The following faculty members have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content, and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Education, with a major in Curriculum and Instruction.

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ABSTRACT

There is a strong divide between the literacies educators are teaching students in the classroom and the twenty-first century literacy skills students need. While the definition for literacy is constantly changing it currently refers to anything that is either visual or auditory that can be used to make meaning (Wissman & Costello, 2014). Despite this the current education system focuses primarily on reading and writing skills (Shaw, 2014; Smith, 2014). In order to address this problem, this study focused on the history of multimodal literacy, how it is currently being used in classroom, opposition to its uses, and ways to expand multimodal literacy in education. This study examined two research questions. First, does incorporating multimodal literacy into the English classroom make lessons more engaging and meaningful? Second, does multimodal literacy help retention of knowledge? The participants in this study were 33 high school students enrolled in junior level English during 2016. The results were compared to 2014 and 2015 baseline data. Data was collected through regular classroom assessments and student surveys. This data lead to the following themes: twenty-first century literacy, student engagement, and meaningful learning experiences. These themes will help educators understand how to effectively incorporate twenty-first century literacy skills in a way that engages students and produces meaningful learning experiences.

Keywords: Multimodal Literacy, Graphic Novels, Comics, Film, Video Games, and Print
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Defining Literacy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1 Defining Multimodal Literacy</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 History and Current uses of Multimodal Literacy</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1 Graphic Novels</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2 Comics</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.3 Film</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.4 Video Games</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.5 Pedagogy</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Introduction</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Research Design</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Setting</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Participants</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Instrumentation</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6 Procedures</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.1 Video Game Instruction</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.2 Documentary</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.3 Literary Term Comic Strip</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7 Data Collection</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8 Data Analysis</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. RESULTS</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Quantitative Data</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Qualitative Data</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. DISCUSSION</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Discussion of Results</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Limitations and Weaknesses</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 Implications</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4 Future Research</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5 Conclusion</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDICES</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Literary Term Assessments</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Common Core State Standards addressing Multimodal Literacy</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Divorce Corp. and Persuasive Techniques</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Literary Term Comic Strip Worksheet</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Student Comic Strip Examples</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Student Responses to Questionnaire</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. American Literature Literary Term Annotation Example</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Something is wrong with American teenagers: they are spending almost two hours and thirty minutes watching television daily but only picking up a book for entertainment eight minutes every day (United States Department of Labor, 2016). Years of consistently low test scores seem to show that the true culprit of the decline of our students’ education is popular culture. Many teachers maintain that students are spending too much free time engaging in video games, television, movies, and lower forms of reading that have no literary value such as comics (Newkirk, 2006). However, the true culprit behind declining literacy in adolescents might not be popular culture, but rather a disconnect between the type of literacy employed in classrooms and the type of literacy students use in their daily lives and need for their life outside of the classroom. Currently, the education system’s focus on literacy encompasses both verbal and written language; recently, more emphasis has been put on speaking and listening. This system, however, puts many students at a distinct disadvantage because not all students excel at these two types of literacy (Shaw, 2014; Smith, 2014). We have entered into “The Age of Images” where “the primary literacy of the twenty-first century will be visual: pictures, graphics, images of every kind” (Low, 2012, p. 370).

It is in this Age of Images where multimodal literacy, literacy that is not limited to only the modes of reading and writing print text, is becoming increasingly important for success. Many researchers and educators have begun to recognize the importance of studying how multimodal literacy works in classrooms by studying how it can help prepare students for the real world by acquiring 21st Century literacy skills (Smith, 2014). However, a majority of their
research focuses on language acquisition and rote memorization of vocabulary words in younger children or children with special needs (Alshaiji, 2015; Sipe & Brightman, 2009; Wissman & Costello, 2014.) A number of other studies focus on multimodal literacy at the college level (Dukerly-Bean & Bean, 2015; Garcia-Martinez, 2014; Kim, 2016). There is also a strong need for multimodal literacy only to be explored at the high school level, which focuses on more than rote memorization especially application of knowledge. Most of the literature surrounding multimodal literacy focuses on one type of literacy (either video games or graphic novels), but does not look at using a combination of these literacies to engage more students (Brannon, 2012; Low, 2012; Newkirk, 2006). The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of using multimodal literacy when teaching literary terms in junior level English classes. There are two research questions that the study will answer. First, does incorporating multimodal literacy into the English classroom make lessons more engaging and meaningful? Second, does multimodal literacy help retention of knowledge?
Defining Literacy

“What is literacy?” seems like a simple question. In reality it is actually a complex question with an ever changing answer. If this question were posed a mere 20 years ago the answer would have been whole language (Leland & Harste, 1994). This movement in learning recognizes that students are growing up in a world where they are constantly “surrounded by print” before they know how to read (Goodman & Goodman, 1990, p. 223). The role of the school is to create a literate environment for students that is meaningful; the role of the teacher is to help students understand how the literacy in their school environment connects to the literacy of the world. In order for students to be self-motivated to learn to read and write, they must understand that these are useful life skills with real world application. The idea of whole language originates from the late 1880s with Comenius, who was one of the first to bring images into learning and advocate for real world applications in education (Goodman & Goodman, 1990).

Leland and Harste argue for a new definition of literacy, one that moves away from the idea of “whole language” to the idea of “whole literacy” (1994, p. 344). “Whole literacy” is being able to recognize the relationship between complex ideas and interpret the ideas in multiple ways either through language, images, sound, or any other sign system. Under this definition of literacy anyone who is able to navigate the world using sign systems is literate. For example, a student who is not able to read the word “stop” but is still able to recognize that a red sign that is a hexagon means “stop” is literate. Furthermore, they are able to use this existing
knowledge and to make meaning of other signs and come to the conclusion that all red traffic signs mean stop in some sort of context. This evolution from Comenius’ original ideas into whole language and into the definition for whole literacy that Leland and Harste proposed in “Multiple ways of knowing: Curriculum in a new key” in 1994 has birthed a new type of literacy: multimodal literacy.

Incorporating multimodal literacy into classrooms has become increasingly important. As the world becomes increasingly digital, schools will begin relying on technology heavily to educate students; although, as Bomer explains teachers do not have to use technology in order to teach multimodal literacy. In fact, a common mistake teachers make is using new technology to teach more traditional types of literacy. Bomer states, “Teachers need to know how to think beyond the device and to understand the practice” (Bomer, 2011). Smith (2014) argues the standards that most districts in the United States, rely on revolve around reading and writing; although, speaking and listening are part of the standards and are becoming more important in past years. However, while speaking and listening have received more attention in past years, many schools and districts continue to overlook these standards (Palmer, 2014). The state of Kansas for example included listening as a portion of its state assessment during 2014 and 2015, but during the summer of 2016 they decided to remove the listening portion from the 2016 state assessment (KSDE, 2016). While the standards may take years to change in order to truly meet students’ needs, teachers are still capable of teaching multimodal literacy to keep students engaged and to help prepare students more effectively for life after education (Smith, 2014). A list of the standards that address multimodal literacy are included in appendix B.
Defining Multimodal Literacy

Cope and Kalantzis (2000) define multimodal literacy as: “written-linguistic modes of meaning [which] are part and parcel of visual, audio, and spatial patterns of meaning” (p. 5). Smith (2014) expands on this definition explaining that multimodal literacy can be, “film, images, sounds, games, social media, or any other form of communication not traditionally addressed in the English classroom” (p.6). Eisner defines multimodal beautifully when he states, as quoted by Wissman and Costello (2014), “Literacy itself can be thought of not as limited to what the tongue can articulate but what the mind can grasp. Thus in this sense dance, music, and the visual arts are languages through which both meaning and mind are promoted” (p. 104). Over the years other authors, such as Smith (2014) and Eisner, as cited in Wissman and Costello (2014), have refined the definition to be more specific, but also more inclusive. Smith, Eisner, and Costello’s definitions are a dramatic shift from how Cope and Kalantzis defined literacy in 2000 in a broad and unspecific way. Now, multimodal literacy refers to anything that is either visual or auditory that can be used to make meaning whether that be a ballet dance or a funny picture online or a traditional print text based book or anything in between (Wissman & Costello, 2014). Multimodal literacy currently only refers to two of the five senses, sight and sound; however, since the definition for multimodal literacy is constantly shifting and changing it is likely that the definition will eventually encompass all five senses.

History and Current uses of Multimodal Literacy in Classrooms

Many teachers may be reluctant to incorporate multimodal literacy into their classroom because they either believe printed text (textbooks, novels, poems, etc.) to be superior to other forms of literacy or they believe that new technology and media is simply a fad that will only be relevant for a brief period of time. Furthermore, some teachers believe that since students already
pursue these types of literacy in their free time, then class time is better spent on traditional modes of literacy.

A study from the US Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics takes a closer look at how free time is spent. People ages 15 to 19 spent on average only 8 minutes a day reading for pleasure while spending 1.3 hours a day on the computer. When teenagers are on the computer a large part of their time is spent on the internet using social media to communicate with others and build their digital persona. Teenagers who are using social media are relying on more than just print based text, they are also “developing a fluency in expressing themselves through multiple types of digital media – including photos, music and video” (Lenhart and Madden, 2007).

Interestingly enough, older citizens, 75-years-old and up, spent 1.1 hours a day reading and only 20 minutes a day on the computer. The data were also analyzed looking at levels of education; not surprisingly, those who have a bachelor’s degree or higher read the most and those who do not have a high school diploma read the least. What these statistics demonstrate is that there is a slight disconnect between the older generation, who have a college education, and the younger generation who are currently working their way through the education system. Teachers, who fit into the first category tend to read more print text and have successfully gone through an educational system that focused primarily on print text, therefore, they might not see the purpose of incorporating multimodal literacy into their classroom. Hesterman (2011) proposes an alternative theory as to why some teachers are reluctant to engage in these new forms of literacy; teachers are not as confident when it comes to using new technologies and are reluctant to incorporate something that they know little about but their students are experts on. Refusing to incorporate multimodal literacy into the classroom creates a gap between the literacy
students encounter at school and the literacy they choose to interact with at home. Palmer explains this gap by stating, “We probably underuse diverse media in our classrooms. We definitely fail to teach all students how to analyze the construction of multimedia messages…” (2014, p. 71). When teachers fail to acknowledge the forms of literacy students interact with at home such as movies, graphic novels, comics, and video games, it hurts students’ overall school performance (Dempster, 2016; United States Department of Labor, 2016; Low, 2012; Newkirk, 2006).

Simply ignoring students’ need for adequate 21st century literacy skills can be harmful to all students. As previously stated the current education system’s focus on literacy encompasses both verbal and written language; recently, more emphasis has been put on speaking and listening. This system, however, puts many students at a distinct disadvantage because not all students are successful at these two types of literacy, notably English language learners. Simply focusing on only two types of literacy does not give an accurate measure of what students are capable of outside of the classroom (Shaw, 2014; Smith, 2014).

