

Media literacy education for parents: A systematic literature review

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ABSTRACT

This systematic literature review examines emergent approaches toward media literacy education for parents. Method guidelines for review originated from the 2020 update of the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) statement. The review sample consists of twelve studies, six originating in the United States, and six from other parts of the world. Findings include: (a) assessments of parent needs, interest in media literacy education, and receptiveness to learning, (b) integration of media literacy education with parental mediation instruction toward positive, healthy child development and socialization – shifts attention from reactive management of media effects to issue prevention or healthy balance, (c) short-term effectiveness of media literacy interventions involving parents that foster improvements in family dynamics, such as parent-child communication, and (d) U.S.-based studies employ interventionist approaches to media literacy education for parents, while gathering parental insights to inform program construction is foregrounded abroad.

Keywords: *Media literacy, parent education, family education, community education, parental mediation.*



INTRODUCTION

The field of media literacy education has yet to adequately address the needs of parents as media literacy learners. It is important to note that the dearth of scholarship on this topic creates space for highlighting related context. When referring to parents, media literacy literature has been predominantly tethered to the concept of parental mediation, recognized as parents intervening between their kids and media effects, without making the relationship between mediation and media literacy clear (Mendoza, 2009; 2019). In the United States, K-12 students have been the primary focal point of media literacy scholars, practitioners, and advocates (McNeill, 2022; Huguet et al., 2021). Such evidence is apparent within the realms of media literacy curriculum (Hobbs & Frost, 1998; Weninger et al., 2017), media literacy pedagogy (Hobbs, 2007; Kellner & Share, 2019), and attempts at media literacy education policy (McNeill, 2022). The trickle-up effect, as described by Scheibe and Rogow (2012), or the assumption that children transfer knowledge they acquire at school to their parents, is inherent in the discourse. A more pointed assessment would claim that, even within the context of mediation, parents have been relegated to the periphery of media literacy education with respect to their own knowledge development, skill acquisition, and competencies.

As Livingstone and Blum-Ross (2020) illuminate through an array of parent voices, contemporary family realities are oriented by a digital culture that compels inventive and continuous shifting of parental approaches, which lack both precedent and adequate support for child-rearing in this environment. Today, at least two generations of parents do not have personal points of reference that resemble the type of media experiences of their children (Latiana et al., 2021; Livingstone & Blum-Ross, 2020; Varuhin, 2018). Minors leading themselves through uncharted territory further complicates the mediated ecosystem parents are expected to manage and constrains cultural traction for media literacy (Buckingham, 1998; Kubey, 1998; Livingstone & Blum-Ross, 2020; Livingstone et al., 2013).

The media literacy movement risks cycling through self-defeat if it continues to neglect the varied needs of parents as media literacy learners. Children lack sufficient guidance through this media dominant culture when parents are not educated in media literacy themselves.

Media literacy's PR problem

The field of media literacy continues to struggle making progress toward the public's universal understanding of its meaning, transmission of knowledge and skills. Though media literacy is a simple educational concept, its meaning remains unclear for most outside of the community of scholars and advocates who shape, and are engaged in, the discourse (Kellner & Share, 2005). Media literacy's stunted reach as a discipline outside of academia can be attributed to the lack of congruence among scholars worldwide and those who have taken on the task of teaching media literacy skills to others. General public confusion or incognizance of media literacy in the United States can be traced to the hundreds of interpretations one finds within the media literacy community (Potter, 2022) as well as varying terminology for similar concepts from country to country all around the world (Zylka et al., 2011). In other words, a single precise point of entry for those seeking to learn, teach, regulate, or legislate media literacy does not exist. Conflicts within scholarship born of a relatively small academic community have gotten in the way of students, and the adult humans around them, gaining universal understanding, or even awareness, of media literacy.

