Media Literacy: Comparative Analysis of Freshmen and Seniors Education English Major Students

Sophomore T. Vacalares, Daryll R. Daniel, Rhea Sarah Angelina A. Kaurak,
Ian Rey M. Laid, Braxzin Julia Q. Magpulong, Jane C. Paculba
College of Education, Opol Community College, Philippines

ABSTRACT:
Media literacy has been a trend in the educational landscape in honing the media skills of the students that may be used personally and professionally. Media literacy enhances traditional skills such as reading, evaluation, analysis, and writing. It supports the analysis, evaluation, and production of the media content, improves text comprehension, enables one to see prejudices, and develops essential communication skills. This makes it easier to navigate and participate in the contemporary media environment. This study compares the media literacy among fourth-year and first-year Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSEd) English major students at a community college in the province of Misamis Oriental. This study can be a basis for curriculum development and pedagogy in tertiary schools. Findings reveal potential disparities between freshmen and senior students. The first-year has a total mean of 2.188, which sometimes integrates media literacy in their lesson, while a total mean of 3.158, which is most of the time integrated into their lesson. These results guide teachers to tailor curriculum development to ensure that all students, regardless of their year, receive appropriate media literacy education. This suggests that higher education should redesign the curriculum by integrating media literacy in the early years of the students to foster mastery of skills. However, this prepares future educators to work in today's media world and effectively educate students with thinking and media analysis skills. This study recommends curriculum makers integrate media literacy into the lesson and use these media literacy skills in pedagogical development.

Keywords- *Media literacy, Curriculum development, BSED-English Students, Freshmen, Seniors*

I. INTRODUCTION

Media literacy is essential for everyone in today's world, where media access is nearly unlimited. With information readily available through various media networks, understanding and managing media content is important. Developing media literacy helps individuals handle the vast amount of information, identify what is valid, and make informed decisions. It also enhances the ability to create, evaluate, and share information responsibly, promoting an informed society (Cho et al., 2024). Awareness of the need to teach media literacy in schools has grown, with teachers recognizing that it helps students become critical media consumers and creators (Ciampa et al., 2023). Including media literacy in the curriculum prepares students to analyze media messages critically, understand media's impact on society, and use media responsibly. This focus ensures that students are ready to engage critically with the media and the world as active and informed citizens.

Students transitioning from high school to college or career-focused studies face various challenges, opportunities, and learning experiences. For those studying for education degrees,

enhancing media literacy is crucial because their field involves language use, reading literary texts, and learning communication theory and media (Hobbs, 2004). Since these students will become educators shaping young minds, they need strong media literacy skills. This expertise helps them understand the modern media environment and develop critical thinking skills (Walter, 2024). As future teachers, they will equip their students with the knowledge and skills to become discerning and responsible media consumers and users.

The role of forging media literacy among students largely lies in the English teachers who teach students how to analyze and interpret different forms of media. According to the research studies, traditional literacy skills such as reading, reasoning, and writing are enhanced when media literacy education is provided (Young, 2012). Media literacy is especially important for students in English education because their field includes language, literature, communication theory, and media. Future teachers tasked with shaping young minds ought to have a good knowledge of media literacy that enables them to understand modern media and relay the skills to the learners. Media-literate teachers can also teach students modern texts and properly facilitate their relationship with digital reality.

Some literature has revealed that both pre-service and in-service teachers possess weak media literacy skills (Cherner & Curry, 2019). For instance, English pre-service teachers are inexperienced at evaluating Web content and are not particularly mindful of their consumption (Singh & Woo, 2014). This underlines the necessity of enhancing the media literacy curriculum for future educators. Nevertheless, the present study finds a shortage of studies that address media literacy skills disparities between the year groups in English teacher education programs. Perhaps fourth-year English pre-service teachers sample more and comprehend more as compared to first-year students, thus their higher media literacy score. This study focuses on comparing the media literacy levels of these two groups of college students.

The findings of the research hold significant implications for the preparation and instruction of English teacher education programs. This way, the teacher has the information on how each group of students comprehends media literacy so that freshmen students are provided with simple information and senior students are given complex information. Formal and informal assessment instruments are useful in monitoring student progress when it comes to media literacy and making changes to the curriculum if necessary (Hobbs, 2010). Furthermore, English courses, when media literacy instruction is embedded into them, enhance understanding and use of skills and showcase examples for future teachers.