There is an increasing global awareness of the need to address twenty-first century literacy in the classroom. Australia’s school standards, for example, require teachers to use Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the classroom to help support students’ literacy needs (Oakley, Howitt, Garwood, & Durack, 2013). Teachers in Israeli schools now receive intensive training on how to implement ICTs into their classrooms. These trainings are implemented from elementary teachers up to high school teachers and last two years. The trainers walk through each step of implementation and require the teachers to design a project for their students that implements ICTs. This specific approach to ICT training helps teachers properly implement new technologies in an educational way that helps benefit the students.
The Sri Lanka government is also implementing ICTs into their education system, but are experiencing more issues because they serve such a large population of students. Before the implementation of ICT training in 2012, a majority of Sri Lankan educational technology was focused on lesson presentation such as a digital slide show. Sri Lanka is implementing ICT training by specifically training preservice teachers. They chose preservice teachers since earlier programs were unsuccessful because of teacher attitude towards implementing new technologies (Tondeur, et al., 2016).

Educators who support and advocate for more multimodal approaches in the class argue that multimodal literacy “bridges the gap between traditional school-based literacies and real world contexts, and thus increases student motivation and learning” (Brannon, 2012, p. 38). However, American teachers are encountering restrictions, such as little to no instruction on how to incorporate speaking and listening, scripted curricula or conservative standards that focus on reading and writing print text only, and they must find an appropriate balance of meeting these curriculum guides and standards while still meeting the realistic needs of the students. Teachers who are aware of the different types of literacies students interact with at home, try to incorporate these types of literacies into relevant and meaningful learning experiences in the classroom (Palmer, 2016 and Sanders & Albers, 2010). The remaining portion of this literature review will explore the ways teachers are incorporating multimodal literacies into everyday classrooms, while still meeting curriculum standards, student interest, and student literacy needs. It will also explore the research that supports the benefits of multimodal literacy and opposition teachers have faced when incorporating multimodal literacy into their classrooms.
Graphic novels are a specific form of literature that originated from comics. Graphic novels are defined as a form because they include all types of genres: romance, science fiction, biographies, etc. (Tabachnick, 2009; Cole, 2009). Tabachnick (2009) defines graphic novels as, “an extended comic book that treats nonfictional as well as fictional plots and themes with the depth and subtlety that we have come to expect of traditional novels and extended nonfictional [print] texts” (p.2). The first graphic novel is credited to Frans Masereel with his woodcutting book Passionate Journey that was published, without words, in 1919. Graphic novels entered higher education in the 1990s; however, it has taken 100 years to gain enough popularity and recognition to be included in education at the high school level (Tabachnick, 2009). While graphic novels are slowly entering the high school level, Carter (2007) argues that graphic novels are just entering their “Golden Age” in education.

This “Golden Age” is emerging because of educator’s growing awareness for the need to incorporate visual literacy into the classroom. Incorporating art and visual literacy into the classroom correlates with higher retention rates, increased self-image, and more learning overall. Graphic novels are a good avenue to present visual literacy to students because it is a format; as a format it encompasses different genres, reading interests, and reading levels (Carter, 2007). Graphic novels have become more popular in recent years among teenagers and their popularity seems to be increasing. Graphic novel’s popularity can make them more engaging than traditional print text based books and is one of the many reasons teachers are beginning to incorporate them into classrooms (Brannon, 2012). Tabachnick (2009) explains it by stating, “One of the very pleasant discoveries that new teachers of graphic novels will make is that students usually do not have to be urged to read them” (p. 3). They are more popular in both
classrooms and libraries because teachers are beginning to recognize the benefits of incorporating them into their curriculum such as reader enthusiasm and engaging reluctant readers. Research suggests that graphic novels can be especially beneficial for students who traditionally struggle in school such as boys, English language learners, and students with disabilities (Graphic Novels Save the Day, 2015).

Graphic novels can be beneficial in teaching higher level vocabulary for all students because the context clues are visual. The strong visuals also help increase comprehension. Unfortunately, the strong visuals, which is what helps make graphic novels great, are also hurting graphic novels. *Persepolis*, an autobiographical graphic novel that depicts Marjane Satrapi’s childhood in Iran during the Islamic Revolution, was removed from Chicago Public Schools in 2013. *Persepolis* was removed because of one image, which depicted torture, on one page in the book. The Comic Book Legal Defense Fund, an organization that helps support graphic novels and comics in classrooms by dealing with legal issues, reports that the number of graphic novels and comic books being challenged and banned in schools is dramatically increasing. Graphic novels are banned for the same reasons print text based books are banned, but the strong visuals make more of an impact and can make sexuality and violence seem more extreme (Alverson, 2014).

Early supporters of graphic novels in education tend to view graphic novels as useful supplements, but not necessarily as a novel that would warrant enough time for in depth study. Fortunately this mindset is beginning to shift and more and more teachers are incorporating novel units that are built around graphic novels. Brannon (2012) explains the mindset well when she states, “Graphic novels have a place in modern classrooms because they offer students
opportunities to develop critical thinking skills that are essential for an increasingly image-saturated environment” (p. 40).

Gareth Hinds, an author who predominately focuses on graphic novels, caters specifically to teachers with this mindset. His graphic novels are mostly adaptations of classic literature that is typically read in high school settings such as: The Odyssey, Beowulf, Romeo and Juliet, Macbeth, The Merchant of Venice, and King Lear. His work is popular among teachers who recognize the benefits of reading graphic novels, for example, graphic novels scored higher than print text based books in comprehension, enjoyment, and interest (Graphic Novels Save the Day, 2015). In addition to this, even though students spent 3.5 hours less reading the graphic novel version than students who read the print text based version of the same book, the students who read the graphic novel had a better understanding of the book and contributed more to class conversations about the book. Students were able to spend less time reading because the visual context clues made it easier to read (Alverson, 2014). Classic literature can be difficult for students to comprehend on their own, but when there are translations of the literature that has visual context clues it becomes easier for students to read on their own. Since the brain understands and stores images quicker and more easily, students who are reading these graphic novels versions are also more likely to remember the story better than the students who read the print version (Alverson, 2014).

A case study completed in Australia by Oakley et al. (2013) took the knowledge that graphic novels can help struggling readers and tested it out with an 8-year-old boy named Alex who was in second grade. Alex did not read on his own, but was proficient using Google and Youtube and enjoyed reciting facts that Alex had learned. The teacher decided to have him write his own books to read. He decided on a topic for each book such as Hawaii or the Bermuda
Triangle. On each page Alex was required to have one picture, which he could find using Google, and one sentence that related to the image that he had to write himself. After completing each book Alex had to record himself reading the book. At the start of the project Alex was hesitant about this and asked the teacher to help him before recording himself. Towards the end of the project Alex was confident in reading out loud and was even willing to read out loud in front of the class.

Comics

Modern comics originated from Rodolphe Töppfer’s *Histoire de M. Jabot*. Töppfer was the first modern writer to apply “narrative sequence, words, and caricature to the subjects of daily lives” (Tabachnick, 2009, p.8). While graphic novels did evolve from comics they are separate formats of literature; however, defining comics is slightly tricky. Scott McCloud attempted to define comics in his book *Understanding Comics* which was published in 1993. Little did he know that he would spark a war on the idea of defining comics. Some claim comics cannot be defined because that would limit the format and others claim that not clearly defining them means too many things that are not comics can fall under unclear definitions. For the purpose of illustrating a distinct difference between comics and graphic novels, comics will be defined as, “the basic medium that uses sequential panels and the spaces between them, gutters, as its primary means of expression” (Tabachnick, 2009, p. 2).

While picture books are widely used in primary level classroom, comics are often looked down on as a lesser form of literacy. This is an intriguing double standard as picture books are the foundation of literacy for children because the images provide context clues and help children make meaning of the story even if they are unable to read every word. Low (2012) argues that comic books for older students are very similar to picture books used with younger
students. The only true difference between picture books, viewed as a legitimate form of literacy, and comic books, viewed as less valuable literacy, is that comic books are written for an adult or teen audience. Tabachnick (2009) explains that there is a rich history behind this notion that comics are lesser forms of literature. Many of the early comics produced in America had children as the main characters, forging this unconscious connection to the idea that comics are for children. Tabachnick also explains that in the early days of comics many of them were produced using cheap ink and paper giving them a cheap feel.

Comics, unlike other forms of multimodal literacy, are so much more than just words and pictures. Readers of comics must also look at “the panel, the gutter, the frame, and the margin” of the comics in order to make meaning of the story (Low, 2012, p. 372). In addition to that they must understand how each frame interacts and relies on all of the other frames in order to make the story meaningful. Researchers have been examining how turning the page in a picture book helps students construct their own meaning of the story. They essentially have to fill in the gaps between what happened from image to image. Low (2012) cites Sipe and Brightman’s work on pictures books stating, “Encouraging children to speculate about page breaks develops inference-making and positions them as co-authors, adding another element to their literary repertoires” (p. 69). Low argues that this page break that is present in picture books is present in comics in the blank space between every panel. Allowing students to access comics and encouraging them to speculate about these gaps in the story helps increase their literacy and can help them understand that these gaps in narrative are present in all types of literature, though they are not always visually represented.

Teachers are beginning to incorporate comics into the classroom not by allowing students to read them, but by asking them to create comics to demonstrate their understanding of a lesson
or print text book that was read. Wissman and Costello (2014), for example, had students create comics of a particular part of the story for students to reflect on the book *The Outsiders*. The students enjoyed the project because it allowed them to be creative and the teachers commented that students often choose colors and images that were symbolic on a deeper level.

Teachers need to move beyond simply allowing students to create comics, which as previously stated have many beneficial aspects, but incorporate the reading of comics into their classroom. As Rosen explains, most students assume they already know how to read comics because they read them before but an educator needs to specifically teach how to read images. She points out that most teachers either focus on the specific story line being told or they focus on the art work; few teachers demonstrate to students how to read both aspects of the text at once. Many readers assume that the images are simply to help tell the narrative in a visual way, which is true, but the narrative and the images play off of each other and are inseparable. How the image is drawn combined with the paneling “can be used to convey mood, indicate character, signal movement, and reveal theme” (Rosen, 2009, p. 59). Rosen teaches these ideas by showing different panels from various comics and asking students to look at the images and decipher as much meaning as possible from them. Rosen also asks students to imagine that the word bubbles are empty and to examine the image to see if they would have come to the same understanding of the story without the words. She explains that this technique of noticing the word bubbles helps students to understand how the illustrator is showing time in a visual way (Rosen, 2009).

