)?"

Through this strategy, elementary students can begin to understand that not everything in print is correct. Learning these skills early on will create stepping stones for understanding the focus of other types of media through out their life time.

According to Hall (1999), students are being affected earlier and earlier by the media and more specifically suggestive advertising; making it more important for education to "match its impact." She believes if students were taught how to recognize the media's "negative images and ploys to convince consumers of certain behaviors to practice and mirror" (p. 42), they would be less likely to believe anything in print or on television to be true at face value.

Some teachers are trying to expose the media's fallacies by using the newspaper as not only an insight into modern day history and an alternative to textbook, but also as a teaching tool. Segall & Schmidt (2006) suggest that using the newspaper as an exploration tool into issues such as perspective, rhetoric, representation, audience, and consumption helps to critically examine, question and evaluate media. This also guides students to understand how words and images "are used to include or exclude certain 'ways of seeing'" (Segall & Schmidt, 2006, ¶ 11). By teaching students these skills, they are able to read or see something in the media and question its audience and credibility before absorbing it at 'face value.'

Educators are not only trying to reach students on an elementary and high school level, but also on a collegiate level. Even at the college level students are unaware of some of the mistakes carried out by the mass media. Venable (1998) speaks highly of the "Mass Media Mistake," an exercise he uses in his chemistry class at Agnes Scott College in Georgia. The strategy, according to Venable, starts with an error in media to be identified and provided by the student to focus them on questioning the relevance of the information and to stimulate critical thinking. "The goal is to engender in students a healthy skepticism for the printed word in the mass media. From that skepticism, it is hoped that they will develop the skills necessary for critical analysis (Venable, 1998, p. 33)

The lack of basic knowledge is often too insufficient, even at the college level, to recognize any error making it important to continue to teach students how to recognize these errors.

The media is not 'out to get' its viewers as many think through things like the "Magic Bullet" and "Hypodermic Needle" theory. These two theories were discredited among media scholars (Martinson, 2006). Some people choose not to listen to what media has to say while others focus on every syllable. Take for instance the radio broadcast of Orson Well's adaptation of H. G. Well's *War of the Worlds* on Halloween Eve 1938. It was reported that there was wide spread panic for hours including people in New Jersey wearing wet towels on their heads while walking down the street to protect their heads from "Martian rays" and in New York a young man reported to the National Guard headquarters to prepare for battle. But according to research done by Martinson in 2004 everyone did not panic. In 1998 research done by DeFleur and Dennis proved that

> "critical ability was the most significant variable related to the response people made to the broadcast…[people] who were low in critical ability tended to accept the invasion as real and failed to make reliable checks on the broadcast" (p. 437) .

Without the knowledge of media's influence and the ability to analyze and critique what is being 'shot out' across the air waves, people are unable to determine fact from fiction creating havoc and sometimes drastic consequences. Through research into this "panic" we now know that in 1938

the world was not coming to an end like many thought. Those educated in critiquing and analyzing the media could have told you that it was simply a spooky story over the airwaves.

Throughout the literature one particular theme was prevalent. "Without purposefully teaching the skills to decode the meanings behind the media, however, we leave students, as well as ourselves, in the tenuous position of allowing media to construct our reality. By recognizing that fostering media literacy in students is both a responsibility and an opportunity for educators, teachers will insist that these much needed skills should find their way into the curriculum" (Davies, 1996, p. 1).

Through inquiry based questions on literature we read and compare in the classroom, to reading the headline of a magazine in the grocery store, these skills are focused on helping us become well educated citizens. The media presents us with bright appealing images to pull us in to purchase something or follow along with their beliefs. Looking into the text past the design and pretty colors and focusing on the black and white although it may be boring, individuals at least won't be worried about the sky falling at the drop of an acorn.

<center>Television</center>

Since television began, there have been questions and concerns about the impact it has or has had on children and society. Behaviors learned in childhood are strengthened during repeated experiences and become

solidified by adulthood. Much of the focus of the various literature discusses television's influence on children.   Some key areas of current literature have examined television's effect on gender stereotypes, aggression, obesity, academic achievement and perceived reality. The susceptibility of youth is an important concern for what influences are significant during their development. Two recurring themes throughout the literature were the issues of content and quantity of viewing as they pertain to the susceptibility of youth.

Gender Stereotyping

Oftentimes studies have concentrated on particular genres of programming, be it dramas, sitcoms or the news. However, one area that is overlooked is the effect of commercials on young viewers. Pike & Jennings' (2005) address this media aspect. They illustrate how commercials can promote gender stereotypes through overt factors. Pike and Jennings' study shows that:

> "Research suggests that children are aware of the gender portrayals in commercials and thus have learned the gender 'appropriateness' of toys through modeled behavior, which may affect their toy preferences and the nature of their play. The repeated exposure to these images contributes to the development of children's conceptions of gender and their expected roles as men and women." (p.84-85)

These researchers prescribe to the 'social learning theory'. This theory states that learning can be achieved through observation as well as direct

experiences. Because children are more susceptible to the "television world view, particularly . . . social construction of gender and gender roles"(p. 84), it becomes imprinted on their psyche and continues into adulthood. This is especially significant when television viewing is extensive.

Aggression

Eyal & Rubin (2003) prescribed to the 'social cognitive theory'. This theory expands on the social learning theory by taking what is observed and not only modeling that behavior, but expanding on it as well. Children then use those same behaviors in other instances. Eyal and Rubin found that violent television content effects people differently. They found that although media violence influences its viewers, the extent by which it does influence them is symbiotic to a predisposition to aggressive characteristics. Therefore a child who is prone to aggressive behaviors will watch more violent programming. They will see the situations in which aggressiveness is used and will emulate that behavior in not only similar situations but in situations that they feel might follow the "rules" or excuse such behaviors. The authors also believe that selectivity is guided by homophily. They feel that we do lean towards what is similar and familiar to us. Therefore those children that have a propensity towards aggressive behavior and have chosen that violent programming watch more of it. They are desensitized by it and look at it as humorous. This in turn exacerbates their negative behaviors. (Eyal & Ruben, 2003)

Obesity

Another significant area of concern worldwide is children's obesity

levels.   Anderson & Butcher (2006) illustrate in their study how shifts in

energy balance can cause overweight tendencies and obesity. These

authors show the significance of this problem:

> "In the United States obesity rates have increased for all age groups
>
> over the past thirty years . . . During 1971-74 about 5 percent of
>
> children aged two to nineteen years were obese . . . By 1999-2002
>
> nearly 15 percent of U.S. children were considered obese." (p. 21)

This is significant because not only are more children obese, but overall,

many children are also heavier than before. Television affects the energy

intake as well as the energy expenditure. There is a high quantity of

commercials that children are exposed to that promote unhealthy, high

energy foods such as snacks, sodas and fast foods. Television is a

sedentary activity and can promote obesity. When you combine the content

of commercials and the amount of non-activity occurring because of extensive

viewing, weight gain becomes the inevitable conclusion. In this way,

television is a significant factor in obesity. (Anderson & Butcher, 2006)

Academic Achievement

The effect of television on children's academic achievement is an

additional topic that has parents and educators worried; however, Thompson

& Austin (2003) found that academic achievement and television viewing is a

complex area to study. There are so many influences that can impact

academic achievement. These range anywhere from factors dealing with television to a child's home environment. This article poses two variant views. In one respect, the negative relationship between television and academic achievement is that television viewing takes time away from other educational activities such as reading. The choice of content rears its head again. There is educational programming available for youth at home and in school. These programming options can be beneficial to children's academic achievement. Television viewing can be both good and bad depending on the control exerted as to content and quantity. Continually this study stressed that it is difficult to narrow down the conclusion that television viewing is a major factor in lowering academic achievement. It does however, confirm that it is a factor when the viewing is not appropriate or is extensive. (Thompson & Austin, 2003)

Perceived Reality

Lastly, Shapiro & Chock (2004) look at the effect media has on people's perception. They draw from two theories, the 'media dependency theory' and 'perceived reality'. These researchers address how media's level of influence will decrease as familiarity with actual facts increases:

"Generally, in a familiar environment audience members can be relatively certain of what is typical. They are unlikely to become convinced that atypical behavior is more typical than the viewer thought. In an unfamiliar environment audience members are less certain about what is typical. Typicality should have a strong effect on

perceptions of reality in familiar environments. In unfamiliar environments where there is less certainty about what is typical, that uncertainty should weaken the effect of typicality on perceptions of reality" (Chapiro & Chock, 2004, p. 676).