Media literacy education

In spite of the field's incoherence, media literacy education, as a process, has been focused on gaining the attention of K-12 students as their schools and learning spaces have been left to interpret the meaning of media literacy and the curriculum to support it. From scholarship through advocacy efforts, much of the emphasis has been on K-12 pedagogical strategies and student experiences (Hamilton et al., 2020). In definitional terms, media literacy education has been described as "an ever-evolving continuum of skills, knowledge, attitude, and actions," (Scheibe & Rogow, 2012, p. 55) that may begin in classroom settings but culminates "in the larger culture, leading to a personal and political transformation from spectator to citizenship" (Hobbs et al., 2011, p. 45). Advancing media literacy education toward discussions of citizenship or society, beyond academia, the K-12 student level and school settings, leads to exploring how media literacy education can work as community education (i.e., Rhinesmith & Stanton, 2018). Media literacy should have more of a presence beyond K-12 spaces and in every community in the United States.

This systematic literature review aims to serve future investigations of media literacy education at the community level, specifically studies focused on the maternal perspective of parenting adolescents in a media dominant culture. This phase of research seeks to examine approaches toward instruction for parents, the human beings raising K-12 students, as media literacy learners. The following research question guided this review: in what ways has media literacy education for parents been approached in the field?

METHOD

Method guidelines for this systematic literature review originated from the 2020 update of the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) statement (Page et al., 2021). With media literacy education for parents as the combined primary construct for this study, preliminary searching for “media literacy parent education” generated just two results using the Canadian version of the Google Scholar search engine. Neither preliminary result represented research nor discussion of media literacy education for parents. Expanding Internet search terms and strategies was necessary to improve precision, relevance, quality, and quantity of search results.

Formulating Boolean queries with search terms (i.e., utilizing basic operators such as AND, OR, NOT, and using an asterisk for word truncation wherever logical, (i.e., TERM*) addressed the need for deeper investigative search angles. The researcher engaged in daily searches over a two-week span that involved switching between different search engines (i.e., Ecosia, Bing, DuckDuckGo, Google), probing multiple databases, alternating user profiles and devices, and varying term combinations each time. As Google appeared to be the search engine to offer the most scholarship-related results, both American and Canadian versions of Google and Google Scholar were utilized for contrast. In addition to gauging differences in search engine results pages appearing in less advertisement- or user identity-influenced order, Canada's position as a world leader in media literacy education was a presumptive beneficial factor.

The researcher met with and enlisted the help of a public university librarian who, after days of “coming up empty-handed,” then engaged another library colleague who was based at a different campus of this same university to aid in the search process. Independent searches were conducted from the three different locations at different times but working from the same

list of terms (see Table 1). For the phenomenon construct, search terms included: media, mass media, multimedia, digital media, social media, media literacy, media literacy education, screen media, mothering, parenting, caregiving, adolescence, parent education, parent education program, parent training, caregiver training, parent coaching, parenting program, media aware parent, media literate parents, critical thinking and understanding of media, digital parenting, adult learners, non-formal education, informal education, and information education. The term *training* was a late addition and early deletion to the phenomenon construct when it became clear that the word draws more behaviorist language in literature far removed from the field of media literacy. Search terms for the phenomenon's context included: home, home environment, household, residence, community, family, and parent-child.

Table 1. *Search terms*

Construct	Terms
Phenomenon	media, mass media, multimedia, digital media, social media, media literacy, media literacy education, screen media, mothering, parenting, caregiving, adolescence, parent education, parent education program, parent training, caregiver training, parent coaching, parenting program, media aware parent, media literate parents, critical thinking and understanding of media, digital parenting, adult learners, non-formal education, informal education, information education
Context	home, home environment, household, residence, community, family, parent-child
Participants	mothers/maternal caregivers of adolescents, teen*, youth, juvenile, high school student, secondary school student, senior high school student, high school freshman, high school sophomore, high school junior, high school senior, 9 th grade*, 10 th grade*, 11 th grade*, 12 th grade*, minor, screenage*, mother*, mom*, caregiver, parent

Terms used for participant types included: mothers/maternal caregivers of adolescents, teen*, youth, juvenile, high school student, secondary school student, senior high school student, high school freshman, high school sophomore, high school junior,

high school senior, 9th grade*, 10th grade*, 11th grade*, 12th grade*, minor, screenage*, mother*, mom*, caregiver, and parent.