**Film**

Year after year as low reading scores come in, schools want to put the blame on one particular problem: popular culture. A strong focus has been put on television shows, movies,
and video games. However, educators need to take a different mindset to this apparent problem of too much television and not enough books. Students being immersed in pop culture is not a bad thing, Hesterman (2011) argues that it helps give them new ideas and it helps give them images they must make sense of. On average 15 to 19-year-olds spend 2.39 hours a day watching television compared to 8 minutes a day reading (United States Department of Labor, 2016; Newkirk, 2006). Television, movies, and video games are a form of literacy and Newkirk (2006) deems them “media narratives” and explains that they are rich in plot, characterization, effective use of puns and satire, etc. They have all of the elements teachers are trying to teach their students through print text based books, so why are teachers trying so hard to fight against popular media?

Newkirk (2006) suggests allowing students to use movies and television shows as inspiration for when students need to write in class. Fanfiction is a popular and legitimate form of writing. Allowing students to explore different types of fanfiction in class can teach them about narratives, characterization, and writing for real audiences (Cole, 2009; Newkirk, 2006). Hesterman (2011) takes this idea of relying on movies to help students write narratives and describes a case study in which 6 and 7-year-old boys in an Australian classroom watched the film *Star Wars: A New Hope*, the first *Star Wars* movie that was released. After watching the movie the boys were told they needed to write scripts for a sequel. After writing their first scripts they performed them in front of the class. As the different groups of boys performed their elaborate light-saber fights, the feedback was the same from the rest of the class, all of the boys were confused about the story line. Having a chance to get up and perform what they had written showed the boys the lack of a true narrative and true characterization. This same lesson would have been much more difficult if the teacher had instructed the boys to write a story and then
turn it in, no one would have been able to see and hear the good and bad parts of their skits. Eventually, the boys did multiple rewrites and filmed their final versions where they had to work with other teachers in the school for different elements of their film such as lighting and music to help add more meaning to their story (2011).

While many scoff at literary works being turned into movies, it cannot be ignored that a movie version is more accessible than print text based books and tends to make the original book more popular. *The Lord of the Rings* sold 14 million copies after the movies were released making the same amount money in one year which the books had made in the previous 36 years (Cole, 2009). *The Lord of the Rings* is not the only book to increase in popularity after the movies were released; *Harry Potter*, 21 years after the first book was published, is still popular in all forms: books, movies, fan fiction, and videogames (Dempster, Oliver, Sunderland & Thistlethwaite, 2016). In a British study, Dempster, et al. (2016) in England examined what role the movies had on students’ literacy, choosing the *Harry Potter* series because of its international popularity. The researchers found many participants of the study chose to read one or more of the books after watching the movies. Reading the series, gave many participants a positive perception of their reading abilities because the books are so long. Many participants who finished the series went on to read more difficult and complex print text that is valued in education. Films, which are their own form of literacy, can help encourage students to access print text, that are valued more highly in education, outside of the classroom (Dempster, et al., 2016).

Many teachers make the mistake of showing movies either as time fillers or right before a break to give them a chance to catch up on grading. This in turn sends the message to students that movies shown in class have no true educational value. When teachers devalue the literacy
that students choose to interact with on their own, it hurts the students’ school performance. Dempster et al. (2016) argue that films should be shown in class in an educational and valuable manner because it is what students choose to interact with at home and it helps legitimize that form of literacy for the students. Teachers can use movies to look at storytelling in a more visual way. How does the lighting effect the mood? How do the characters’ clothing contribute to the story? How does the camera angle impact the emotion of the story? How does the scene selection impact the story? Cole (2009) states, “they [movies] provide an opportunity to reflect on different interpretations, what works in adaptations, and what adaptations reveal about society” (p. 564).

Another option for incorporating movies, in an educational way, is reading movie scripts. Most curriculum maps require that a play is read every year of English class, but movies scripts are written in similar ways. Teachers could tailor the movie choice to what would interest the students and then watch the movie critically after reading the script. Many movie guides, which include the scripts, also include pictures of filming and trivia making it engaging in multiple ways (Cole, 2009).

**Video Games**

There is an increase in the number of both educational and non-educational video games that are being used in classrooms for educational purposes, such as, World of War Craft, Sim City 2000, and Minecraft (Nebel, Schneider, & Rey, 2015). The most important thing to acknowledge when contemplating the educational value of video games is the simple fact that students want video games to be incorporated into the classroom. Video games make lessons more interesting and gives students the “the opportunity to improve their computer, reaction and problem solving skills, subject knowledge, and the ability to work in teams” (Mifsud, Vella, &
Camilleri, 2013, p. 33). There is a correlation between using video games in the classroom, increased student motivation to complete the activity, acquisition of decision-making skills, and increased curiosity. It should be noted that these video games have multiple educational benefits beyond literacy such as real world math and science applications; however, the focus on this section will be on the value of educational and non-educational video games in classrooms and their impacts on literacy.

Alshaiji (2007) reported on a study of kindergarteners that found that video games helped promote alphabet recognition, pre-language knowledge, and cognitive development. The video games also helped increase kindergarten students’ self-esteem and self-image. Video games offer students a more comfortable environment to practice new skills because their mistakes might not be as perceptible to other students, and the teacher, in the classroom. Students who were able to use video games for learning demonstrated a decrease in fear of engaging in learning and an increase in retention of what they were learning. Students who were usually more reluctant were also more willing to engage in video games. Video games can teach students how to learn on their own, a valuable skill in the twenty-first century (Alshaiji, 2015). However, Kim (2016) cautions that video games are not necessarily better than print based texts, they simply offer an alternative that is more actively engaging.

Video games that require students to make an avatar, an electronic persona of a real life person, require them to interact with other students across the country and even across the world. This digital interaction, while it is limited by the digital world the video game creates, is incredibly beneficial to students in multiple ways. How students design their avatars and how they choose to interact with this digital community helps students gain a better understanding of their identity and it helps promote what Kim (2016) describes as transcultural literacy.
Transcultural literacy refers to the ability to effectively communicate past cultural barriers. This skill of being able to effectively communicate with others around the globe through more than just print text is becoming increasingly important in a world that is becoming more connected every day. It is also important to note that this is a skill that is difficult to replicate with only teacher led instruction in an isolated classroom. As Kim explains, “Multimodal manipulations of texts to construct online self-representations align well with how young people enact multiculturalism in our rapidly globalizing, networked world; identities are in constant remix, especially online” (p. 6).

Using videogames to teach foreign languages and vocabulary acquisition is a popular trend in foreign countries (Alshaiji, 2015). One example of this can be seen in a case study completed by Oakley et al. (2013) which took a student with autism and used video games to help him increase his literacy. Cam, a preschooler, only knew 5 letter sounds and did not know any letter names at the start of the intervention. A video game app named ComicBook! was used to help engage Cam. At first he was reluctant, but after coming to school dressed as Spiderman, the teacher took pictures of him with a cartoon filter and uploaded them into app. Once Cam saw himself in a comic book format he was engaged, his next task was to fill in the speech bubbles using sentence starters. After each page was printed and glued into his existing book, Cam would sit down with his instructor and read through the book. While this app increased his literacy, it was soon used as a motivator for him to complete other literacy exercises on various ipad apps. At the end of the 10 day intervention, Cam knew 20 out of 26 letter sounds, when he originally only knew 5 (Oakley et al., 2013).

Another example of video games teaching language and vocabulary acquisition took place in Saudi Arabia. Alshaiji (2015) wanted to test the idea that using video games for
kindergarten students helped them learn English vocabulary. She discovered that not only did the students who used the video game learn more words, but they were more likely to remember the words longer and even the more reluctant students were eager to participate in the learning (Alshaiji, 2015).

An important question to look at when video games are incorporated into the classroom is what exactly is the role of the teacher? When teachers choose to use videogames they need to shift their mindset from teacher to facilitator. Teachers should allow students to play the game without interruption and then find teachable moments to connect the game students are playing with the concepts the teacher is teaching in the class. Some researchers who suggest having time at the end of the class period to “debrief” students on what they accomplished and how it relates to learning objectives. The teacher’s main goal when incorporating video games is to “focus on getting the class to think, reflect and make links between what is happening in the game and the main learning aims of the class” (Mifsud, Vella, & Camilleri, 2013, p. 34). While the current research on video games and literacy clearly shows that there is a strong correlation between using educational video games in the classroom and language and vocabulary acquisition, most research is focused on young children. There is a need for research on video games and literacy at the high school level.

Nebel, Schneider, and Rey (2015) make it evident that the key to proper implementation of non-education, and educational, video games in the classroom is teacher education on the value of video games in the classroom and teacher education on how to incorporate video games into the classroom. Kim (2016) reports that schools have not always recognized the value of the literacy skills students picked up outside of school via digital literacy; however, the students themselves reported that they found themselves using the skills in school despite the lack of
validation. One teacher, when asked about her willingness to incorporate educational video games into the classroom, responded by questioning the purpose of doing so if students already spend a large portion of their time on video games at home. The teacher then noted that it is impossible to have true teamwork, or cooperative learning, if everyone is simply just sitting in front of a computer. While the teacher makes valid claims, the attitude towards implementing video games into the classroom demonstrates the need for proper teacher education and for an ongoing discussion about the proper way to use video games in educational settings (Nebel, Schneider, & Rey, 2015).

**Pedagogy**

Best practices in education are constantly changing as the world around us changes. As an educator I tend to lean towards the constructivism philosophy of teaching. Essentially students construct their own meaning and learning. As their educator I introduce the ideas and concepts to them, but the students make their own meaning and figure out how it relates to their lives. While standards are starting to reflect 21st century literacy learning, they still have a way to go, but changes in education are sparked in the classroom by the students and their teachers. Studies show that Instagram, a photo sharing and image-based social media site, is the most popular social media site for teenagers. Wetta, a librarian, explains how Instagram can engage students in reading. Wetta suggested taking pictures of books that teachers have in their classroom library, taking pictures of what the teachers are currently reading, or sharing pictures of books that are popular in their classroom or library. According to Wetta, there is a specific hashtag for sharing artsy pictures of your books: #bookstagram (Wetta, 2016).