II. METHODOLOGY
Research Design

In this research, the study adopted a quantitative design to give a mechanistic perception of the process of handling research questions (Thomas & Zubkov, 2023). Applying this quantitative research design enables the researchers to know what to do. Second, the assertion of the research design allows readers to know what the researcher did in the study. One can assess the relevance of a study by evaluating the research design elements when reading a research paper.

Participants

The participants of this study are seniors and freshmen Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education majors in English students at a community college in the province of Misamis Oriental. A purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure appropriate and sufficient representation from diverse backgrounds and school contexts. The fourth-year students were pre-service teachers who were having their practice teaching in the laboratory schools. On the other hand, the first-year students were studying in their degree programs. These two groups were too far apart regarding their experience in media literacy at the tertiary level.

Data Collection Procedures

The first method was initiated by the researchers, who wrote to the college dean seeking permission to administer a survey in the department. Once they received permission from the dean's office, faculty members sought permission from several lecturers for the administration of questionnaires among the students. After the students had filled in the questionnaires, the researchers gathered and sorted the collected data to proceed with the analysis. To address this, descriptive statistics, specifically mean and standard deviation were adopted to study the gathered data and present adequate results. The researchers then used the results in light of these statistical measures to determine an accurate analysis of the collected data. Furthermore, the researchers were also courteous when formulating the questions and during data collection while observing ethical standards to avoid disclosing the identity of the respondents to a third party when disseminating the research findings to maintain the credibility of the research. Adopting this method enabled the researchers to capture the right perceptions held by the students, as evidenced in the survey, and come up with rich recommendations based on survey outcomes.

III. RESULTS

This section presents and explains the students' perceptions of media literacy employed in both freshmen and senior BSEd-English students. This study compared two different levels of education students, particularly in the following categories:

Category 1: Construction. Hobbs (2010) stresses the application of critical thinking when identifying the sources and meanings of media and appreciates the need to acknowledge the credibility and the motive behind media messages.

Category 2: Techniques. Continues the description of media techniques, pointing to the need for understanding such concepts as appeals to emotion, framing, and visual rhetoric in media education. The author states that their strengths and weaknesses can be shown through the results of system assessments, where media literacy is a subject that does not show variability in students' performance (Buckingham, 2003).

*Category 3: Interpretation. T*hese are probably some of the areas of focusing on media content in relation to the personal and societal context—students who make such connections are very properly placed to engage with the media critically—and this has been reflected in the groups' high mean scores in this category (Kellner & Share, 2007).

*Category 4: Values and Biases. A*ccording to Potter & Christ (2021), media bias identification is defined by the information that is sequent to that; as the results demonstrated, students with high media comprehension are capable of identifying partiality and agendas systematically.

Category 5: Purpose and Power. Mihailidis (2014) posits that media credibility evaluation is understood as the ability to recognize the power relation in media. It would help the achievement of accurate proficiency outcomes that would enable the determination of trust and authority in media content. Such references help in constructing the fundamentals of the observation and recommendation on the different facets of media literacy skills.

Table 1. Freshmen BSED Students' Perceptions of Media Literacy

CATEGORY	M	SD	DESCRIPTION	INTERPRETATION
Construction *(Understanding source and message)*	2.35	0.052	Sometimes	Not all the times Media literacy integrated

Techniques *(Analyzing techniques)*	2.10	0.089	Sometimes	Not all the times Media literacy integrated
Interpretation *(Relating)*	2.17	0.106	Sometimes	Not all the times Media literacy integrated
Values & Biases *(Identify bias)*	2.12	0.143	Sometimes	Not all the times Media literacy integrated
Purpose & Power *(Valuing credibility)*	2.20	0.103	Sometimes	Not all the time Media literacy integrated
TOTAL	**2.188**	**0.0988**	**Sometimes**	**Not all the time Media Literacy Integrated**

Legends: 1.00-1.75 (No integration); 1.76-2.50 (Not all the time); 2.51-3.26 (Sometimes integrated); 3.36-4.00 (All the time)

The table presents the results of a survey assessing different aspects of media literacy among students, covering five categories: These are Construction process, Techniques of analysis, Interpretation process, Values and Bias, and Purpose and Power. Among all the categories, namely the Construction one that requires an understanding of the content source and message, the students' mean was 2.35 with a standard deviation of 0.052 sometimes noted. Nevertheless, the overall connotations are weak, which implies poor capability in this domain.