Targeted use of research databases organized queries by general, subject-specific, and multi-disciplinary areas. Databases used included: EBSCO Information Service's Academic Search Complete and EBSCOhost, Education Source, ERIC, ProQuest, WorldCat, Communication Abstracts, Communications and Mass Media, Film and Television Literature Index, SocINDEX with Full Text, PsycINFO, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global. All required continuous appraisal of the range of algorithmic interpretations and misinterpretations, if not misuses, of the same terminology.

Justifications for inclusion and exclusion

Selections from the search results were screened based on the following criteria: (1) publication year of 2007 or later (Apple's debut of the iPhone made 2007 a pivotal year for media and media literacy as it sparked a cultural shift toward individual mobile screens and multimedia-enabled personal devices [Burgess, 2012]), (2) reporting of first-hand data, (3) appearance in a peer-reviewed publication, and (4) a focus on both media literacy AND parent education. A total of three publications met all criteria. Modifying criteria was

required to assemble a larger sample. Modifications included (5) adding parent education, family education, community education to media literacy or parental mediation. The Boolean query would look like this: "parent education OR family education OR community education AND media literacy OR parental mediation."

Building a master literature database of relevant results occurred over a span of two weeks between September 12-26, 2022. The first week was dedicated to skimming articles and assessing criteria while handling data entry and sorting. The second week was dedicated to reviewing articles that were of interest but did not meet criteria. The pool of considered publications expanded to a total of 249, 18 of which were potentially eligible for inclusion and warranting closer examination. The final cycle of inclusion-exclusion evaluation could most efficiently be addressed on a case-by-case basis (see Table 2). For example, Brogan-Frietas et al. (2019) were excluded because what had been published, to date, was a research poster, and the authors did not respond to an email inquiry (sent September 27, 2022) about where to gain access to the full article if, in fact, one had been produced. Fulton et al. (2011) were eliminated because the study was funded by Meta, and no additional detail was provided regarding the company's research parameters, motivation, or degree of involvement in the interpretation of findings.

Table 2. *Publications excluded in final inclusion-exclusion evaluation cycle*

Year	Author(s)	Publication title	Reason for exclusion
2008	Chakroff, J.L. & Nathanson, A.I.	Parent and school interventions: Mediation and media literacy	▪ No first-hand data reported
2016	Copeland, P.	Factual Entertainment: How to make media literacy popular	▪ Report was part of a think-tank funded Beyond Propaganda series
2017	Dewi, T.T. & Permana, M.J.	Children in adult television world: The importance of media literacy in family viewing habit	▪ Methods section lacked sufficient detail for analysis
2019	Brogan-Frietas, E., White, A., Polizzotto, H., Escalera, F. & Graziani, L.	Rationale for a media literacy intervention for parents of 5-10-year-old children	▪ Publication of research poster only
2021	Rahayu, N.R. & Haningsih, S.	Digital parenting competence of mother as informal educator	▪ Digital literacy emphasis did not include a critical thinking component
2022	Fulton, C., McGuinness, C., Kerrigan, P., Siapera, E., Carrie, D. & Pope, P.	Training the trainers: A public library – higher education collaboration for media literacy education in Ireland	▪ Study funded by Meta; publication lacks detailed explanation of Meta's involvement in research process

Rahayu and Haningsih's (2021) study was omitted here because the digital literacy emphasis did not also focus on a critical thinking component, which is a fundamental tenet of media literacy education. Dewi and Permana's (2017) Jakarta-based research was excluded from the final sample because the two-sentence methods section did not provide enough detail to evaluate. Copeland's (2016) report was eliminated because it was part of a Beyond Propaganda series funded by a think tank. Lastly, Chakroff and Nathanson's (2008) publication was excluded because it did not feature the gathering of first-hand data.