Social media is a relatively new concept and has exploded in recent years as the quality of camera phones steadily increase. While we are in the Age of Images, there is a small amount
of research dedicated to how using social media and interacting with these images is shaping our youth. A majority of this research looks at connections between posting images of oneself onto social media and mental disorders such as narcissism and depression. I was only able to find one publication that looked at how teenagers’ interactions, beyond just posting their own content, impacted their lives. This study, by Johnston-Goodstar, Richards-Schuster, and Seth (2014), reported positive outcomes of teenagers engaging in social media. Teenagers felt more “empowered” and were able to share their passions and opinions on important current events. Social media allowed teenagers to find other like-minded individuals in their community and were able to come together for “collective action” to help improve their community. The most important idea that this study reported on was “Critical youth media focuses on voice and narrative storytelling as a core basis for their work. Through the creation of media, individuals and groups find ways for expressing their ideas, telling their stories, and owning their voice” (Johnston-Goodstar, et al., 2014, p. 342). Allowing students to create, share, and partake in this culture of image gives them the opportunity to have their voice heard on a grander scale and it allows them to connect with others throughout our world.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

In order to examine the effectiveness of different types of multimodal literacy the researcher incorporated three distinct types of multimodal literacy into the unit plan: video game, film, and comics. The unit was taught in a high school classroom in order to examine how multimodal literacy operates at the high school level. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of using multimodal literacy when teaching literary terms in junior level English classes. This research addressed the following questions. Does incorporating multimodal literacy into the English classroom make lessons more engaging and meaningful? Does multimodal literacy help retention of knowledge?

Research Design

The approach for the research was a mixed-method design. Mixed methods research combines qualitative and quantitative research into one design. Mixed methods research is an approach that gained popularity in the 1990s, and continues to increase in popularity through federally funded programs, such as grants, and students writing dissertations (Creswell, 2014). Mixed methods was chosen for the research design because the research takes place in an educational setting with a large number of students. The researcher felt that evaluating only quantitative data would not provide a full picture of the impact of multimodal literacy. Being able to evaluate both quantitative and qualitative data was more useful for understanding and accurately interpreting the results of the study and for identifying the impact the multimodal literacy instruction had on the students’ learning.
Setting

The research took place in a regular education classroom at a public high school located in a large mid-western city. It is the only high school in the district and serves between 500 and 600 students each school year with an average student teacher ratio of 12:1. Approximately one third of the school’s population receives free or reduced lunch and 85% of the school’s population is white. The school has 100% graduation rate and an average ACT score of 21.2. The research took place during the fall school semester; however, quantitative data in the form of tests scores from the two previous school years was included as base-line data for comparison. The research took place in the same classroom with the same teacher. The class size ranged from 12 students to 25 students depending on the class period. The base-line data came from two different classes in 2014, one of which was a class with in a class (CWC) with a para educator present in the classroom. The baseline data for 2015 also came from two different classes, one class was a CWC with a para educator present. The current research took place in two classes.
None of the classes during the 2016 year was a CWC and no para educators were present in the classroom (Kansas State Department of Education).

Participants

The participants of this study were all high school students enrolled in junior level English. The participants consisted of 33 students, 16 males and 17 females, one student with a 504 plan, and 32 white students and one student of mixed race. The baseline data from 2014 and 2015 consisted of 78 students, 47 males and 31 females; eight 504s and three IEPs; 43 white students, one Hispanic student, two students of mixed race, and one student who identified as Cherokee (American Indian). IEPs and 504s are accommodation plans for students who qualify because of health issues, such as concussions, or they meet special education requirements. IEPs and 504s are created by the student’s teachers and legally must be upheld at all times.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2014/2015 Baseline Data</th>
<th>2016 Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>78 student scores</td>
<td>33 student scores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 classes</td>
<td>2 classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47 males and 31 females</td>
<td>15 males and 17 females</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 504s and 3 IEPs</td>
<td>1 504</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instrumentation

Students were evaluated using five assessments that were designed by the educator administering the assessments. The first two assessments required students to match 30 randomly chosen literary terms. The assessment was chunked into three parts with literary terms 1-10.
being matched with definitions lettered A through J, literary terms 11-20 were matched with
definitions lettered K through T, and literary terms 21-30 were matched with letters A through J
(see appendix A). The next three assessments required students to identify the literary terms
based on the definition provided and no word bank. There were 20 randomly chosen literary term
definitions that matched those provided during instruction and students wrote the name of the
literary term (see appendix B).

Each assessment was administered by the regular classroom teacher and was timed. The
first two assessments were timed for 15 minutes, which gave students 30 seconds for each
literary term. The last three assessments were timed for 10 minutes; this gave students 30
seconds for each literary term. The time was displayed for students and they were given verbal
reminders of the remaining time. Directions were displayed on all assessments and the teacher
verbally read the directions and clarified any questions before starting the time. Verbal directions
for the first two literary term quizzes were as follows: “You have 15 minutes to complete your
quiz. In order to complete your quiz, you must match the literary term with the proper definition.
Please note that the answers for 1-10 will be A-J, the answers for 11-20 will be K-T. Please draw
a line underneath literary term 10 and the definition for the letter J. On the back of the quiz you
will match 21-30 with A-J. If you have a question at any point, please raise your hand and I will
do my best to assist you.”

Verbal directions for the last three literary term quizzes were as follows, “You have 10
minutes to complete your quiz. In order to complete your quiz, you must read the definition and
write the literary term that best fits that definition in the blank. Spelling does not count as long as
I can tell what literary term you mean. If you have a question at any point, please raise your hand
and I will do my best to assist you.” Immediately prior to taking the quiz the class reviewed
together via Quizlet.com. Some students who participated in the study had IEPs or 504s that required the classroom teacher to provide modified versions of the assessments. The assessments were modified in the following ways in order to provide the most reliable and accurate results for students with IEPs or 504s.

- Extended time on the assessment with a minimum time of 30 minutes and maximum time of 90 minutes.
- The assessment was chunked into ten questions at a time. Assessments with thirty questions had ten questions placed on separate pieces of paper totaling three pieces of paper and assessments with twenty questions had ten questions placed on separate pieces of paper totaling two pieces of paper. The student only had one piece of paper in front of him or her at a time. Upon completing each piece of paper the student exchanged it for the next paper until the assessments were completed.
- Separate setting during the duration of the assignment that was monitored by either a para educator or another classroom teacher was provided.
- Students needing more than 15 minutes to complete the assessment were allowed one break if needed. While on break students were not allowed to study, consult with other students, or consult with teachers or paras about the assessment.

The modifications provided to each student differed depending on the legal requirements set forth by their IEP or 504 plan. It was possible that a student required multiple modifications. Regardless of the modification all assessments tested the same literary terms.

The assessments were scored by the classroom teacher.
Procedures

During the 2016 fall semester the teacher incorporated multimodal literacy into her instruction in order to evaluate the effectiveness of multimodal literacy when teaching literary terms to junior level English classes. The 61 literary terms that were selected for this unit, were selected because they were present in all of the literature that was read in both junior and senior English classes. The literary terms applied to all genres of literature as well as literature from the early 1700s to post-modern literature. The instruction took the same number of days but incorporated the following multimodal literacy approaches: video game instruction, documentary that verbally and visually illustrated the literary terms being used, and student design of a comic that illustrated literary terms in action.

The evaluations began one week after the end of the literary terms unit. The literary terms were broken into two categories: literary techniques and persuasive techniques. The video game instruction incorporated literary terms from both groups and was used throughout the unit. The documentary focused on persuasive techniques and the comic focused on literary techniques. The approach taken in planning this unit fits the definition for multimodal literacy offered by Cope and Kalantzis (2000) as it incorporated “visual, audio, and spatial patterns of meaning” (p.5). It also fit the definition of multimodal literacy offered by Smith (2014) by incorporating “Film, images, sounds, [and] games” (p.6). It was also in compliance with the district curriculum guide and state standards.

Video Game Instruction. The videogame that was used to engage students was Quizlet.com. Quizlet.com offers two different games. The first game, called “Match”, displays eight literary terms on separate cards and the corresponding definitions on eight other cards. The objective of the game is to match the card with the literary term to its corresponding definition
by dragging one of the cards and placing it on top of the other card. On the right side of the board, a timer is constantly running. The time is displayed in green and changes to red if the person playing goes past the record time. Since students are playing to beat the clock, it turns the game into a competition. “Match” was played before the first and second literary term quiz because it simulated the first and second literary term quiz.

The second game, called “Gravity”, displays a planet at the bottom of the screen. Asteroids start falling from the top of the screen with the definitions of the literary terms displayed on them. The player must then type in the literary term to make the asteroid disappear before it hits the planet. As the game progresses the asteroids begin falling faster and faster. For each asteroid that is effectively eliminated and the student’s score goes up, for every asteroid that hits the planet the score goes down. The object of the game is to have the highest score.

“Gravity” was played before the third, fourth, and fifth literary term quiz because it simulated the layout of the quiz.

The decision to incorporate a video game, Quizlet.com, into the classroom instruction this year was to give the teacher a better idea of which words the students knew or did not know. As Alshaiji (2015) reported, video games helped increase students’ self-esteem and self-image. Students were encouraged to play Quizlet.com using their phones in addition to playing with the class as a whole. Allowing students to practice their literary terms using a game that closely simulated their quizzes gave them a safe environment to practice and/or to make mistakes in a way that was not easily perceivable by either their teacher or their peers. When the whole class played either “Match” or “Gravity” it offered the opportunity for specific instruction because the teacher could visually see which terms students were confusing. After each round the teacher was able to clarify literary terms that students frequently missed. Video games were
incorporated because research also suggests that using video games helps students with retention (Alshaiji, 2015). Video games were used with other techniques because Kim (2016) made it clear that video games were not necessarily better than print based text, but they offered an avenue to learn that some students found more engaging.

**Documentary.** The documentary *Divorce Corp.* was chosen because the teacher thought the subject matter would be something all of the students could relate to, so it would keep them engaged. As students were watching the movie they were listening and watching for different persuasive techniques. Students then had to explain the purpose behind why the documentary employed a specific persuasive literary term (see appendix C). The teacher purposefully showed this movie at the beginning of the unit and explained the learning objectives in order to avoid the trap many teachers fall into, giving the impression that movies are simply time fillers for the teachers to complete their own work. When teachers do this is sends the message to students that movies are not a legitimate form of literacy (Dempster et al., 2016).

**Literary Term Comic Strip.** The literary techniques were broken into six groups with six literary terms in each group (see Appendix D). Students were assigned partners and were given a group of literary techniques. They were then tasked with incorporating all six literary terms into a comic strip that had a clear plot (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and conclusion). On the back of the worksheet they had to explain how each literary technique was incorporated into the comic strip (see Appendix D). Comics were incorporated because as Low (2012) explains, comics are more than words and pictures. There was a lot of meaning in how students chose to illustrate their comic and how many or how few words they chose to incorporate. Including a comic strip combined the visual and the spatial elements of multimodal literacy to help make it even more meaningful to the students. In addition, since studies support
the idea that images are more memorable than print based text, the teacher felt it was important to incorporate images in a way that might help students connect the meaning of their literary term with a picture (Graphic Novels Save the Day, 2015). Teaching students how to write a story for a comic and how to illustrate their comic helps teach them how to read comics properly as well. The curriculum, including what is read in the English classroom, is dictated by the district and while teachers have influence over what they read, ultimately they are not in control. Since comics are still viewed as a lesser form of literary, the teacher must first demonstrate to the district that real and meaningful learning can happen using this form of literacy before they will allow her to influence the curriculum to include comics (Tabachnick, 2009).