Perceived reality is significant in that it can influence attitudes, beliefs, and learning and social behaviors. Most children do not have a wide variety of experiences. Because of this they are more susceptible to television programming's influence. Content and quantity are again powerful variables in this area. If they are watching programming that takes them to unfamiliar territories, they can believe that is the reality. The more they are exposed to that same version of reality, the more apt they are to believe in it completely as reality (Shapiro & Chock, 2004).

There are so many types of programming available to youth today with cable/satellite programming that it is difficult to monitor the content of children's viewing choices when many parents are not home and their children are. The amount of hours that children spend in front of the television set can truly be considered excessive. In today's world, busy adult schedules have left monitoring children's television viewing at a minimum and again the effect has increased television's influence on children's behaviors, knowledge, and physical health.

Children learn their behaviors by what they observe in the world. If their world narrows itself, as with extensive television viewing and inappropriate content, then their behaviors will reflect those narrowed views.

Examining the psyche and characteristics of children and their home environments are also aspects on how significant media's influence can be. Television and the other media is here to stay. By conducting a study that searches for connections between media exposure and children's behaviors, both learning and social development within the school setting can provide the opportunity for the development of workable plans to monitor media influence for the benefit of children.

Mass Media

In today's society, the ability to access media is at a touch of a finger. It is part of our culture now and it is only going to continue to rise. The young generation of today will not remember a time where there weren't numerous channels on the television to view. Dial-up internet is becoming a thing of the past. So one thing you have to ask yourself is how are they using this media? How are we as teachers, supposed to handle the use of media by students?

One study took a look at this and was searching for knowledge construction links. These are defined as "incidents where students made tangential comments or questions in the classroom." (Schuh, 2004, p. 335). Some of the findings were that when students were discussing Vikings, their boats, and how being up north would cause the water to be frozen. The students heard the word frozen and began to talk about the popular Madonna song "Frozen" that they had heard on MTV. In this example, it caused the students to be off task. This is an example of a simple link. One thing that you also need to keep in mind is the amount of data that is available to

children. If you were to Google™ the word Frozen, there would be endless pages of information. Some of it would most definitely be off topic. As a teacher, if a topic comes up where discussion is sparked, you can use this opportunity to really help the student understand the topic.

One interesting study came where researchers took a look at civic knowledge. This is more or less the study of current events and what is going on in today's world. This study compared gathering news data from the media to getting it from a newspaper. With the amount of shows on television today, a student can easily perceive reality to be what it really isn't. There are so many opportunities to tune into a show and say, wow that looks real. But when you read a newspaper, you are getting nothing but the facts. No perception, all reality. The assumption made was that there would be more gained from a newspaper. But one thing that is happening now is the availability of newspapers is declining. Less people are subscribing to newspapers because you can get your information, if wanted, right at the click of a mouse. But you cannot discount the fact that reading a newspaper can greatly increase a students' civic knowledge. Just imagine if a student spent time every day reading the newspaper. Think of the average amount of time a person spends watching television a day, when reading the newspaper could also be done.

Some research suggests that reading newspapers provides students with more in-depth understanding of current events and politics than does television viewing. Similar to what was

found with regard to television news viewing; students who

frequently read news about their country in newspapers had

higher average levels of civic knowledge. (Amadeo, 2004, p. 6)

What affect does the media have on younger women? I do not think

that anyone would argue the fact that media influences people. Can media

break stereotypes though? Is it that powerful? The media can offer girls

strong, positive role models. Three things girls can take from media perhaps

include:

Women in the media are often shown as independent,

depending upon themselves to solve their own problems to

achieve their goals; women are shown as honest and direct in

their dealings with other characters; women are often portrayed

as intelligent and frequently use their intelligence to achieve

their goals. (Signorielli, 1997, p. 6-7)

Really what better message is there to send than to be honest? This does

nothing but to try and show girls to become their own person and to use their

minds. This is the kind of thing we want the youth of America to be doing.

Media can also reinforce stereotypes. Why is this? Some stereotypes

that are gathered from media include:

Women continue to be underrepresented in most media, which

limits opportunities to portray women in a full range of roles;

media's female portrayals send girls messages emphasizing a

woman's ideal appearance and the importance of this

appearance to their lives; women's lives are most often portrayed in the context of relationships, while men's lives are most often seen in the context of careers; both men and women are sometimes seen acting in stereotypical ways. (Signorielli, 1997, p. 7-9)

Students, both male and female will try to mimic their favorite characters. For entertainment value and money making, should we be sending these kinds of messages? This is something that may never stop. Again, perception is reality. We as educators and parents need to make sure that students know what the difference between right and wrong is. Also, we need to do our best to make sure that the material they are watching and reading is age level appropriate.

But at the same time, the media may not necessarily be a completely negative thing. Students learn a lot by using the media everyday. Some of the most popular things on the net include sites such as YouTube and MySpace. One thing that could be taken from this is integrating the arts. Students can learn so much more about other topics and subject areas by combining them. Whether it is a math teacher teaming with a physical education teacher to teach a lesson with numbers and physical activity or a music/physical education activity, there are numerous activities that can be done. Students enjoy this sort of thing and will gain knowledge and respect for the areas. In terms of media, networking can be something that students can learn a lot from. Students can learn how to become comparative. This

means they can bridge together all sorts of ideas and concepts. Students can teach from the media. With sites such as YouTube and MySpace, students are learning about multiple areas.

> A recent study from the Pew Internet & American Life project found that 57 percent of teens online have created their own media content. As our culture becomes more participatory, these young people are creating their own blogs and podcasts; they are recording their lives on LiveJournal and developing their own profiles on MySpace; they are producing their own YouTube videos and Flickr photos; they are writing and posting fan fiction or contributing to Wikipedia; they are mashing up music and modding games. Much as engineering students learn by taking apart machines and putting them back together, many of these teens learned how media work by taking their culture apart and remixing it. (Jenkins, 2007, p. 4)

The media is really rising when it comes to education. We are a growing society and we always will be. A perfect example of this is the amount of online courses that we see today. People are always going to have bias on the effect of media on students. But there can also be some positive effects. Being able to bridge that gap is a process that will be ongoing.

It seems like anytime anything goes wrong in society, such as guns being brought to school and acts of random violence, mass media takes the

blame. If the media is used properly, students can take so much from it and learn a great deal. The media isn't out there to get or bring anyone down. One popular myth is the "hypodermic needle myth." This myth talks about how "In effect, they(society) are convinced that if mass media tells the audience to jump, the only question asked will center around how high they should jump!" (Martinson, 2006, p. 17)   The fact of the matter is that no two people are the same. There are many factors that go into what influences individuals. It would be necessary to take a look at their culture, their religion, their beliefs, area they live in, and many other factors. To think that years ago we didn't have access to all this information that we do now. It is something that we all take for granted. When a paper is assigned, you go to a computer to look up information on your subject. We have access to information at any point, any time. We have the opportunity to be well informed on just about any topic we would like to sink our feet into.

Educators shouldn't push students away from the media and the usefulness of it. Some educators will try to scare students away from the media. The media, as I have said before, is going to be accessed at some point by pretty much everyone. We already know the amounts of television the average child consumes a day. If we can now take this media, make it a meaningful experience in which students learns something, they will want to do it over and over again. So educators must first possess knowledge of media use themselves. If we give out the wrong idea about the media then of

course a student will not grasp it or at the same time will want to go out and do it anyway.