The final sample of literature for review consisted of twelve studies, divided evenly between six based in the United States, and six originating in other parts of the world, including Ireland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Germany. A single study among the global findings featured data from five countries of the European Union (EU) (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, and Poland), as well as at the EU Level (see sample overview in Table 3). Three of the twelve publications in the final sample do not represent peer-reviewed research, but they do feature the gathering and reporting of first-hand data. Including community education in the search led to one study that is not limited to parents in its focus on adults in Ireland (O'Neill & Barnes, 2008). And in its focus on libraries and community media centers as spaces for media literacy education, one other study infers applicability to parents as community members but does not feature parents as participants (Rhinesmith & Stanton, 2018). One study in the final sample was published prior to 2007 and included here because the authors claim to have conducted the first investigative intervention to apply media literacy concepts and strategies to television food advertising (Hindin et al., 2004), and the screening process for this review did not uncover any reason to dispute this claim. Lastly, one study required translation. For this task, version 6.47 of Google's free desktop Translate application was utilized through a Chrome browser to detect Latiana et al.'s (2021) original text language as Indonesian and then convert one section at a time into a corresponding English equivalent. While the application does not guarantee complete grammatical accuracy, the researcher determined that the translation output was adequate for the purpose of this review. Therefore, a third-party evaluation of the translation's quality was not pursued. While English is the first language of this article's primary author, both authors are cognizant of issues raised by English ethnocentrism (Macedo,

Dendrinis & Gounari, 2003) and wanted queries into this topic to reflect such consideration. In addition, the literature search revealed such a paucity of scholarship on the topic of parents as media literacy learners that expanding the language options confirmed the global extent of the deficit. The topic's universal relevance extends beyond the United States and any language barriers. The final sample represents a wide range of disciplines in terms of where the work was published and, interestingly, none of the studies were published by the Journal of Media Literacy Education.

Coding and analysis

The initial coding framework used for analysis of the final sample was derived from a rubric established by Boote and Biele (2005). Publications were converted from Adobe PDF to Microsoft Word format, page layouts were adjusted wherever necessary to ensure post-conversion readability, and then uploaded into Taguette, a free open-source qualitative data analysis software designed for coding. Details of Boote and Beile's (2005) rubric were reduced from 12 to 9 applicable criteria, but then expanded from 9 to 33 codes within 5 categories (coverage, synthesis, methodology, significance, and rhetoric) to facilitate the capture of greater detail (see Appendix for master code list).

After the initial coding process was completed, all coded text was exported into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet for further analysis, sorting, synthesizing, and pattern coding (Saldaña, 2021). The final cycle of pattern coding involved extracting key words and phrases as new inferential categories to represent identification of relationships among the coded data, and development of super codes (Saldaña, 2021).

FINDINGS

U.S. centers interventionist approaches, while parental insights are sought abroad

With the exception of Rhinesmith & Stanton (2018), whose interest was in exploring public libraries as spaces for community media literacy education, all of the U.S.-based researchers engaged in experimental intervention studies conducted to examine the immediate and short-term participant behavioral changes within the realm of healthy living.