Typically, after the literary term unit is completed, students begin reading early American literature. As they read, they look for specific literary terms that the instructor identifies before they begin reading. Throughout junior level English, students will continue reading American literature and every piece of literature they read will focus on specific literary terms, how they are used in the text, and the effectiveness of the literary device on the reader. A variety of literature is used from non-fiction to fiction, short stories, essays, poetry, novels, and autobiographies.

During 2014 and 2015 the teacher instructed students based on methods employed at the school for the previous three years. The unit was taught by providing students with a worksheet with all of the literary terms and asking the students to write out the definitions from the back of their textbooks. Then the students were assigned one literary term that they had to come up with an example for and then draw an illustration for it. The last day all the students presented their examples and images to the class. While this sounds like multimodal literacy, since it included images, the learning was not meaningful and mostly consisted of students copying images off of
the internet and then coloring them in. This teaching approach was hands off and relied on the expectation that students would study on their own outside of class in order to learn the literary terms. This approach did not offer any meaningful discussion with students about the literary terms and it did not allow the teacher to see students using the literary terms. For this approach, the only way the instructor knew if the students understood the literary terms was based on quiz scores at the end of the week. If a student was struggling with a term, the teacher would not know and would not be able to offer one on one instruction. Data was collected from the literary term quizzes and stored by the classroom teacher, a regular instructional practice.

Data Collection

Data was collected during the fall semester of 2016. Data from 2014 and 2015 provided a baseline for how well students scored on the provided assessments when multimodal literacy was not incorporated into the instruction of the unit. The 2016 data collection took place as multimodal literacy was incorporated into the instruction of the unit and was compared to the previous two years. The data was collected in the regular education classrooms by the teacher present in the classroom. The data was collected from the six assessments that were previously described under instrumentation. This study was limited because it only looked at students’ ability to pass quizzes and which methods they enjoyed the most. There was no effort made to access whether or not students were able to use the information in subsequent analysis of future literature that was studied.

At the end of the unit of study, students were given an open-ended questionnaire that consisted of the following questions.
1. Which activity (Quizlet.com, Literary Term Comic Strip, or Persuasive Techniques in *Divorce Corp*) was your favorite? Why? Explain in two or more sentences.

2. Which activity (Quizlet.com, Literary Term Comic Strip, or Persuasive Techniques in *Divorce Corp*) was your least favorite? Why? Explain in two or more sentences.

Data Analysis

The data collected was analyzed using statistical software. The data reflecting test scores were analyzed looking for the difference in mean scores between the group of students who were instructed using multimodal literacy and the baseline data from the students who were not instructed with multimodal literacy.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This study focused on answering two main research questions. First, does incorporating multimodal literacy into the English classroom make lessons more engaging and meaningful? Second, does multimodal literacy help retention of knowledge? In order to analyze the results in a coherent way, the quantitative data collected from quizzes, and analyzed to determine if multimodal literacy helped students retain knowledge, will be examined first. Next, the qualitative data will be examined in order to determine if multimodal literacy in the English classroom makes lessons more engaging and meaningful for students.

Quantitative Data

The quiz scores for each quiz were averaged together and then converted to percentages. Percentages are used because the research took place in an educational setting and most educators look at specific percentages and then letter grades to determine if the instruction was effective. The baseline data from 2014 and 2015, where the average scores for quiz one was 79.40%, quiz two was 62.36%, quiz three was 62.95%, quiz four was 65.95%, and quiz five was 77.25%, was examined and can be seen in Figure 1.1.
The results for 2016 were as follows: quiz one was 90.02%, quiz two was 89.00%, quiz three was 70.00%, quiz four was 75.65%, and quiz five was 80.00%. The average quiz scores now spanned “A”, “B”, and “C” letter grades. The difference between averages ranged from 2.75 points to 26.64 points. The average difference between quiz score averages when averaged together was 11.35. When the two outliers were not taken into consideration the average difference was 9.12, which is a 9% increase in quiz averages (see figure 1.2).
2016 Results

Figure 1.2

Baseline Data Compared to 2016 Results

Figure 1.3
Qualitative Data

When students were asked to choose which activity was their favorite (*Divorce Corp.*, literary term comic strip, or Quizlet.com) four chose *Divorce Corp.*, 12 chose the literary term comic strip, and 16 chose Quizlet.com, and one did not respond. When students explained why they chose the activity as their favorite 50% of them stated that they enjoyed Quizlet.com because it was quick. One student stated, “Using quizlet [w]as a lot easier way to study for me than flashcards.” Another student stated, “I liked learning with visuals and direct examples.” Thirty-three percent stated that they enjoyed the literary term comic strip because it allowed them to be creative and because in order to illustrate the word they had to understand the word first which helped them study. A student who stated that the literary term comic strip was their favorite wrote, “The comic strip because it allowed us to be creative with the terms. It also showed us that the terms could be fun.” Another student wrote, “It caused me to look up the word and have to know the word to be able to draw it”. For a complete list of student responses to the question “which activity was your favorite?” please refer to appendix E.

Figure 1.4
When students were asked to choose which activity was their least favorite (*Divorce Corp.*, literary term comic strip, or Quizlet.com) 22 chose *Divorce Corp.*, two chose the literary term comic strip, and five chose Quizlet.com, one did not respond, and two responded with answers that did not apply. When students explained why they disliked *Divorce Corp.*, their stated reasons were either they did not like the subject of the movie, they did not enjoy filling out worksheets during movies, or the activity was perceived as difficult. One student wrote, “*Divorce Corp.* was my least favorite. Trying to find literary terms through watching people talk was very hard.” Another student wrote, “I hated the *Divorce Corp.* … it was time consuming, whereas Quizlet.com only took a few minutes.” Students who selected Quizlet.com as their least favorite explained that they either did not like using technology or they did not like doing Quizlet.com as a class because other students would answer before they had a chance to. One student wrote, “Quizlet because I found it to be boring and it doesn’t give examples. I also like to take my time which quizlet didn’t allow.” For a complete list of student responses to the question “Which activity was your least favorite” please refer to appendix E.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Discussion of Results

The research question does multimodal literacy help retention of knowledge will be addressed first. On all five quizzes the average scores from 2016 where higher than the average scores from the baseline data. The average difference between the baseline data and 2016 was 9%. A 9% increase is approximately the difference between each letter grade, which indicates that incorporating multimodal literacy did help retention of knowledge. In addition to this, the lowest average quiz grade for 2016 was quiz three with a 70%. Quiz three was expected to have the lowest quiz grade because the format of the quiz changed to be more difficult. An average quiz grade of 70%, which is the equivalent of a “C” letter grade, indicates that all students had a basic understanding of the literary terms. The lowest quiz scores for the baseline data which was quiz two with a 62.36% closely followed by quiz three with a 62.95%. The scores for quiz two and three suggests that students did not have a basic understanding of the literary terms. The amount of time that students spent engaging with the terms in class drastically increased from the students whose scores were used for the baseline data and the students who participated in the 2016 study. The increase in the amount of time interacting with the terms may have had a positive impact on the 2016 quiz scores.

The research question does incorporating multimodal literacy into the English classroom make lessons more engaging and meaningful will now be addressed. When students filled out the questionnaire many of them indicated that they enjoyed the literary term comic strip the most because it was hands on and required them to think in a creative way. While students were
completing the assignment there was a lot of good discussion going on between partners. Students would argue over a legitimate representation of the literary term. I was called on multiple times to mediate these disagreements which provided good one on one instruction. Students enjoyed showing their work to other classmates and explaining the story line and how they had cleverly incorporated some of their literary terms. When I hung up the comic strips, many students enjoyed reading them. The favorite comic strip involved a gorilla and life size banana being trapped on an island together. The comic ends with irony when the gorilla confesses his love for the banana and the banana eats the gorilla in response.

Students indicated that Quizlet.com was their favorite activity overall. From personal observation the game “Gravity” seemed to be their favorite. Students enjoyed beating my high score. In one instance, a student went home and played gravity specifically to beat my score. That evening, Quizlet.com sent me an e-mail telling me my score had been beaten and who had beaten it. The next day in class I told the class the student’s new high score and they decided they wanted to beat him. So, we played as a class until we beat his score. He, along with other students, vowed they would beat the new high score before the end of the year. This example illustrates how invested students were in this game. Not only did they want to play it as a class throughout the week, but when they went home they chose to play the game on their own. It should be noted that the format of these games mimicked the format of the quizzes students took in class which definitely had a positive impact on students’ overall quiz scores.

The final activity that needs to be addressed is the Divorce Corp. documentary. This was overwhelmingly the most disliked activity because of the perceived level of difficulty. In addition, multiple students stated that they just did not enjoy watching movies and completing worksheets in general. Students indicated that they thought both the literary term activity and
Quizlet.com were easy and enjoyable and that both activities helped them study for their quizzes. This suggests that when students perceived an activity to be easy they were more willing to participate and were more open to the possibility that it could be fun; however, when an activity was perceived as difficult they were more likely to not want to participate and were more likely to describe it as boring. There also seems to be a connection between enjoyment and perceived learning on the students’ part. This connection between enjoyment and perceived learning on the students’ part was also seen in the case study from Australia by Oakley et al. (2013). When Alex was able to make his own graphic novels by doing things he was already good at and enjoyed doing, such as using Google and YouTube, he was able to learn to read. These results indicate that multimodal literacy can make lessons more engaging and meaningful if students perceive the activity to be enjoyable before the activity starts.

**Limitations and Weakness**

There were a number of limitations in this study. The study size was relatively small with only 39 students, there is a possibility that if the sample size was larger the results might be different. Another limitation to the study was the lack of diversity. Thirty-eight of the students participating in the study were white with one student participating in the study identifying as mixed race. Students also had similar backgrounds in education and religion. Another limitation that should be taken into consideration was the variation in instruction. This was the instructor’s third year teaching and the baseline data came from her first and second year teaching. Some of the results could be attributed to variations in instruction and increased content knowledge of the educator. The failure of the educator to fully explain multimodal literacy and the purpose of all activities to the students was another weakness of the study. Students were aware that the study and activities were centered on multimodal literacy but were only given a brief explanation of
multimodal literacy. The study focused mostly on data from quizzes and student feedback on
enjoyment of activities; however, focusing on quiz scores and student enjoyment was not an
authentic assessment of what students learned. While student scores were higher during 2016,
this could also be a result of students spending more time interacting with the terms in class. The
researcher wanted to make connections between classroom literacy and real world learning, but
simply using technology that students enjoy to study vocabulary terms may not provide the depth
of connection with real world learning. Overall the results show that students enjoyed engaging
with the literary terms and that the methods used to engage with the terms did help improve the
retention of the literary terms.