> If one considers that one's experiences aid in new learning, the encounters with the media sources comprise a large number of these students experience. To discount these experiences and not find value in them in classroom learning implies that students enter the classroom with a much blanker state than they do. (Schuh, 2004, p. 341)

Summary

In this chapter, a review of literature pertaining to the media influence on student learning was reviewed. The review included literature related to violence, health, instructional strategies, television and other forms of media. The common theme across the literature is that the media makes a significant impression upon children. Children make associations from the media, sometimes correct, and sometimes incorrect. From the media, they often create altered perceptions of reality. The news, for example, is riddled with coverage of crime and war, leading children to believe the world is more violent than it really is. This leads to desensitization towards violence. Children are exposed to high amounts of sexual content throughout the media. What they are not exposed to are the consequences of or alternatives to the sexual actions. This leads to misconceptions regarding personal health, especially in the areas of sexual activity, personal image, and addictive substance. There are many forms of media that make an

impression on children. Television is the most obvious, but magazines, video games, internet, and newspapers also make impressions. Magazines provide images of models and celebrities, many of whom children look up to. Video games allow children to step into a role and carry out tasks as if they were that character. The internet provides endless opportunities for information, often skewed or incorrect. Newspapers offer plenty of articles and information regarding recent crime and war statistics. All of these media outlets affect student learning in some way. Students bring a variety of impressions, generated by the media, with them when they come to school. Depending on the media impression, this can hinder the education process by leading to behavior issues, self-confidence problems, health issues, or misinformation that needs to be overcome.

On a brighter note, many teachers and curriculum experts are looking for ways to incorporate media outlets to encourage student learning and counteract the misinformation typically generated.

Although the literature shows the media has significant negative impact on children, teachers are incorporating instructional methods to turn the negatives into positives.

Chapter III

Problem Statement

Many students in today's world are impacted by the media. This has

the possibility of creating conflict between information received from media

and what is learned in the classroom. Because information is presented so

powerfully by the media, it undermines the education process by dissolving

what they have learned and creating roadblocks to what they will learn.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to find out how teachers and

administrators see the media affecting the learning behavior of their students.

Since the media has become such a powerful instrument of learning as well

as enhanced digital technology, it is becoming more challenging to

discriminate what is factual. Because of these unique challenges more

information on how the media is affecting students is important to develop

new instructional strategies.

Problem Question

How do teachers and administrators see the media affecting the

learning behavior of their students?

Participants

This study shall focus on teachers and administrators of K-12. Participants ages shall range from 23-65 and who are employed at the following school districts: St. Regis Falls, Indian River, Beaver River, and Lyme.

Criteria for Selection of Participants

The participants will be selected based upon their willingness to participate and communicate and by their employment as a teacher or administrator of the above mentioned school districts.

Methodology

According to Mills (2007, p. 2), action research is a series of questions that help people in the teacher-learning environment (teachers, administrators, graduate students, etc.) collect information to improve how their particular school operates, how they teach, and how well the students learn. Overall action research is used to better the learning environment and "enhance the lives of students."

Lewin (1934) is credited for the term "action research". He was quoted saying that action research "gives credence to the development of powers of reflective thought, discussion, decision and action by ordinary people participating in collective research on 'private troubles' that they have in common" (Mills, 2007, p.5) People from America, the United Kingdom and Australia have also worked toward the development of the research process. Through its development it has been determined that the collaboration of

research from teachers, administrators, counselors, and parents can help better the learning community for its students.

There are many different models demonstrating action research but Mills (2007, p. 5) describes it in four steps: identify an area of focus, collect data, analyze and interpret data, and develop an action plan. Action research benefits the learning community through providing information to better the students, teachers, and administrator's educational outcome. Through research teachers are forced to focus on how they are teaching; forcing teachers to reflect on their educational process allows them to see what is working in the classroom and what is not. By correcting their error and creating a new way through research teachers are able to create a better learning environment for the students as well as a better school for the administrators and others involved in the teaching profession.

<div align="center">Rationale for Methodology</div>

We chose to use Action Research for this study because, like 'good teachers' have been doing for centuries, it celebrates reflection. According to Mills (2007), teachers are the experts of the classroom. They know what works and what doesn't. By performing this teacher research we are identifying the focus that is important in *our* classrooms. We are challenging the "conventional craft culture" and emphasizing our willingness to reflect on and change our thinking about our teaching practice (p.13) By doing this type of research our goal, like many other researchers, is to improve the lives of students and teachers through a topic that directly affects them.

Procedure Used for Data Gathering and Analysis

Four step process

1. Focus & Review of Literature

2. Reconnaissance-who do you get permission from, begin to gather data

3. Analysis of the Data, beginning changes in what is being done

4. Development of an Action Plan based upon findings

Collection of Data

Data will be collected by responses to a survey. The survey will be distributed to northern New York school administrators and teachers. Access to surveys will be internet based. Administrators and teachers that choose to participate may complete the survey that that will be distributed by email. Optional interviews will also be conducted based upon willing participants. Researches will conduct interviews asking each interviewee the same questions. The information collected from participating administrators and teachers will be used to analyze and discuss the research question.

Data Analysis

Data analysis will be ongoing throughout the study. This will ensure that our data collection techniques are catching the type of data needed to answer the studies question. A continuous analysis of data will also allow the researchers to change data collection techniques as needed.

As the researchers in this study begin to receive and analyze data, they will identify common themes seen in literature reviewed prior to data

collection and themes seen in the data that is collected from the field. Researchers will also look to see if data that is being collected is supported or challenged by previous studies. Results will be summarized and formatted for easy review by readers. It will be important to state which pieces of information are missing from the data collected and what questions still need to be answered.

<div align="center">Data Management and Validity</div>

During the collection of data, it is important to check data for validity. The data that is collected should accurately gauge how the media affects the learning behavior of students. This study will use triangulation to collect data and information. This study will use multiple sources of data to collect pre-study information, and will use multiple sources for data collection. The researchers will use triangulation to increase their understanding on this compounding issue.

E-mail interviews will be sent out to participating administrators and teachers. All returned e-mail interviews will be confidential and anonymous, using a secure website. E-mail will allow teachers and administrators to respond on their own time by a defined due date.

In order to ensure validity the researchers will practice peer debriefing, triangulation, member checks, establish structural corroboration, and establish referential adequacy. Researchers will collect descriptive and detailed data, as well as practice reflexivity, revealing underlying assumptions or biases that caused researchers to formulate questions in a certain way or

present their findings in a certain way. Journals will be kept by each researcher in order to keep confirmability of the study.

<center>Role of the Researcher</center>

The members of the team are a group of five teachers, both elementary and secondary, with varying backgrounds. As a team, we are the primary researchers in this study. We will be responsible for designing, distributing, collecting and analyzing the data as it becomes available. To implement our study, we will need to contact administrators to request participation in our study. Next, the survey will need to be designed to address the items needed to complete the study. It will be designed electronically to aid in the distribution and collection of the date.   The survey will then be distributed by the team to various administrators and teachers. The data will be collected and analyzed by the research team. Once analyzed, we will be responsible for writing up our conclusions based on the data. The team will be limited by our bias, skills, experience, and backgrounds.

<center>Reliability</center>

Reliability is an integral criteria of action research. It can be used synonymously with consistency in everyday use and with regard to action research. It is important for a study or test to be trustworthy. According to Gall, Gall & Borg (2007), the reliability factor is "the extent to which other researchers would arrive at similar results if they studied the same case using exactly the same procedures as the first researcher". (p. 477)

Reliability can be measured by test results and by giving them a numeric coefficient. The higher the coefficient, the higher the reliability is. Another way to measure reliability is through the observers themselves. The reliability of the study can be measured by the extent the observer's scores would agree with an expert's, the use of consistent observational codes and the extent they agree with other observers during the data collection. (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007, p. 272)

An essential component of determining the validity of a research study is if it is reliable. Although reliability and validity go hand-in-hand, they have their differences. Validity is the level that a study measures what the study was set up to do. Reliability is the extent the study gives the same measurement. The amount of errors can affect the level of reliability and validity. Validity errors are constant while random errors affect reliability. Some types of errors are caused by parts of the actual test such as vague questions while some errors are on the test-takers part as with directions not followed correctly or the emotions of the test taker. When the error of measurement lowers that shows that the errors are being minimized or eliminated. (Mills, 2007)

Reliability is a characteristic of action research that can stand on its own but is an influential aspect. As stated previously, it is an essential part of validity determination. A research study can be reliable without being valid. It can consistently give the wrong answer and because of that consistency it is considered reliable. It is a major factor in a valid research study as a study

has to be reliable to be valid. As Mills points out, team researchers must agree on descriptive accuracy and that if the same methods were used the results would be consistent . . . reliable.