Table 3. *Overview of literature sample for analysis*

Year	Authors	Country	Publication title	Publisher	Peer-reviewed
2004	Hindin, T.J., Contento, I.R. & Gussow, J.D.	United States	A media literacy nutrition education curriculum for Head Start parents about the effects of television advertising on their children's food requests	Journal of The American Dietetic Association	Yes
2008	Comer, J.S., Furr, J.M., Beidas, R.S., Weiner, C.L. & Kendall, P.C.	United States	Children and terrorism-related news: Training parents in coping and media literacy	Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology (American Psychological Association)	Yes
2008	O'Neill, B. & Barnes, C.	Ireland	Media literacy and the public sphere: A contextual study for public media literacy promotion in Ireland	Dublin Institute of Technology: Centre for Social and Educational Research	No
2014	Št'astna, L. & Wolák, R.	Czech Republic	Do parents have anything to rely on?	European Journal of Science and Theology	Yes
2018	Austin, E.W., Austin, B.W., French, B.F. & Cohen, M.A.	United States	The effects of a nutrition media literacy intervention on parents' and youths' communication about food	Journal of Health Communication	Yes
2018	Rhinesmith, C., & Stanton, C.L.U.	United States	Developing media literacy in public libraries: Learning from community media centers	Public Library Quarterly	Yes
2018	Varuhin, A.	Hungary	Educating parents about gaming: Action research in a Hungarian elementary school	University of Tampere	No (master's thesis)
2019	Riesmeyer, C., Abel, B. & Großmann, A.	Germany	The family rules: The influence of parenting styles on adolescents' media literacy	MedienPadagogik (Translation: Media Education)	Yes
2019	Scull, T.M., Malik, C.V., Keefe, E.M. & Schoemann, A.	United States	Evaluating the short-term impact of Media Aware Parent, a web-based program for parents with the goal of adolescent sexual health promotion	Journal of Youth and Adolescence	Yes
2020	Austin, E.W., Austin, B.W. & Kaiser, K.	United States	Effects of family-centered media literacy training on family nutrition outcomes	Prevention Science	Yes
2020	Fundacja Mapa Pasji	Bulgaria, Cyprus Greece, Italy, Poland, European Union	Media literacy for parents in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Poland and on the EU level	Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union (European Commission)	No
2021	Latiana, L., Sumanto, R., Hasjiandito, A. & Shofwan, I.	Indonesia	Utilization of digital media literacy for parents of early childhood during the covid-19 pandemic in Semarang City	Jurnal Sains Sosio Humaniora (Translation: Journal of Sociology and Humanities)	Yes

Common quantitative methods included a pre-intervention assessment, implementation of an interactive media literacy curriculum, and a post-intervention assessment (Austin et al., 2018, Austin et al., 2020; Comer et al., 2008; Hindin et al., 2004; Scull et al., 2019), with some advancements in quantitative data collection tools to enhance reliability (i.e., Austin et al., 2018) and to build on previous correlational work (i.e., Comer et al., 2008).

The pattern among U.S.-based researchers appeared to be to introduce media literacy lessons to parents in ways that generalize their experiences through presumptions about their needs in somewhat of a laboratory fashion. For example, Hindin et al. (2004) taught media literacy skills to parent participants, who all had preschool children enrolled in a Head Start program, via a hands-on curriculum that covered the evaluation of nutrition (mis)information on food labels and claims made in television food commercial advertisements in prerecorded segments. The intervention involved parents learning and then discussing media techniques used in food advertising, analyzing food products promoted on television, parents role-playing grocery shopping situations of children requesting advertised food products and practicing their responses. Parents were also tasked with structured homework assignment activities after each session that encouraged practice of food media analysis and talking with their children about television advertising. While their media examples could be personalized, participants had no input on the design, structure, content, or facilitation of the activities, which was true for all of the intervention studies. Though, perhaps well-intended, the quantitative, multivariate measurement of educational effectiveness here reduced the spectrum of critical thinking skills to narrow displays of learned behaviors. This cognitive behavioral approach to the research encouraged cultivation of skepticism in the parents as well as acquisition of language applicable to media analysis. While empiricists may argue on behalf of investigative rigor offered by such approaches, the absence of participant perspective not assigned to value-based a priori constraints raise more questions concerning how the depth of the experience may or may not be an accurate representation of what happens in their real lives. While the debate over quantitative versus qualitative methodological benefits is not unique to this field of research, the ongoing conundrum leaves the media literacy scholarship at a deficit. The strive for transferrable evaluative depth and validity in analysis that could help bolster the argument for such educational

programming sacrifices valuable participant insight that is only gleaned from narrative reflections on the lived experience. Research that accentuates both quantitative strength and qualitative detail of various perspectives could better represent what the field has to offer.