Implications

While I categorized my research as multimodal literacy I would now argue upon
reflection of my study that I barely used multimodal literacy. My research was more interactive
than basic paper and pencil, which made it more enjoyable for students at times, but I made the
mistaken Bomer cautions teachers against, I did not “think beyond the device to understand
practices” (2011). I made the assumption that because I used video games, film, and images that
it was automatically multimodal literacy. While all of those can be multimodal literacy at times,
the difference is that video games, film, and images need to help students gain a deeper and more
meaningful understanding in order for it to be classified as true multimodal literacy. Simply
incorporating technology does not make it multimodal or innovative. My study examined if
students knew vocabulary words; my study did not look at meaningful understanding or true
connections to real world learning.

Research on multimodal literacy is rapidly increasing and as the literature review shows
more teachers are incorporating it into their classroom. Keeping that in mind, I would suggest to
teachers who are interested in incorporating multimodal literacy into their classroom to first make sure what they are using is truly multimodal and does help students gain a deeper understanding of the learning objectives. I would also suggest for teachers to keep it simple, just because it is an emerging type of literacy does not mean lesson plans need to be complicated. A good place to start would be by reading political cartoons in the classroom and looking at the story line, the images, and how the story line and images combine to create a deeper understanding. As Rosen, 2009, states, a mistake most teachers make is solely focusing on either the story line or the images; only focusing on one or the either takes away the deeper meaning that is essential to multimodal literacy. Teachers could also have students read graphic novel versions of classic literature and compare it to the print text version by asking students the question, “How do the images enhance your understanding of the story”. The author Gareth Hinds specifically writes graphic novels versions of classic literature. Teachers could have students read graphic novels or political comics that relate to specific historical events and teachers could ask students to explore how seeing visual representations of these events is different than simply reading print based text about these events. *Tales of the Talented Tenth* and *Strange Fruit* by Joel Christian Gill are two ongoing graphic novel series about American history that visually illustrates how offensive using racial slurs can be along with many other aspects of American history. *March* by John Lewis, Andrew Aydin, and Nate Powell is another good series that shows the Civil Rights Movement.

Although I think vocabulary is important, in the future I plan to focus less of my energy on using multimodal literacy to teach vocabulary. I will continue to use multimodal literacy but I will be more careful to make sure what I am asking students to complete is truly multimodal. As stated above, most of what I did was not completely multimodal and a majority of my students
and I did not completely understand multimodal literacy. My understanding of multimodal literacy began to emerge more as the school year progressed and I began compiling the results of my study. Now I have new understanding of multimodal literacy and would do the research very differently. In English 3, I mostly address the history of American literature, the context in which the literature was written, and the literary terms. After the literary term unit was complete, the class moved on to annotating Early American Literature looking for the literary terms and examining if the literary terms are used in a meaningful way (an annotated example of “Common Sense” by Thomas Paine can be found in appendix G). Based on my observations, this year when we moved on to annotating students had a much better understanding of how authors used different persuasive techniques and literary device to enhance their writing. While I was successful at helping students, retain the literary terms and to make connections within texts to these literary terms, it is evident that there is still no real world connection or true understanding of the connection between the literature we read in class and present day. In order to help students make these connections and to make the learning more meaningful, I will decrease the amount of attention focused on annotating and literary terms. Instead, I would like to have students examine the art work and music from the historical time period we are studying. Students can examine how the art and music are similar or different from the literature from that time period. They will examine how the art, music, and literature work together to give us a look at what that time period was like. Students can also examine how the art, music, and literature from that time period are similar or different to contemporary art, music, literature, and social media that they engage with.
Future Research and Recommendations

Future research on this topic should explore a larger sample size and a more diverse sample to see if these results can be replicated across different diversities, learning styles, districts, and teaching styles. Future research should also focus on more authentic assessments to show student understanding by not focusing on quiz or test scores, but rather by having students complete assignments that connect with real world learning. Future research should also look at different parts of multimodal literacy such as auditory and spatial patterns of awareness.

Conclusion

The idea of what exactly literacy encompasses is constantly changing. While it once only included reading and writing that notion is beginning to change. Literacy can be defined as anything we can making meaning out of and while that currently only includes audio, visual, and spatial meaning, it is possible that the definition of multimodal literacy will eventually evolve to include all five senses (visual, audio, taste, touch, smell). While many countries are beginning to train teachers on ICTs, which will increase the amount of multimodal literacy in their classrooms, teachers in the United States are still grappling with the idea that there is educational value in such things as graphic novels, comics, film, and video games. The way to remedy this problem is to educate teachers on the value of multimodal literacy and the proper implementation of these forms of literacy. When teachers do not incorporate the types of literacy that students choose to interact with at home into the classroom, it sends the message that the only valuable forms of literacy are reading and writing. When students feel that the forms of literacy they choose to interact with are valued in the educational setting they are more likely to view their education as meaningful.
REFERENCES


# APPENDIX A

## LITERARY TERM ASSESSMENTS

### Literary Terms

Matching Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>citing authority</td>
<td>a story in which characters, actions, and setting stand for something beyond themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>symbol</td>
<td>a word or phrase that has become lifeless because of overuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>dynamic character</td>
<td>a story that ends with a happy resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Comedy</td>
<td>a story in which characters, actions, and setting stand for something beyond themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Opinion</td>
<td>character that changes dramatically as a result of the stories' action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Allegory</td>
<td>a story that ends with a happy resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Cliché</td>
<td>a story in which characters, actions, and setting stand for something beyond themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Fact</td>
<td>a statement that can be proved true or false</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>glittering generalities</td>
<td>a statement that can not be proven true or false</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>rhetorical question</td>
<td>question asked for effect and does not require an answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>foreshadow</td>
<td>persuasive arguments that rely on intellect and reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Tone</td>
<td>the emotional highpoint (tensest moment) in the story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>overstatement</td>
<td>the problem between the protagonist and the antagonist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>climax</td>
<td>repetition of a similar vowel sounds followed by different consonant sounds in words close together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>plot</td>
<td>clues about what will happen later in the plot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>appeals to reason</td>
<td>figure of speech that compares two seemingly unlike things in a statement, WITHOUT words such as like or as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>conflict</td>
<td>an exaggeration for effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. <strong>assonance</strong></td>
<td><strong>R.</strong> a series of related events in a story</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. <strong>metaphor</strong></td>
<td><strong>S.</strong> speech delivered by one character who is alone on stage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. <strong>soliloquy</strong></td>
<td><strong>T.</strong> the author’s attitude towards a topic, character, or audience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. <strong>static character</strong></td>
<td><strong>A.</strong> repetition of same or similar consonant sounds in words that are close together</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. <strong>hyperbole</strong></td>
<td><strong>B.</strong> character that can be summed up in one or two personality traits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. <strong>statistics</strong></td>
<td><strong>C.</strong> figure of speech that contains an exaggeration for effect</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. <strong>protagonist</strong></td>
<td><strong>D.</strong> the central character in a literary work who drives the action of the plot</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. <strong>propaganda</strong></td>
<td><strong>E.</strong> figure of speech that combines contradictory terms in a short phrase</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. <strong>tragedy</strong></td>
<td><strong>F.</strong> character that does not change throughout the course of the plot</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. <strong>oxymoron</strong></td>
<td><strong>G.</strong> systematic promotion of ideas or doctrine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. <strong>alliteration</strong></td>
<td><strong>H.</strong> statement about life that is revealed through a literary work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. <strong>flat character</strong></td>
<td><strong>I.</strong> story in which the main character dies or comes to some unhappy end</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. <strong>theme</strong></td>
<td><strong>J.</strong> persuasive technique that uses data to support an argument</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Literary Terms
Fill in the Blank

1. ____________________ the narrator’s vantage point in the story

2. ____________________ persuasive technique that uses recommendation from people who have experience with the issue

3. ____________________ long speech given by a character who is alone on stage

4. ____________________ clues about what will happen later in the plot

5. ____________________ line of poetry that contains five sets of stressed-unstressed iambs

6. ____________________ use of descriptive words to appeal to the senses

7. ____________________ persuasive technique that references expert testimony

8. ____________________ emotional charge of a word

9. ____________________ persuasive technique that uses people’s pre-conceived notion

10. ____________________ repetition of the same or similar consonant sounds in words that are close together

11. ____________________ a multi-faceted character with many traits, who seems “real”

12. ____________________ figure of speech that combines opposite or contradictory terms in a brief phrase

13. ____________________ writing that ridicules a person or institution to bring about change

14. ____________________ long speech given by one character to other characters

15. ____________________ a character with only one or two traits who represents a stereotype

16. ____________________ repetition of the same or similar vowel sounds with different consonant sounds in words that are close together

17. ____________________ a figure of speech that has become lifeless because of overuse

18. ____________________ the problem between the protagonist and the antagonist
19. _________________  a reference to a well known event or person from history, literature, religion, sports, etc

20. _________________  a series of related events in a story
APPENDIX B

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS ADDRESSING MULTIMODAL LITERACY

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.5: Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.6: Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.5: Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.6: Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. (CCSS, 2014 and Palmer, 2014)
**Divorce Corp and persuasive techniques**

As we watch the documentary *Divorce Corp*, pay attention to the use of persuasive techniques and consider how different sides of the arguments use them. Fill in the chart below by identifying an example that is presented in the movie and then explain in a complete sentence the purpose behind the literary term, what does it demonstrate to the viewer?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literary Term</th>
<th>Example of Literary term from documentary</th>
<th>Purpose behind literary term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>50% of U.S. marriages end in divorce.</td>
<td>This fact illustrates that divorce is a widespread problem impacting ½ of marriages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeals to emotion</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Appeals to reason</td>
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<td>Bias</td>
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<td>Citing authority</td>
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<td>Overstatement</td>
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<td>Propoganda</td>
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<td>Rhetorical Question</td>
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<td>Statistics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Testimonials</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D
LITERARY TERM COMIC STRIP WORKSHEET
(This worksheet has been modified slightly to fit within the format of the appendix)
**Comic Strip** Transfer your ideas from your rough draft to this final draft. Make sure all elements of plot are included and your literary terms are present. All boxes need to be completely filled in with characters and setting, colored appropriately, and demonstrate that effort was put in to create a tidy final product.

**Literary term connection** Write down the six literary terms you drew on the lines provided below. Transfer your ideas from your rough draft and double check to make sure the literary terms appear in your comic strip. Explain, in one or more complete sentences, how the literary term fits into the comic strip.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literary Term</th>
<th>Explanation of how the literary term will appear in the comic strip</th>
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APPENDIX E
STUDENT COMIC STRIP EXAMPLES

Literary Terms
Comic Strip-Final draft

"The rain has been so
dry we can't stop the
flooding in the streets.