Audit Trail

An audit trail is the documentation of materials and procedures used throughout this study. An audit trail is designed such that a third party can examine the process of the study throughout its entire course. Because it is written from the perspective of the researchers, the reader gets a feel for the entire process of the research and documentation, including any problems that may arise. The audit trail can include a written journal, pictures, audio of interviews, video, and anything else used to help collect data (Mills, 2007). Refer to Appendix I for the complete audit trail.

Confounding Issues

At this time there are no confounding issues. If issues arise, they will be recorded.

Summary

Many students in today's world are impacted by the media. The purpose of this study is to find out how teachers and administrators see the media affecting the learning behavior of their students.   The participants in this study will be faculty and administrators from school districts in the Northern New York area. The study will be completed using the Action Research Method, where the team members of this study will be the primary

researchers. The methodology of Action Research was chosen because it provides reflection.

The data for this study will collected through an online/email survey that will be sent to area teachers and administrators. The data analysis will be an ongoing process throughout the course of the study. To ensure the validity of the data, triangulation will be used. A journal will be kept as an Audit Trail throughout the study.

Chapter IV

Problem Statement

Many students in today's world are impacted by the media. This has the possibility of creating conflict between information received from media and what is learned in the classroom. Because information is presented so powerfully by the media, it undermines the education process by dissolving what they have learned and creating roadblocks to what they will learn.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to find out how teachers and administrators see the media affecting the learning behavior of their students. Since the media has become such a powerful instrument of learning as well as enhanced digital technology, it is becoming more challenging to discriminate what is factual. Because of these unique challenges more information on how the media is affecting students is important to develop new instructional strategies.

Problem Question

How do teachers and administrators see the media affecting the learning behavior of their students?

Summary of the Study

Many students in today's world are impacted by the media. The purpose of this study is to find out how teachers and administrators see the media affecting the learning behavior of their students.   The participants in this study are faculty and administrators from school districts in the Northern New York area. The study was completed using the Action Research Method, where the team members of this study were the primary researchers. The methodology of Action Research was chosen because it provides reflection.

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Data Management and Validity

During the collection of data, it is important to check data for validity. The data that is collected should accurately gauge how the media affects the learning behavior of students. This study used triangulation to collect data and information. This study used multiple sources of data to collect pre-study information, and will used multiple sources for data collection. The researchers used triangulation to increase their understanding on this compounding issue.

E-mail interviews were sent out to participating administrators and teachers. Paper surveys and interviews were handed out as well. All returned surveys and interviews are confidential and anonymous, collected using a secure website or anonymous collection location.

In order to ensure validity the researchers practiced peer debriefing, triangulation, member checks, establish structural corroboration, and established referential adequacy. Researchers collected descriptive and detailed data, as well as practiced reflexivity, revealing underlying assumptions or biases that caused researchers to formulate questions in a certain way or present their findings in a certain way. Journals were kept by each researcher in order to keep confirmability of the study.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was ongoing throughout the study. This helped to ensure that our data collection techniques were catching the type of data needed to answer the studies question. A continuous analysis of data has also allowed the researchers to change data collection techniques as needed.

As the researchers in this study began to receive and analyze data, they identified common themes seen in literature reviewed prior to data collection and themes seen in the data that is collected from the field. Researchers have also looked to see if data that is being collected is supported or challenged by previous studies. Results will be summarized and formatted for easy review by readers.

Question #1: What level of influence does the exposure to violence and violent acts in the media lead to a disconnectedness and desensitization of students' behaviors?

Level of Influence	Number of Reponses	Percentage of Responses
1 (No Influence)	0	0.00%
2	8	10.13%
3	25	31.65%
4	**37**	**46.84%**
5 (Highest Influence)	9	11.39%
Total	**79**	

|	
Mean	3.59
Standard Dev.	0.82
Variance	0.68

CHART A-1
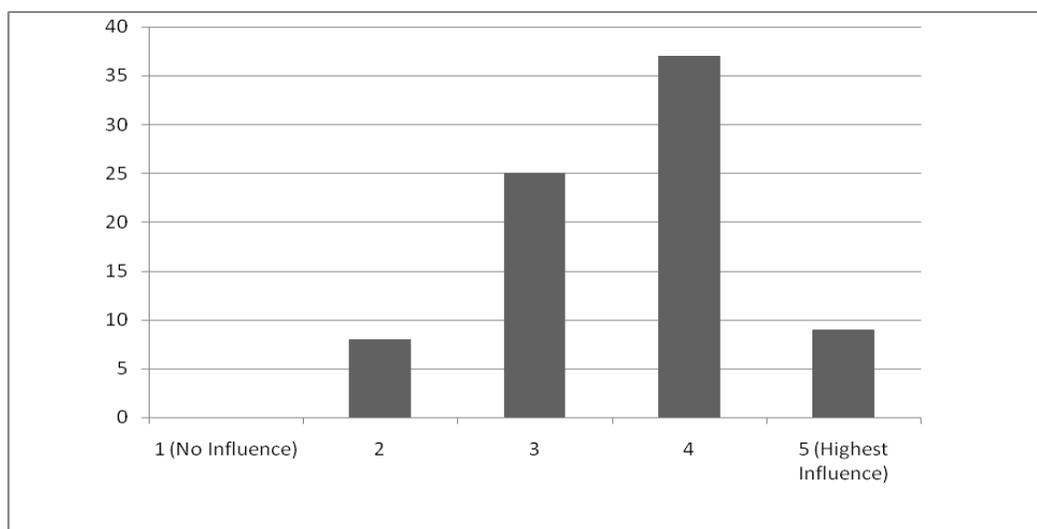
GRAPH A-1:

According to survey results 47% of teachers and administrators feel that media has a strong influence on students' desensitization and disconnectedness to violence. Although many teachers' comments refer to lack of empathy in students towards others, they feel that it is a combination of media and environment.

Question #2: What level of influence does media have on the frequency of

bullying occurrences in your school?

Level of Influence	Number of Reponses	Percentage of Responses
1 (No Influence)	3	3.90%
2	14	18.18%
3	**30**	**38.96%**
4	24	31.17%
5 (High Amount of Influence)	6	7.79%
Total	**77**	

|	
Mean	3.21
Standard Dev.	0.96
Variance	0.93

CHART A-2
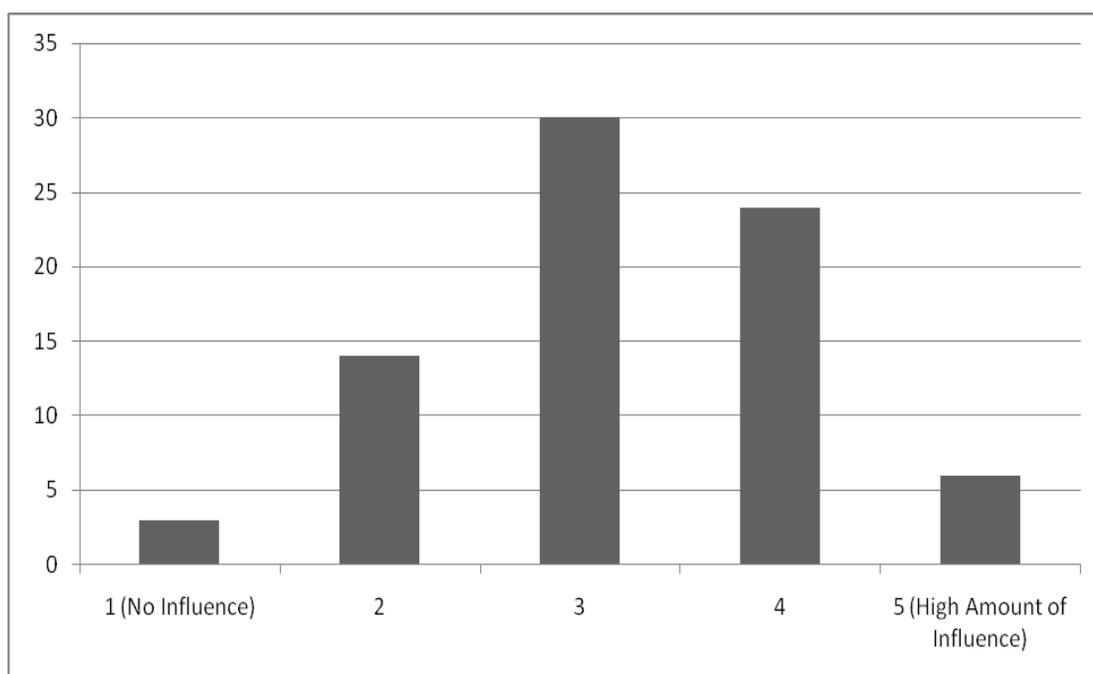
GRAPH A-2

Results indicate that 60% of survey participants feel the media does not

directly affect the frequency of bullying occurrences in their school. It appears

that the bullying tactics used by students today could be where media

influence lays, as one participant notes, "…a promotion of instant messaging

and technology."