Some of the studies in this sample involved data collection from parents with their children, primarily in parent-child dyads participating in interactive workshops, followed by home and community lesson application, in a variety of formats. While centering the parent responsibility for creating the media culture for their children's home environment and optimal circumstances for the development of media literacy skills, and engaging dyads of fathers or mothers and their children, Riesmeyer et al. (2019) made explicit mention and demonstration of the need for parents to accompany their children in the media literacy learning process. Research included a parent or grandparent in the exploration of media management and family dynamics (Austin et al., 2020; Comer et al., 2008; Varuhin, 2018). Researchers employed parent-adolescent dyads in a "think aloud" media evaluation task using Instagram as the focal point (Riesmeyer et al., 2019), facilitated concurrent parent-child/family activities (Austin et al., 2018) or meetings (Austin et al., 2020). Exceptions to the dyad configuration included Scull et al.'s (2019) self-paced, self-directed interactive Media Aware Parent program, designed for a parent to complete without their child, and the investigation of perspectives of community media center experts rather than parents (Rhinesmith et al., 2018). The dyad studies illustrate dynamics of the family system as an important component in community media literacy education, discounting a singular reliance on children to gain such skills through school curriculum to then bring home and teach their parents. These emergent approaches advance the media literacy discourse by acknowledging parents as first educators of their children and the home environment as an informal learning space. Parents are also acknowledged as media literacy learners as researchers draw on the value of lessons applying to contexts of their lived experiences. Children are relieved of pressures and strains on their relationships that may stem from expectations that they act as their parents' teachers, just as parents are released from concerns about their children navigating a kind of mediated culture that does not resemble their own developmental experiences. Researchers are beginning to address parental concerns attached to a lack of credible, structured education to prepare or guide them, but more investigative work should be initiated toward the

discovery of best practices for media literacy instruction for parents.

Most of the studies that originated outside of the United States relied on multimodal exploratory qualitative research techniques. For example, methods in Ireland, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Poland, and on the European Union Level, involved document analysis and focus group interviews (Fundacja Mapa Pasji, 2020; O'Neill & Barnes, 2008). Fundacja Mapa Pasji (2020) also utilized questionnaires. While Varuhin's (2018) action research thesis project was the only study to engage a clear intervention design – an informal co-playing workshop at an elementary school in Hungary – methods for data collection (interviews, observations, and group discussion) – aligned with other studies conducted in countries outside of the United States. Individual parent (Št'astná & Wolák, 2014) or parent-child dyad interviews (Riesmeyer et al., 2019) were the most common mode of data collection across this segment of the sample. The European approach toward community media literacy parent education appears to be grounded in aspects of andragogic theory (i.e., Knowles, 1980), accounting for a range of perspectives, leading with an assessment of real-life circumstances, investigation of what is current, type of information wanted or needed, engaging parents as sources of knowledge and experts of their own family dispositions and experiences. Researchers outside of the United States appear to place great emphasis on discovery investigations, assessing current circumstances, resources, and essentials, which fosters the vested interest of potential beneficiaries; a model more U.S.-based researchers should follow. Such a methodological approach can generate rich data that inform development of programming reflective of diverse narrative points-of-view. Opening a dialogue with community members, while in the early stages of constructing educational opportunities intended for their benefit, can help future program participants better understand the interdependent nature of the ecological system that encompasses their relationship with media, and media literacy's role in determining the health of that relationship.

Deliberate attempts were apparent in three studies originating outside of the United States to situate parents as sources of knowledge toward construction of educational needs assessments informing the design of media literacy instructional programming and support materials. While assessing existing resources, researchers identified parents across Europe who

recognized media as an omnipresent part of their children's lives and were willing to develop their own media literacy competencies (Fundacja Mapa Pasji, 2020; Št'astná & Wolák, 2014). Though not strictly addressing parents but adults in Ireland, the work of O'Neill and Barnes (2008) sought to inform the development of media literacy programs and policies based on public interests. Similarly, three studies referenced frustrations, difficulties, or concerns about how to parent within this uniquely mediated context without gathering explicit comments from parents (Austin et al., 2018; Latiana et al., 2021; Riesmeyer et al., 2019). Outside of the United States, targeting the design of responsive instruction through a parental lens, such as the three-phase project of Št'astná and Wolak (2014) that explored the problems and needs of parents in connection with parental mediation, and framing parents as media literacy educators within their own homes (Fundacja Mapa Pasji, 2020; Varuhin, 2018), stretches media literacy discourse in a social constructivist direction that extends beyond school learning spaces and into the community.