"Knowing how the residents
feel, we should evacuate.

"Imagine this... it's been
pouring rain for 40 days and

... like Noah and the
Ark, our people will
be floating in boats.

"We could end up
like the big brown
boat rowing across
the brave waters.

"We need to evacuate our
beautiful and ever-growing
town before the extreme
weather conditions occur.

Literary Terms
Comic Strip-Final draft

OMG! He's
Perfect!!!

You don't
need him... it's
cert right for
you.

Maybe she's
right...

We're done.

You're done... It's
cert right for
you.
In loving memory of Hermewe.
This comic strip appears to be about a farmer and a cat. The text is not legible, but the scenes suggest the following:

1. A farmer with a hat and a dog is talking to a cat.
2. The farmer says, "What was the worst night ever?
3. The cat replies, "That was the worst night ever.
4. The farmer laughs and says, "No, but you're not a part of it."
5. The cat says, "No, but you're not a part of it."
6. The farmer responds, "I'm sorry, but it's true."

The comic humorously explores the concept of perspective and the impact of events on different characters.
APPENDIX F
STUDENT RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE

What literary term activity was your favorite (Divorce Corp., literary term comic strip, or Quizlet)? Why? Explain in 3-5 sentences.

- Quizlet was my favorite activity because it helped me learn all of the definitions. It was easy to use and I would spend about five minutes studying, and then I would feel prepared for the quizzes. Quizlet helped me get good scores on my quizzes.
- Divorce corp was my favorite was I found it to be interesting and I liked learning through movies. I found it easier to understand the words when the movie had examples of the words. I like learning with visuals and direct examples.
- Literary comic strip. It was fun & helped explain more about the terms.
- Divorce Corp. It was good to watch the interesting video + put literary terms w/ real examples
- The comic strip was my favorite. I liked it because I worked with a partner. I also liked it because it had us be creative.
- Quizlet was my favorite, because it was the most fun and I learned the most.
- Quizlet was the best one to do. Because it made it like a same. And the whole class did it.
- Quizlet was my favorite literary term activity. It made things different and had more fun learning the terms.
- Quizlet is my favorite because you can play games. It helps a lot.
- Quizlet was my favorite cause it’s easier to learn when your trying to hurry and beat the clock.
- Quizlet and practicing in the class. We can interact with the matching questions but the gravity was hard to play. I liked participating in class.
- Quizlet was my favorite, because there were many different activitys you could do to learn the terms.
- Quizlet really helped me. Doing Quizlet 2-3 times a week was helpful. I like Quizlet. Quizlet can help you with anything.
- Literary term comic strip because it allowed us to be creative with the terms. It also showed that the terms could be fun. It was fun to read the other peoples comic strips as well.
- The comic strip was my favorite. With the comic strip we had more freedom in what to do. Activities like these don’t dumb down students creativity either.
- My favorite literary term activity was Quizlet, because it helped me memorize all literary term definitions. I was focused on each definition and its elements which helped me immensely on the quizzes.
- The Literary term comic strip was better I thought. It gets us engaged and thinking on how to express a literary term through a story. It is also more fun than just watching videos or studying.
• I liked the Divorce corp video, because one it was a video. Another because it was full of information. Although it was sad and made me have fresh issues with lawyers I liked it.
• Literary term comic strip. We got to express our ideas while drawing. You didn’t take it like a art class + you thought our drawing were good they were actually horrible.
• Comic strip because it was fun and learning at the same time. For example the divorce cort activity was to complicated and boring.
• Quizlet was my favorite activity because they had games you could play. Kids want to have fun when learning about these literary terms. Quizlet had the biggest impact on my grade.
• Comic stirp. Because I liked to draw. I like to work together. I also like to study without sitting down and looking at a piece of paper.
• Quizlet is my favorite activity for helping me study. It’s a fast and easy acess for when you forget your stuff at school. Its right there for you. You can also make your own so your more organized.
• I really liked Divorce Corp because it helped learn some literary terms.
• Comic strip is my favorite because comics have pictures and characters that can be funny and relatable.
• The comic strip because we had to draw out the literacy terms so it helped me understand the literacy terms more. It cause me to look up the word and have to know the word to be able to draw it, I liked the Divorce Corp. too.
• Quizlet was my favorite literary term activity. It was my favorite activity because it got everyone involved and kept me entertained. The ways to learn the literary terms vary on quizlet which makes it more fun to learn.
• Quizlet because it is a good studing tool and kinda helps me study for quiz. It is also helpful right before class to get a refresher. Quizlet has been for me, used for vocab on other studying techniques.
• I liked the comic strip the best. I think it helped me learn the most. I am not very good at memorizing just by reading it, I personally like have a visual too.
• The comic strip was my favorite activity involved with literary terms. It was a fun activity that gave us students the chance to be interactive with our classmates while learning at the same time. It was very hands on and the best opporitunity to learn while having fun.
• Quizlet was my favorite. I liked using this because the games were really fun to play and they were really helpful the quizzes, using quizlet was a lot easier way to study for me than flashcards.
What literary term activity was your least favorite (Divorce Corp., literary term comic strip, or Quizlet)? Why? Explain in 3-5 sentences.

- Divorce Corp was my least favorite because it was hard to find the literary terms. If I thought I heard or saw a literary term it was gone before I could write it down. Divorce Corp did not help me on my quizzes.
- Quizlet because I found it to be boring and it doesn’t give examples. I also like to take my time which quizlet didn’t allow. I also like working alone rather than with the class.
- Divorce Corp. I didn’t see the point in it & what we were supposed to do.
- Literary term comic strip, It was time consuming + didn’t provide the examples I needed
- Divorce Corp. was my least favorite. I didn’t like it because it was depressing.
- Divorce Corp was my last favorite, because it was boring.
- Literary terms were the least fav of them all. Because it was the most boring.
- The Divorce corp was my least favorite because it was extremely boring and it didn’t get my attention.
- My least favorite is Divorce Corp. because we had to watch a video and fired examples and its hard to do that.
- Divorce corp was awful. It was very long and lost my intrest. It didn’t help me much.
- Divorce Corp. was very tense. I like watching a movie, but it was a bit depressing.
- My least favorite was the comic strip, because I didn’t really like having to draw the comic art.
- Divorce corp., the movie didn’t really help me learn anything. It is hard for me to watch the movie and do lit terms at the same time. Divorce corp. I don’t really think had a lot of lit. terms but that might just be me.
- Divorce corp. was my least favorite because it dragged on. It also was kind of hard to pick out certain ones. It was my last favorite because the subject of the video was not exactly interesting to me.
- Divorce corp was my least favorite literary exercise. It was very out and dry work. More creativity should be allowed with assignments.
- The Divorce corp was my least favorite, because I was focused more on how the terms fit in than what the definitions actually mean.
- Divorce corp was my least favorite. Trying to find literary terms through watching people talk was very hard. Videos, in my opinion, don’t teach much.
- I didn’t like the quizlet because you have to do it by yourself. Not everybody had time to do so and It wasn’t really fun.
- Divorce corp. was the worst. We had to try to find literary terms when we were watching something we had no idea about.
- Divorce corp because complicated and boring not a topic we should be worried about at this age.
- I hated the Divorce corp. and the comic strip. They did not help at all. They were both really time consuming, where as, Quizlet only took a few minutes.
• Quizlet. Because I hate computers. I don’t like having to log on. It takes a really long time.
• My last favorite was the Divorce corp video. This is because I felt like the point of vocab/lit terms were not clear and with little practice w/ the terms it was a challenge.
• I personally dislike quizlet the most because I can’t really see the board so its hard to read and participate.
• Quizlet is my least favorite because the whole class does it so therefore I don’t get to answer and study them personaly other students read and answer it faster so I feel like it doesn’t help me.
• Divorce Corp. was my least favorite literary term activity. It was my least favorite activity because I don’t like doing activities during movies.
• Divorce corp I did not like because my family/mom/dad go divorced and I’m not comfortable talking about this. It was interesting but I was not enjoying the time we talked about it. It really hard on me.
• Divorce corp was my least favorite. I just didn’t understand it too well. I don’t like videos it doesn’t help me learn. Especially in uninterested things.
• I did not like the Divorce corp activity. It was very hard to concentrate while watching the movie. I couldn’t personally get all the words done because it was hard to pay attention.
• Divorce corp was my least favorite. The movie was really hard for me to follow what was going on. It was also hard for me to find literary terms in the movie.
APPENDIX G

AMERICAN LITERATURE LITERARY TERM ANNOTATION EXAMPLE

Thomas Paine (1737–1809)

The most persuasive writer of the American Revolution came from an unlikely background. Thomas Paine, the poorly educated son of a corset maker, was born in England and spent his first thirty-seven years drifting through occupations—corset maker, grocer, tobacconist, schoolteacher, tax collector. In 1774, Paine was dismissed from his job as a tax collector for attempting to organize the employees in a demand for higher wages (an unusual activity in those days). Like many others at that time and since, he came to America to make a new start.

With a letter of introduction from Benjamin Franklin (page 67), whom he had met in London, Paine went to Philadelphia, where he worked as a journalist. In the conflict between England and the Colonies, he quickly identified with the underdog. In January 1776, he published the most important written work in support of American independence: Common Sense, a thirty-seven-page pamphlet that denounced King George III as a “royal brute” and asserted that a continent should not remain tied to an island. The pamphlet sold a half-million copies—in a country whose total population was roughly two and a quarter million.

After the Revolution, Paine lived peacefully in New York and New Jersey until 1787, when he returned to Europe. There he became involved once more in radical revolutionary politics, supporting the French Revolution. In 1791, he began to compile The Rights of Man, a reply to the English statesman Edmund Burke’s condemnation of the French revolt. The Rights of Man was an impassioned defense of republican government and a call to the English people to overthrow their king.

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Although he was living in France at the time, Paine was tried for treason in England and banned from the country. Safe in France from English law, he was briefly celebrated as a hero of the French Revolution, but Paine was soon imprisoned for being a citizen of an enemy nation (England). James Monroe, the American minister to France at the time, gained his release in 1794 by insisting that Paine was an American citizen.

Paine’s final notable work, The Age of Reason, was published in two parts, the first in 1794 and the second in 1796. Expounding the principles of deism (page 18), the book was controversial in America. Americans did not fully understand Paine’s ideas and thought he was an atheist—that he did not believe in God. When Paine returned to America in 1802, he was a virtual outcast, scorned as a dangerous radical and nonbeliever. He was stripped of his right to vote, had no money, and was continually harassed. When he died in New York in 1809, he was denied burial in consecrated ground. His body was buried on his farm in New Rochelle.