Question #3: What level of influence do you feel tobacco and alcohol related

media have on students' behaviors?

Level of Influence	Number of Reponses	Percentage of Responses
1 (No Influence)	1	1.27%
2	15	18.99%
3	23	29.11%
4	**30**	**37.97%**
5 (High Amount of Influence)	10	12.66%
Total	**79**	

|	
Mean	3.42
Standard Dev.	0.98
Variance	0.96

CHART A-3
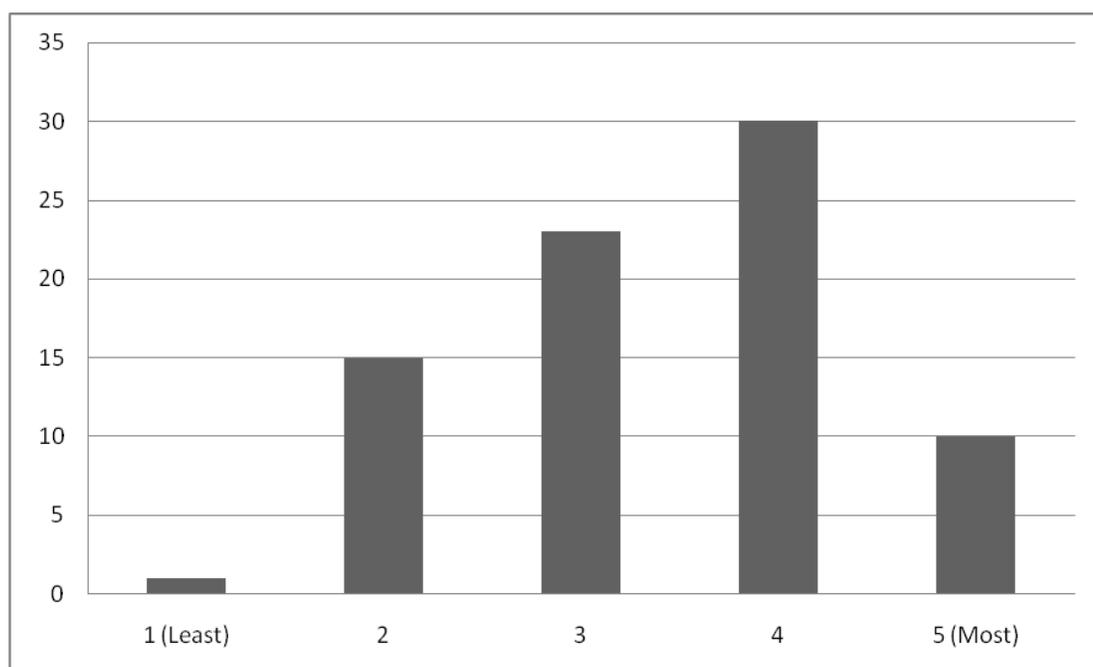
GRAPH A-3

Nearly half of all teachers and administrators surveyed feel that tobacco and

alcohol related media has a strong to high amount of influence on student

behaviors. However, it should be noted that several participants feel that

peer pressure is equally influential in this area.

Question #4: What level of influence does media have on students body image and promiscuity?

Level of Influence	Number of Reponses	Percentage of Responses
1 (No Influence)	0	0.00%
2	3	3.80%
3	6	7.59%
4	29	36.71%
5 (High Amount of Influence)	**41**	**51.90%**
Total	**79**	

|	
Mean	4.37
Standard Dev.	0.79
Variance	0.62

CHART A-4
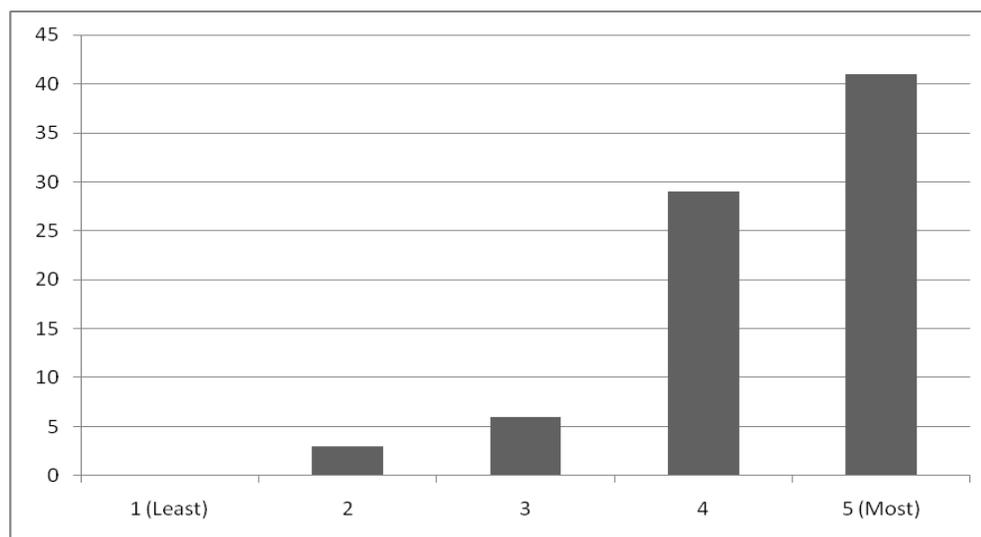
GRAPH A-4

Over 88 percent of those surveyed felt that body image and promiscuity are strongly influenced by media. This question generated the most written feedback. Most of the comments were concise in their indication of a clear connection between media and body image. Comments contained decisive language such as "especially girl/females seen as sex objects" and "without a doubt…females look to the perfect bodies portrayed in the media and are never happy with their own."

Question #5: What level of accurateness do you feel is portrayed by the

media regarding specific subjects like science and health?

Level of Influence	Number of Reponses	Percentage of Responses
1 (No Influence)	2	2.63%
2	15	19.74%
3	26	34.21%
4	**27**	**35.53%**
5 (High Amount of Influence)	6	7.89%
Total	**76**	

|	
Mean	3.26
Standard Dev.	0.96
Variance	0.92

CHART A-5
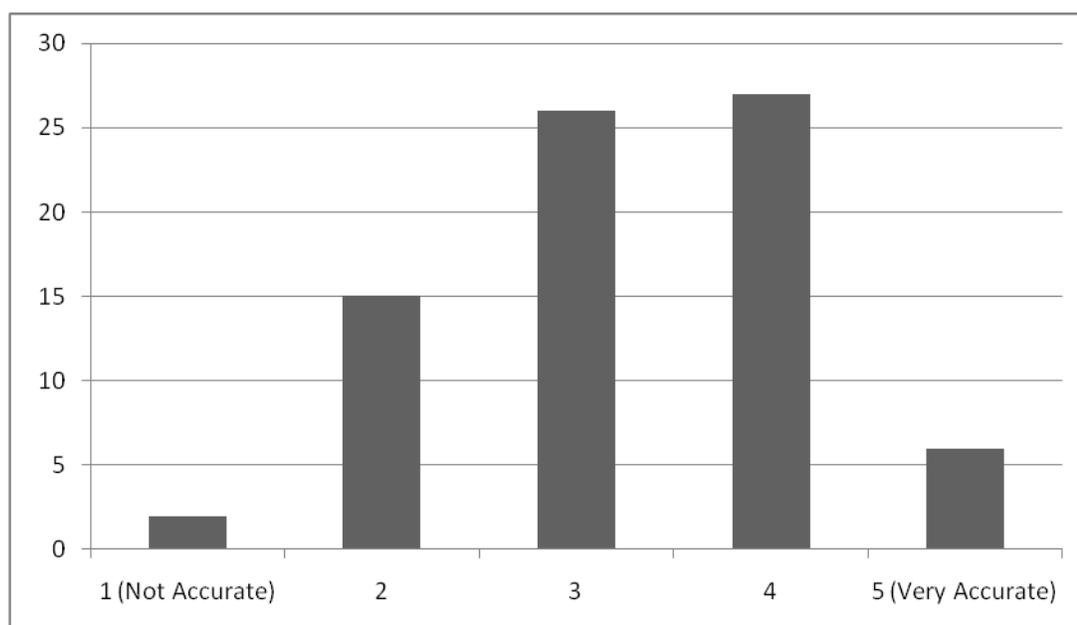
GRAPH A-5

The data suggests that teachers and administrators believe the accurateness

portrayed by media regarding specific subjects like science and health is for

the most part accurate. Comments were related mostly to the accuracy of

"Discovery channel, org, and gov's" and the unrealistic portrayals seen on

"CSI Miami, Bones and House."