Integrating media literacy with parental mediation instruction toward positive, healthy socialization for children

In addressing parents as learners within media literacy education, research objectives of six studies encompass ways to educate parents in mediation strategies and media literacy instruction, with the goal of positive socialization of their children. For instance, applying lessons in media literacy to the analysis of food labels, and demonstrations of how parents of young children can discuss what they see in television commercials, was one way of potentially enhancing parental ability to mediate the influence of advertising on their children (Hindin et al., 2004). In addition, communication dynamics between parents and their children when discussing food label content, as highlighted by Austin et al. (2018), was a focal point for connecting parent expectancies of mediation and their children making fewer requests for advertised—and often less healthy – food products. Further research leveraged family affinity for media use to improve media literacy skills, management of the home media ecology, and communication dynamics – including family conflicts around food-related messages – from the children initiating discussions to consumption of healthier food options by the children (Austin et al.,

2020). Beyond addressing nutrition-related behaviors, documenting the education of parents on media mediation and parent-child communication sought improvement in adolescent sexual health outcomes (Scull et al., 2019), youth anxiety and threat perception (Comer et al., 2008). Varuhin (2018), the only European-based study in this grouping, employed a similar, yet more informal, approach to strengthening parent media literacy skills in video game co-play as a mediation strategy toward children participating in positive gaming culture. In all, the common research presupposition could be one of mediation as a parenting skill to be taught alongside parents learning to critically think and communicate about media, as they are addressed as educators within their own homes, in favor of their children's health and wellbeing. Researchers are drawing on existing family circumstances and relationships with media around the home environment as they offer participants skills to skew engagement experiences toward favorable outcomes.

Parents learning and then modeling media literacy skills leads to positive outcomes with their children. As mothers learned to think more critically about terrorism-related news content, through coping and media literacy training, their own threat perceptions were lowered, reactions were adjusted, and they were able to help their children better cope with threatening news (Comer et al., 2008). Warm, less authoritarian parenting styles translated into adolescents less likely to be influenced by media content (Riesmeyer et al., 2019). And as parents "discuss, interpret, evaluate television commercials with their children, the children also internalize those skills" (Hindin et al., 2004, p. 37). Instances of parents developing media literacy skills and improving the quality of their communication, as their beliefs, family media rules, and frequency of engagement in evaluative or restrictive mediation remained unchanged, resulted in better sexual health outcomes for their children (Scull et al., 2019).

In essence, media literacy for parents contributes to the healthy development, better mental health, and self-esteem of their children. Such results support the argument that effective approaches toward educating children and effecting positive behavior changes, to be media literate lie in the education of their parents. What this conveys is that every effort toward media literacy instruction for students must simultaneously address their parents as learners as well.

Interventions show short-term effectiveness

Intervention results show short-term effectiveness of targeted education for parents in terms of improvements in parent-child communication and healthy family decision-making together. In Hindin et al.'s (2004) quasi-experiment, parents were tested before and after a four-week comparison condition involving a food safety nutrition education curriculum, as well as before and after the subsequent four-week media-based nutrition education curriculum designed for the study. Parent self-efficacy, behavior capabilities, and outcome expectations were enhanced through the modeling and practicing of new skills in workshop settings, in their home environments, and food shopping trips (Hindin et al., 2004). Evaluations showed immediate impact. However, there was no mention of a follow-up assessment of how parents fared weeks or months later. Within the realm of adolescent sexual health, as parents learned to become more skeptical of media messages, they were able to help their children prevent internalization of misinformation about unhealthy sexual scripts. Adolescents showed favorable demonstrations of communication about sexual health (whether with a parent or a medical professional), and they were less willing to go along with unwanted hookups (Scull et al., 2019). For Austin et al., (2018), family-based media literacy intervention (FoodMania!) curriculum, and parental media mediation strategies focused on family discussion rather than control of screen time, directly decreased susceptibility, influence of Wishful Identification (a predictor of behavior choices and, in this context, refers to children wanting to become or emulate characters they see portrayed in food marketing), and impact of message desirability (gauged by attractive elements in media messages). As they learned to evaluate media messaging about food marketed to their children, parents strengthened logical reasoning toward decisions about food purchases as well as how their families discussed nutrition (Austin et al., 2018). Parents improved their critical thinking about food marketing, "increased their efficacy for making healthy dietary changes for their families, and engage in more discussion about nutrition labels with their children." (Austin et al., 2018, p. 196). In addition, parents discovered enjoyable opportunities to teach their children the discipline of critical thinking through their interactions about media (Austin et al., 2020). In the context of game education, parents can experience changes in their attitudes toward gaming and gaming culture by co-playing activities (Varuhin, 2018). And in