Even in death, though, Thomas Paine was not allowed to rest. In 1819, an English sympathizer named William Cobbett dug up Paine’s body and removed it and the coffin to England, intending to erect a memorial to the author of The Rights of Man. No monument was ever built. The last record of Paine’s remains shows that the coffin and the bones were acquired by a furniture dealer in England in 1844.

Published in 1776, Common Sense challenged the authority of the British government and the royal monarchy. The plain language that Paine used spoke to the common people of America and was the first work to openly ask for independence from Great Britain.
from “Common Sense”  
by Thomas Paine

IN the following pages I offer nothing more than simple facts, plain arguments, and common sense: and have no other preliminaries to settle with the reader, than that he will divest himself of prejudice and prepossession, and suffer his reason and his feelings to determine for themselves that he will put on, or rather that he will not put off, the true character of a man, and generously enlarge his views beyond the present day.

I have heard it asserted by some, that America has flourished under her former connection with Great Britain, the same connection is necessary towards her future happiness, and will always have the same effect. Nothing can be more fallacious than this kind of argument. We may as well assert that because a child has thrived upon milk, that it is never to have meat, or that the first twenty years of our lives is to become a precedent for the next twenty. But even this is admitting more than is true; for I answer roundly that America would have flourished as much, and probably much more, had no European power taken any notice of her. The commerce by which she hath enriched herself are the necessities of life, and will always have a market while eating is the custom of Europe.

But she has protected us, say some. That she hath engrossed us is true, and defended the Continent at our expense as well as her own, is admitted; and she would have defended Turkey from the same motive, viz.

He also argues that England is a mother.

As if we have been long led away by ancient prejudices and made large sacrifices to superstition. We have boasted the protection of Great Britain, without considering, that her motive was INTEREST not ATTACHMENT; and that she did not protect us from OUR ENEMIES on OUR ACCOUNT, but from HER ENEMIES on HER OWN ACCOUNT, from those who had no quarrel with us on any OTHER ACCOUNT, and who will always be her enemies on the SAME ACCOUNT. Let Britain waive her pretensions to the Continent, or the Continent throw off the dependence, and we should be at peace with Europe.

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France and Spain, were they at war with Britain. The miseries of Hanover last war ought to warm us against connections. It hath lately been asserted in parliament, that the Colonies have no relation to each other but through the Parent Country, i.e. that Pennsylvania and the Jerseys and so on for the rest, are sister Colonies by the way of England; this is certainly a very roundabout way of proving relationship, but it is the nearest and only true way of proving enmity (or enmity, if I may so call it.) France and Spain never were, nor perhaps ever will be, our enemies as AMERICANS, but as our being the SUBJECTS OF GREAT BRITAIN. But Britain is the parent country, say some. Then the more shame upon her conduct. Even brutes do not devour their young, nor savages make war upon their families. Wherefore, the assertion, if true, turns to her reproach; but it happens not to be true, or only partly so, and the phrase PARENT OR MOTHER COUNTRY hath been jesuitically adopted by the King and his parasites, with a low papistical design of gaining an unfair bias on the credulous weakness of our minds. Europe, and not England, is the parent country of America. This new World hath been the asylum for the persecuted lovers of civil and religious liberty from EVERY PART of Europe. Either have they fled, not from the tender embraces of the mother, but from the cruelty of the monster, and it is so far true of England, that the same tyranny which drove the first emigrants from home, pursues their descendants still.

In this extensive quarter of the globe, we forget the narrow limits of three hundred and sixty miles (the extent of England) and carry our friendship on a larger scale; we claim brotherhood with every European Christian, and triumph in the generosity of the sentiment...

Europe is too thickly planted with Kingdoms to be long at peace, and whenever a war breaks out between England and any foreign power, the trade of America goes to ruin, BECAUSE OF HER CONNECTION WITH BRITAIN. The next war may not turn out like the last, and should it not, the advocates for reconciliation now will be wishing for separation then, because
neutrality in that case would be a safer convoy than a man of war. Every thing that is right or reasonable pleads for separation. The blood of the slain, the weeping voice of nature cries, 'TIS TIME TO PART. Even the distance at which the Almighty hath placed England and America is a strong and natural proof that the authority of the one over the other, was never by the design of Heaven. The time likewise at which the Continent was discovered, adds weight to the argument, and the manner in which it was peopled, increases the force of it. The Reformation was preceded by the discovery of America: As if the Almighty graciously meant to open a sanctuary to the persecuted in future years, when home should afford neither friendship nor safety...

It is the good fortune of many to live distant from the scene of present sorrow; the evil is not sufficiently brought to their doors to make them feel the preternatural with which all American property is possessed. But let our imaginations transport us a few moments to Boston; that seat of wretchedness will teach us wisdom, and instruct us for ever to renounce a power in whom we can have no trust. The inhabitants of that unfortunate city who but a few months ago were in ease and affluence, have now no other alternative than to stay and starve, or turn out to beg. Endangered by the fire of their friends if they continue within the city and plundered by the soldiery if they leave it, in their present situation they are prisoners without the hope of redemption, and in a general attack for their relief they would be exposed to the fury of both armies...

A government of our own is our natural right: And when a man seriously reflects on the precariousness of human affairs, he will become convinced, that it is infinitely wiser and safer, to form a constitution of our own in a cool deliberate manner, while we have it in our power, than to trust such an interesting event to time and chance. If we omit it now, some (Massa) may hereafter arise, who laying hold of popular disquietudes, may collect together the desperate and discontented, and by assuming to themselves the powers of government, may succeed in reviving those incitements to the liberties of the continent like a deluge. Should the government of America return again into the hands of Britain, the tottering situation of things, will be a temptation for some desperate adventurer to try his fortune; and in such a case, what relief can Britain give? Ere she could hear the news, the fatal business might be done; and ourselves suffering like the wretched Britons under the oppression of the Conqueror, Ye that oppose independence now, ye know not what ye do; ye are opening a door to eternal tyranny, by keeping vacant the seat of government. There are thousands, and tens of thousands, who would think it glorious to expel from the continent, that barbarous and hellish power, which hath stirred up the Indians and Negroes to destroy us, the cruelty hath a double guilt, it is dealing brutally by us, and treacherously by them...

Ye that tell us of harmony and reconciliation, can ye restore to us the time that is past? Can ye give to prostitution its former innocence? Neither can ye reconcile Britain and America. The last cord now is broken, the people of England are presenting addresses against us. There are injuries which nature cannot forgive; she would cease to be nature if she did. As well can the lover forgive the treacherous mistress as the continuer forgive the murders of Britain. The Almighty hath implanted in us these unextinguishable feelings for good and wise purposes. They are the guardians of his image in our hearts. They distinguish us from the herd of common animals. The social compact would dissolve, and justice be extirpated from the earth, or have only a casual existence were we callous to the touches of affection. The robber, and the murderer, would often escape unpunished,
did not the injuries which our tempers sustain, provoke us into justice...

I HAVE never met with a man, either in England or America, who hath not confessed his opinion, that a separation between the countries would take place one time or other. And there is no instance in which we have shewn less judgment, than in endeavoring to describe, what we call, the ripeness or fitness of the continent for independence...

'Tis not in numbers but in unity that our great strength lies; yet our present numbers are sufficient to repel the force of all the world. The Continent hath at this time the largest body of armed and disciplined men of any power under Heaven; and now it is arrived at that pitch of strength, in which no single colony is able to support itself, and the whole, when united, is able to do anything. Our land force is more than sufficient, and as to naval affairs, we cannot be insensible that Britain would never suffer an American man of war to be built, while the Continent remained in her hands. Wherefore, we should be no forwarder in this scheme hence in this branch than we are now; but the truth is, we should be less so, because the timber of the Country is every day diminishing, and that which will remain at last, will be far off or difficult to procure.

Were the Continent crowded with inhabitants; her sufferings under the present circumstances would be intolerable. The more seaport-towns we had, the more should we have both to defend and to lose. Our present numbers are so happily proportioned to our wants, that no man need be idle. The diminution of trade affords an army, and the necessities of an army create a new trade...

No country on the globe is so happily situated, or so internally capable of raising a fleet as America. Tar, timber, iron, and cordage are her natural produce. We need go abroad for nothing. Whereas the Dutch, who make large profits by hiring out their ships of war to the Spaniards and Portuguese, are obliged to import most of the materials they use. We ought to view the building a fleet as an article of commerce, it being the natural manufactory of this country. 'Tis the best money we can lay out. A navy when finished is worth more than it cost. And it is that nice point in national policy, in which commerce and protection are united. Let us build; if we want them not, we can sell; and by that means replace our paper currency with ready gold and silver.

To CONCLUDE, however strange it may appear to some, or however unwilling they may be to think, it remains true, in the end, that so many insistent and striking reasons may be given to show that nothing can settle our affairs so expeditiously as an open and determined declaration for independence. Some of which are,

First. — It is the custom of Nations, when any two are at war, for some other powers, not engaged in the quarrel, to step in as mediators, and bring about the preliminaries of a peace. But while America calls herself the subject of Great Britain, no power, however well disposed she may be, can offer her mediation. Wherefore, in our present state we may quarrel on for ever.

Secondly. — It is unreasonable to suppose that France or Spain will give us any kind of assistance, if we mean only to make use of that assistance for the purpose of repairing the breach, and strengthening the connection between Britain and America, because, those powers would be sufferers by the consequences.

Thirdly. — While we profess ourselves the subjects of Britain, we must, in the eyes of foreign nations, be considered as Rebels. The precedent is somewhat dangerous to their peace, for men to be in arms under the name of subjects; we, on the spot, can solve the paradox; but to unite resistance and subjection requires an idea much too refined for common understanding.

Fourthly. — Were a manifesto to be published, and despatched to foreign Courts,
setting forth the miseries we have endured, and the peaceful methods which we have ineffectually used for redress; declaring at the same time that not being able longer to live happily or safely under the cruel disposition of the British Court, we had been driven to the necessity of breaking off all connections with her; at the same time, assuring all such Courts of our peaceable disposition towards them, and of our desire of entering into trade with them; such a memorial would produce more good effects to this Continent than if a ship were freighted with petitions to Britain.

Under our present denomination of British subjects, we can neither be received nor heard abroad; the custom of all Courts is against us, and will be so, until by an independence we take rank with other nations.

These proceedings may at first seem strange and difficult, but like all other steps which we have already passed over, will in a little time become familiar and agreeable; and until an independence is declared, the Continent will feel itself like a man who continues putting off some unpleasant business from day to day, yet knows it must be done, hates to set about it, wishes it over, and is continually haunted with the thoughts of its necessity.