Question #6: How often are strategies implemented to educate students on how to properly interpret media information?

Level of Influence	Number of Reponses	Percentage of Responses
1 (No Influence)	13	16.25%
2	**41**	**51.25%**
3	16	20.00%
4	8	10.00%
5 (High Amount of Influence)	2	2.50%
Total	**80**	

|	
Mean	2.31
Standard Dev.	0.95
Variance	0.90

CHART A-6
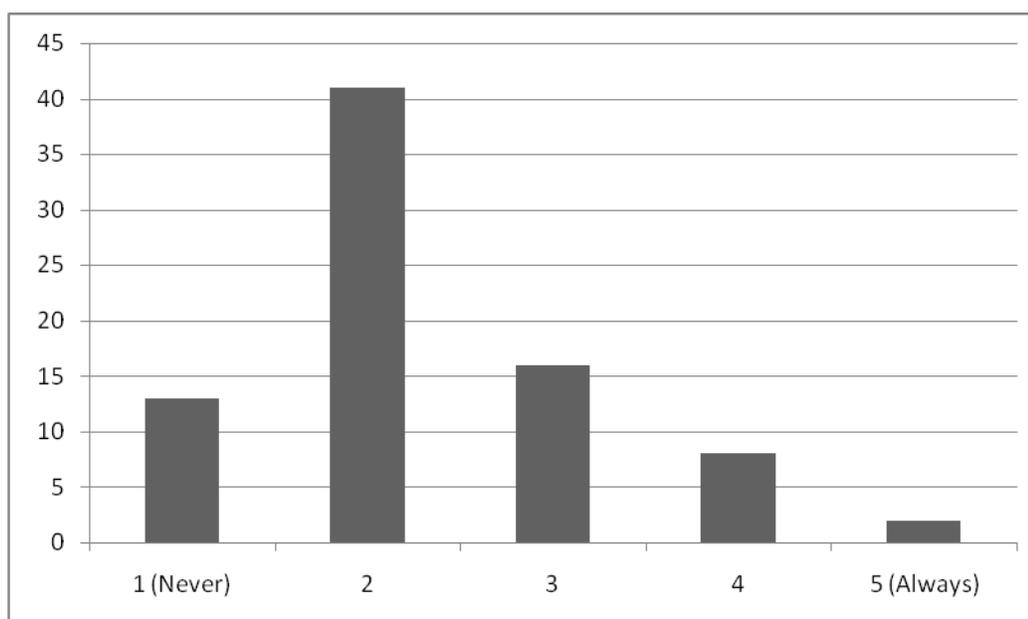
GRAPH A-6

Around 67% feel there is little attempt to implement strategies to educate students on how to properly interpret media information. Most participants commented on the low priority placed on this subject.

Question #7: What level of influence does content of student viewing have on
their behaviors?

Level of Influence	Number of Reponses	Percentage of Responses
1 (No Influence)	0	0.00%
2	0	0.00%
3	29	37.18%
4	**37**	**47.44%**
5 (High Amount of Influence)	12	15.38%
Total	**78**	

|	
Mean	3.78
Standard Dev.	0.70
Variance	0.48

CHART A-7
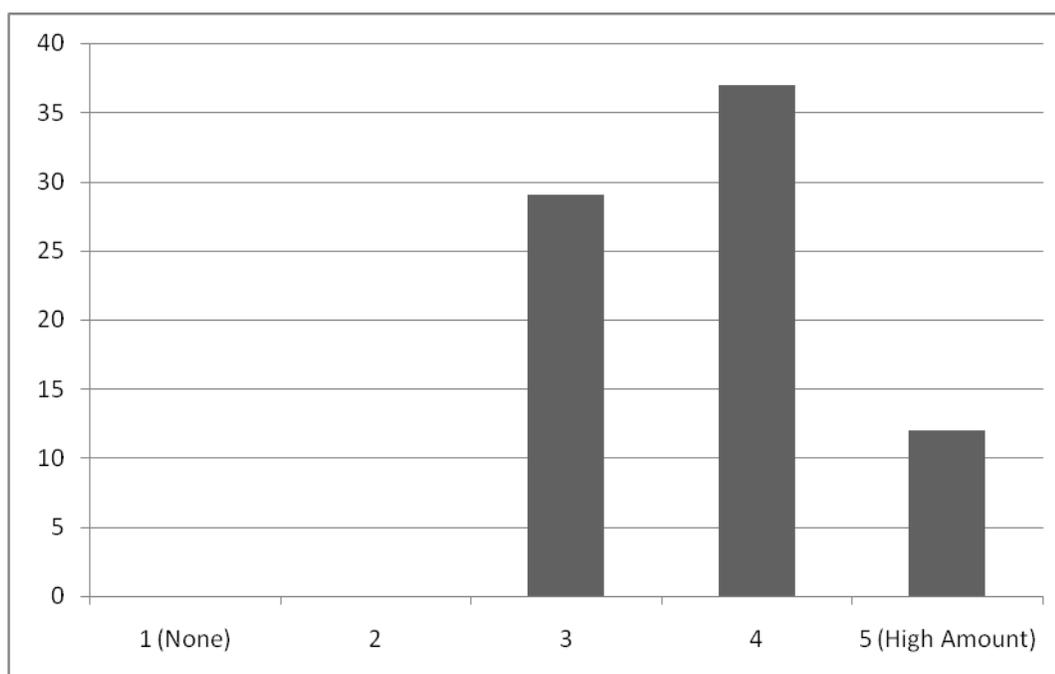
GRAPH A-7

All participants surveyed feel strongly that the content of students viewing
choices influence their behavior. Participants feel there is "pretty high
correlation" between viewing habits and behavior and that "students need to
be reminded…" that what "they watch on TV are not realistic."

Question #8: What level of influence does the media have on student obesity

levels?

Level of Influence	Number of Reponses	Percentage of Responses
1 (No Influence)	1	1.25%
2	9	11.25%
3	19	23.75%
4	**35**	**43.75%**
5 (High Amount of Influence)	16	20.00%
Total	**80**	