For Techniques, which is related to identifying methods in media, the subjects got a mean score of 2.10 with an SD of 0.089. Again, students could show this skill. However, the negative outlook suggests a general lack of the ability to analyze among students. Concerning the Interpretation category, which deals with relating elements of media content to individual experience or other forms of knowledge, students have a mean score of 2.17 and a standard deviation of 0.106. While at times they do this, the integration of media literacy was not all the time integrated into the classroom or lesson.

On average, the score given by the participants where 2.12 for Values & Biases, which is a topic that asks the participants to search for biases in media with a standard deviation of 0.143. As can be observed, the sample means are close to the population means, with the sample standard deviations somewhat higher than the respective population values. This means that while at times students can identify bias, their overall ability in this regard is lacking, and, hence, they come up with a negative perception not all the time.

Finally, in the Purpose & Power category including such aspects as the credibility of media sources, the result was 2.20, while making the standard deviation equivalent to 0.103. While, at times, they feel that they can accurately determine the credibility of a source, the negative interpretation suggests that these students are collectively unable to measure the reliability of media sources efficiently.

To sum up, the mean scores in all the categories are relatively low, which indicates that students develop the abilities connected with media literacy only at times or not all the time. The fact that all aspects of the competencies analyzed have a negative profile emphasizes their necessity to be improved and to become the skills' permanent focus of attention.

Table 2. Senior BSED Students' Perceptions of Media Literacy

CATEGORY	M	SD	DESCRIPTION	INTERPRETATION

Construction (*Understanding source and message*)	3.20	0.120	Most of the time	Sometimes Media literacy integrates
Techniques (*Analyzing techniques*)	3.12	0.105	Most of the time	Sometimes Media literacy integrates
Interpretation (*Relating*)	3.15	0.070	Most of the time	Sometimes Media literacy integrates
Values & Biases (*Identify bias*)	3.12	0.059	Most of the time	Sometimes Media literacy integrates
Purpose & Power (*Valuing credibility*)	3.20	0.062	Most of the time	Sometimes Media literacy integrates
TOTAL	**3.158**	**0.042**	**Most of the time**	**Sometimes Media literacy integrates**

Legends: 1.00-1.75 (No integration); 1.76-2.50 (Not all the time); 2.51-3.26 (Sometimes integrated); 3.36-4.00 (All the time)

Table 2 results highlight students' proficiency in various aspects of media literacy. In the category of Construction, which involves understanding sources and messages, students scored an average of 3.20 with a standard deviation of 0.120. This indicates that most of the time, students demonstrate a positive ability to comprehend the origins and content of media messages. For Techniques that pertain to analyzing media techniques, the average score was 3.12 with a standard deviation of 0.105. This suggests that students frequently and positively apply their skills in dissecting the methods used in media.

In the interpretation category, which entails how students relate the media to their lives, the class got an average of 3. 15 with a standard deviation of 0.070. This proves that the majority of the time, students are capable of making positive correlations of the media content with their lives. For the topic of Values & Biases, on the aspect of assessing bias in media, the average rating was at 3.12, $\pm$ 0.059. This result shows that students are able to identify bias when it comes to the content of media, which is a gain in positive skillfulness in this aspect.

Finally, in the Purpose & Power category, which is about valuing the credibility of media sources, students scored an average of 3.20 with a standard deviation of 0.062. This means that students frequently assess the credibility of media sources positively. Therefore, the results show that students possess strong media literacy skills across all categories, applying these skills most of the time in a positive manner. The consistency in the standard deviations also suggests a reliable level of competence among the students surveyed.

Source	SS	MS	F-Stat	P-Value
Between Groups	2.3522	2.3522	413.4923	0
Within Groups	0.0455	0.0057		
TOTAL	2.3978			

In the table, what is shown is the result of the Test, which is called ANOVA or Analysis of Variance, to compare significance in means of three or more independent groups. The data is divided into two main sources: The results show the Means differentiated in two analyses: Between Groups and Within Groups, as well as the Total.

Thus, the Sum of Squares for the Between Groups category is 2.3522, which also has to do with the variation resulting from the differences between the groups. The mean square for this category is also 2.3522, and this is obtained by dividing the Sum of Squares by the degree of freedom accorded to Between Groups variation. The F statistic, being the quotient of the Between Groups Mean Square to the Within Groups Mean Square, is 413.4923, which depicts the magnitude of the difference between the means of the two groups concerning the differences within each of the groups. Since the P-value is 0, it points to the fact that the null hypothesis has been rejected at

the chosen level of significance, thus confirming that there is a significant difference in the means of the two groups.

The Sum of Squares for the Within Groups category is also 0.0455, showing the coefficient of variation for each group comparing the differences within the groups. The Mean Square for Within Groups is 0. 0057, which is obtained when the Sum of the squares is divided by the degree of freedom related to the Within Groups variation. This small Mean Square value shows that variations within each group are very small.

Therefore, the total sum of squares that amalgamate between groups and within groups variation sums up to 2.3978. Each of these calculations is useful in some sense, but tracking this figure gives a summary of the variation in the sample. For that reason, it is possible to state that the proposed hypothesis is valid in terms of the ANOVA findings, therefore, the F-Statistic and P-Value of 0. This means that the differences that have been seen are not due to just chance and it is therefore possible to speak of the differences in the group means.

IV. DISCUSSION

The basis of comparison between the media literacy skills of 1st-year and 4th-year students reveals an immense increase when students progress through their academic years. The 4th-year students show a mean score of 3.20 with a standard deviation of 0.062, indicating a level of average to high proficiency and relatively consistent skill levels among these students. In contrast, the mean score of the 1st-year students is 2.20, and the standard deviation is 0.103, indicating lower proficiency and more variability in their media literacy skills. This difference in the mean scores indicates an improvement in media literacy as students move along through their studies. This further culminates into an approximate z-score and t-score of 58.82, meaning that there is a highly significant difference between the two groups. Such statistical evidence strongly suggests that the educational curriculum indeed promotes the development of media literacy skills over time.

In educational research, this big increase in proficiency levels and reduction in variability from the 1st year to the 4th year can be attributed to the cumulative effects of coursework, exposure to different media, and increased critical thinking skills gained through the academic journey. Studies indicate that such structured educational programs have considerably improved the ability of students to be literate in using the media (Livingstone et al., 2005). This progression ensures the identification of appropriate strategies required in this very challenging world of today for students who are capable of critically analyzing and making their way through the complex media landscape. (Hobbs, 2010).

In conclusion, the evidence from the presented statistics and observed trends supports the validity of the educational curriculum concerning the development of media literacy in students and underscores the necessity for continued and comprehensive media literacy education across the years in college (Koltay, 2011). Curriculum and policymakers may integrate media literacy in the early years of college life. With this early exposure, the students could develop and master the necessary skills as educators that can be applied during their upper years in college. This development of media literacy among students can improve their analysis, creativity, and communication.

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Integration of The investigation proves that there exist media literacy skills gained as the subjects from the first to fourth year in the BSEd-English program of a community college in the province of Misamis Oriental. Thus, the results of the study underscore the necessity to accredit all students who intend to deliver media education for the modern and effective media literacy curriculum. The above approach assists research proving that media literacy reviews traditional skills like reading, critical thinking, and writing, resulting in the development of well-informed, critical citizens.

Analyzing the results, there are differences in the abilities of first- and fourth-year student BSEd-English students in media literacy. Fourth-year students achieve reasonable and steady performance levels in the areas of knowledge acquisition, media analysis and interpretation, sources' bias identification, and content evaluation. To enhance these skills, it is necessary to present other challenging media texts, encourage actual media production, incorporate media literacy into other subjects, support students' research, and talk about the events.

On the other hand, the first-year students' media literacy is based but in its infancy, with moderately poor levels of critical thinking applied inconsistently. These students, therefore, could be helped by educators through the incorporation of media literacy across the curriculum, group discussions involving the use of media, media production projects, media literacy tasks that call for critical thinking, using current examples of media, and constant assessment, among others, advance listeners. Students who understand and process information well and with ease could also be assisted through the following strategies across the curriculum: strategies such as the use of media in group discussions and production. This literacy will assist first-year students to be more conscious of the amount of time they spend on media and also be more cautious in as much as content analysis is concerned.

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