|	
Mean	3.70
Standard Dev.	0.96
Variance	0.92

CHART A-8
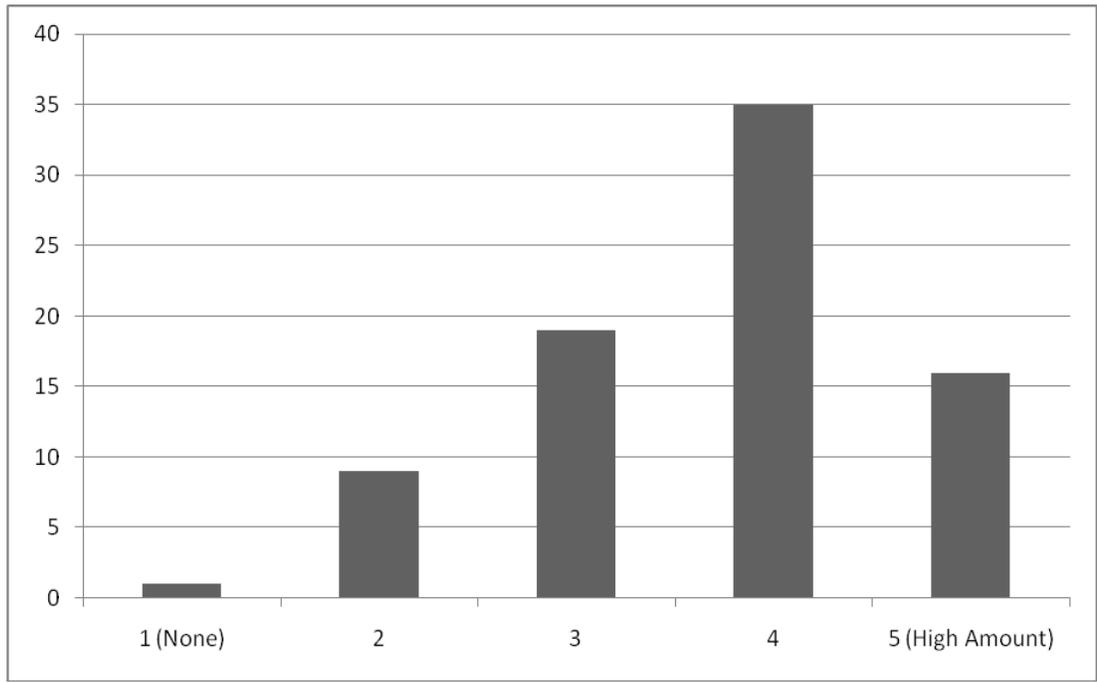
GRAPH A-8

Most teachers and administrators feel the media has some influence on

obesity levels. Many feel that media influence goes hand in hand with

parental involvement. Some participants believe that obesity occurs because

"entertainment comes from media" and "for parents it is a babysitter."

Question #9: What level of validity do you feel the Internet provides for student research projects?

Level of Influence	Number of Reponses	Percentage of Responses
1 (No Influence)	2	2.50%
2	12	15.00%
3	**32**	**40.00%**
4	27	33.75%
5 (High Amount of Influence)	7	8.75%
Total	**80**	

|	
Mean	3.31
Standard Dev.	0.92
Variance	0.85

CHART A-9
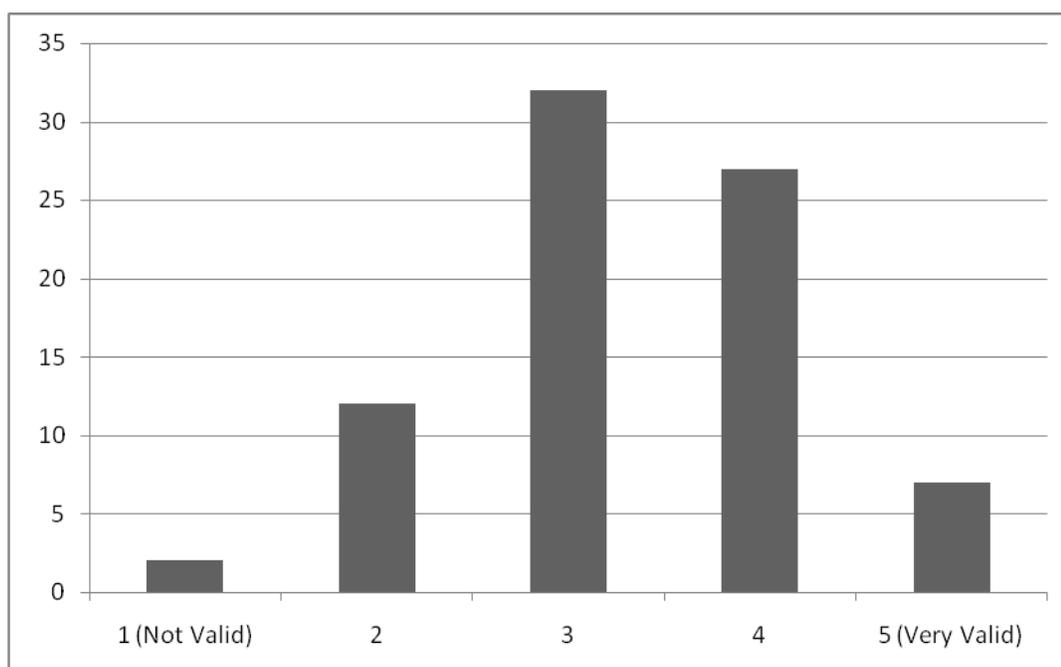
GRAPH A-9

The majority feels that the media is a valid resource for student projects as long as supervision and guidance are involved. As one comment shows " it depend on how students are trained to look for good, valid and reliable sources and how they are monitored."

Question #10: At what level do you see your students mimicking what they

observe in the media?

Level of Influence	Number of Reponses	Percentage of Responses
1 (No Influence)	2	2.53%
2	8	10.13%
3	21	26.58%
4	**33**	**41.77%**
5 (High Amount of Influence)	15	18.99%
Total	**79**	

Mean	3.65
Standard Dev.	0.99
Variance	0.98

CHART A-10
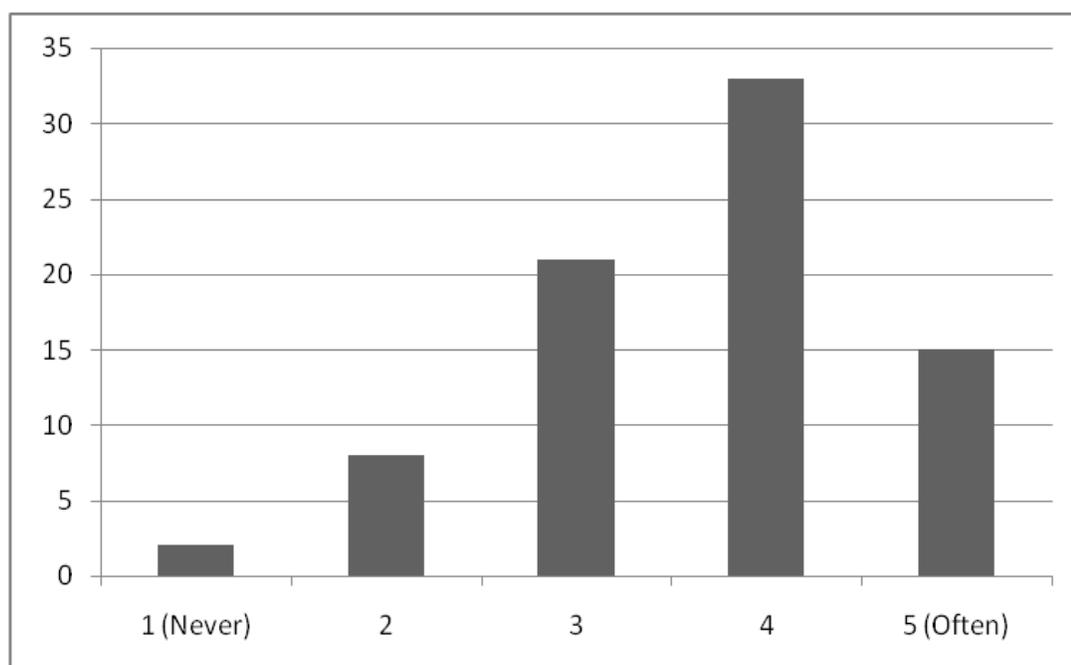
GRAPH A-10

Nearly 87% feel that the students fairly frequently mimic what they see in the

media. Some teachers have observed "…(elem. age) trying to wear high

heels to school and wearing eye makeup" and a dictation of " what to wear

and their leisure time activities."

Additional comments

Additional comments made on this survey show a concern for content and

frequency of media exposure. Many teachers and administrators seem to

approach issues as they occur. As one surveyed participant stated " I try to

ignore what can be ignored, and handle things on a case by case basis."

Discussion of the Research Question

How do teachers and administrators see the media affecting the

learning behavior of their students?

Our findings indicate that as a whole, teachers and administrators do

agree that there is a media influence on student learning behaviors. The

degree of that influence varies among respondents. The behaviors

associated with personal image and lifestyle choices are seen to be the most

influenced. When it came to how much the media affected the other areas of

this study, participants responded that possibly media influences alone were

not the cause of the behaviors. The respondents gave variables such as

home structure, guidance, and peer pressure as having a potential influence

as well. As one participant said "…Does the media affect them [the students],

or do they choose the media because of their personalities?"

Implications for Future Instructional Practices

As the result of this study, the research team devised strategies to be

implemented into the classroom to address the media impact on students.

When using the internet as a research tool, teachers need to make a

conscious effort to instruct students on proper use of the internet. This

includes providing reliable sources, as well as teaching students how to determine whether an internet site is a reliable source or not. Sites with the *.gov, .edu*, or *.org* sites tend to be governed more than the *.com* sites. When using media resources such as videos or video clips, teachers need to not only preview and edit clips for appropriate content, they also need to ensure the validity of the information being presented. Based on the data, students who may be prone to violence or bullying are those who are less likely to be involved in extracurricular activities. These students need to be mentored and guided to prevent adverse reactions to social situations. Starting as young as the lower elementary classrooms students need to be taught how magazines, television, and the internet falsify accepted behaviors and appearances. Another suggestion for programming in schools is the use of Substance Abuse programs and Anti-Bullying programs.

<div align="center">Research Recommendations</div>

We as researchers have noted that if research on this topic would to be further studied, there are areas that need to be explored to a greater degree. Although there were strong correlations between teachers' and administrators' beliefs that student behavior is affected by the media, further investigation should break "student behavior" into separate categories to determine which behaviors are specifically and to what degree affected. Suggested categories would be: 1) components that interfere with the content area and learning process, 2) physical behaviors and misbehaviors of

students in the form of acts of violence, 3) mental affects such as personal views of body image and personal choices, and 4) personal belief systems.

Summary

In this chapter, a review of literature pertaining to the media influence on student learning was reviewed. The review included literature related to violence, health, instructional strategies, television and other forms of media. The common theme across the literature is that the media makes a significant impression upon children. Children make associations from the media, sometimes correct, and sometimes incorrect. From the media, they often create altered perceptions of reality. The news, for example, is riddled with coverage of crime and war, leading children to believe the world is more violent than it really is. This leads to desensitization towards violence. Children are exposed to high amounts of sexual content throughout the media. What they are not exposed to are the consequences of or alternatives to the sexual actions. This leads to misconceptions regarding personal health, especially in the areas of sexual activity, personal image, and addictive substance. All forms of media affect student learning in some way. Students bring a variety of impressions, generated by the media, with them when they come to school. Depending on the media impression, this can hinder the education process by leading to behavior issues, self-confidence problems, health issues, or misinformation that needs to be overcome. This study showed that teachers and administrators are also seeing the same in the school systems.

Although the literature shows the media has significant negative impact on children, it also shows teachers are incorporating instructional methods to turn the negatives into positives. However, the statistics from this study show that teachers are not proactive in teaching positive media usage.

Appendix I

Journals

July 6, 2007

Carrie- Completed the CITI course on the protection of Human Research

Subjects

Pamela- Completed the CITI course on the protection of Human Research

Subjects

Justin-Completed the CITI course on the protection of Human Research

Subjects

July 7, 2007

Group-Today was our first day of class where we decided to all be in a

research group together. We also decided on the topic of "How

the media affects the learning behavior of students." We then

researched the topic separately creating themes for our

research. From there we chose a theme and were then

assigned to write up a paper on the topic, due at the next class.

July 11, 2007

Aubree-Completed the CITI course on the protection of Human Research

Subjects

July 12, 2007

Pamela-Conducted research on media's influence on health related issues.

July 14, 2007

Carrie-Conducted research on television's influence on student behaviors.

July 15, 2007-July 20, 2007

Group- Compiled research and wrote a rough draft.

July 21, 2007

Group- Group met with Dr. Valentine. Dr. Valentine informed us that the

group would consist of five members as one member could not

continue on with the class. We revised our previous

collaboration and proofread our themes as a group. We

determined sections for individuals to compose rough drafts for

Chapter 3.

Debbie-Completed the CITI course on the Protection of Human Research

Subjects

July 28, 2007 – July 30, 2007

Group-Components submitted and compiled for rough draft

July 30, 2007

Debbie-Submitted rough draft to Dr. Valentine

July 31, 2007

Debbie- Completed recommended changes through chapter 3

October 22, 2007

Aubree-I had a meeting with Dr. Valentine where we went over the IRB

application. She also sent me the application via email.

November 3, 2007

Group-We had a group meeting. We began filling out the IRB form.

November 10, 2007

Group-We completed the forms to the best of our ability. We created survey

questions as well as a consent form for the teachers and

superintendents.

November 11, 2007

Group-We had a meeting with Dr. Valentine. We went over our completed

IRB form and made minor adjustments. We also discussed how

to obtain permission from the superintendents and teachers as

well as how to conduct our survey, whether it should be via

email or paper copy. We decided on both methods because of the different relationships the group members had with the schools they were researching.

November 12, 2007

Justin-Superintendent signature at St. Regis Falls School

November 13, 2007

Debbie-Superintendent signature at Lyme Central School

November 14, 2007

Carrie-Contacted superintendent requesting permission to conduct survey at Beaver River. Permission granted.

Pamela-Meeting with Indian River School superintendent about conducting a survey at the high school.

November 18, 2007

Group-Final review and signing of IRB forms.

November 20, 2007

Aubree-Handed in the IRB form and its appendices to Dr. Valentine both via email and hardcopy.

January 19, 2008

Group-Approval from IRB granted

February 4, 2008

Debbie-Informed faculty of survey

February 5, 2008

Pamela-Met with Indian River High School principal about procedure to hand

    out surveys.

Debbie-Sent out survey email to faculty

February 12, 2008

Pamela-Handed out surveys at faculty meeting at Indian River High School

February 14, 2008

Carrie-Discussed with superintendent how she preferred survey conducted.

February 15, 2008

Pamela-Picked up survey's from Indian River High School

Debbie-All data collected from faculty

February 29- March 7

Carrie-Conducted survey at Beaver River.

Justin-Conducted survey at St. Regis Falls.

March 13, 2008

Aubree-I was informed that our data collection is complete. The group

discussed via email how we would conduct the next step of data

analysis.

March 17, 2008

Carrie-Submitted surveys into online question pro software

April 11, 2008

Pamela-Submitted surveys into online question pro software

May 11, 2008

Justin-Submitted surveys into online question pro software

June 7, 2008

Group-Analyzed data. Collaborated on completion of thesis.

Appendix II

MEDIA INFLUENCE ON STUDENT BEHAVIORS

As pertaining to this survey, media is defined as television, radio, Internet, magazines, newspapers and video games.

There are ten (10) questions to be answered based on a scale of 1 (least) to 5 (most). There is also one short answer question at the end of the survey. Please feel free to add any additional comments in the spaces provided under each question.

1.   What level of influence does the exposure to violence and violent acts in the media lead to a disconnectedness and desensitization of students' behaviors?

   1   2   3   4   5

Comments_____
            _____

2.   What level of influence does media have on the frequency of bullying occurrences in your school?

   1   2   3   4   5

Comments_____
            _____

3.   What level of influence do you feel tobacco and alcohol related media have on students' behaviors?

   1   2   3   4   5

Comments_____
            _____

4.   What level of influence does media have on students' body image and promiscuity?

   1   2   3   4   5

Comments_____
            _____

5.   What level of accurateness do you feel is portrayed by the media regarding specific subjects, like science and health? i.e. *Discovery* channel and *Moonbear* by F. Asch

   1   2   3   4   5

Comments_____
            _____

6.   How often are strategies implemented to educate students on how to properly interpret media information?

      1   2   3   4   5

Comments_____
      _____

7.   What level of influence does content of student viewing have on their behaviors?

      1   2   3   4   5

Comments_____
      _____

8.   How strong of an influence does television have on student obesity levels?

      1   2   3   4   5

Comments_____
      _____

9.   What level of validity do you feel the Internet provides the student researcher?

      1   2   3   4   5

Comments_____
      _____

10.   At what level do you see your students mimicking what they observe in media?

      1   2   3   4   5

Comments_____
      _____

How do you, as a teacher, handle the use of media by students?

_____

_____

Number of years in the teaching profession: _____

Thank you for participating in our survey. Your response is greatly appreciated.

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