cases of parents navigating sudden roles as formal educators of their children during the Covid-19 pandemic, research showed increases in their access and understanding of digital media information (Latiana et al., 2021). All immediate and short-term results reflect positive effectiveness of media literacy education for parents, yet the question of long-term changes remains. With the exception of Varuhin (2018), who briefly mentioned a follow-up where lessons learned in the gaming co-play workshop were not apparent a mere one month later, all of the intervention reports in this sample invoke the need for further inquiries into how such educational approaches generate long-term impact for parents or their children. Interventions in this sample validated efforts of the researchers in affirming investigative processes. Yet, where evidence of efficacy is crucial is in the identification of how the family system is affected by newly introduced media literacy-informed habits that reshape the ecological relationships.

Assessing parent needs and receptiveness to learning

Parents are interested in media literacy education for themselves and are willing to participate in, and even help construct, programming designed to support them. More specifically, if it is clear that educational content can address prevalent issues of parental concern, as in media's role in the health and well-being of their children, parents have shown that they will get involved (Hindin et al., 2004). While citing issues such as keeping up with media trends, tools for controlling their children's media content exposure, cyber security, family media management, overestimating their own knowledge and skill, parents confirm the need for media literacy education and that their needs are not yet being met through governmental policies or the school systems (Fundacja Mapa Pasji, 2020). Notably, even within the context of expressing concerns about media, research revealed that parents would prefer to be taught mediation and media literacy skills through the media, i.e., television programming, books, or web applications (Št'astná & Wolák, 2014) – a point that accentuates the complexity of media acculturation. In general, parents have accepted media's omnipresence in their lives and are seeking guidance on how to best apply methods for healthy management. Inviting parents into the development phase of such guidance, in the form of responsive media literacy education design, can serve as a point of entry toward understanding its relevance to their lived experiences.

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

Literature included in this review affirms that community educational interest and opportunity exist beyond K-12 spaces where media literacy can be applied to innumerable aspects of everyday living from the parent perspective. Examples of application in this sample included: nutrition education and food choices (Austin et al., 2018; Hindin et al., 2004), adolescent sexual health (Scull et al., 2019), terrorism and mental health (Comer et al., 2008), family dynamics and communication, healthy food consumption, and the nutrition home environment (Austin et al., 2018), obesity risk factors, family conflict (Austin et al., 2020), gaming education (Varuhin, 2018) parenting styles (Riesmeyer et al., 2019), values, religious faith, and character (Št'astná & Wolák, 2014).

Ways to educate parents in mediation strategies served as a transitional bridge to media literacy instruction for half of the studies in this sample (Austin et al., 2018; Austin et al., 2020; Comer et al., 2008; Hindin et al., 2004; Scull et al., 2019; Varuhin, 2018). All of these studies addressed the health and well-being of children as parents were framed as educators within their own homes. Broader areas of study extend media literacy education and the practice of media literacy skills toward mitigating potential negative effects of media on aspects of individual, familial, and societal health. Inherent in the concentration on such issues as bases for the application of parental critical thought toward media content is recognition of all media as products of construction, targeted, and persuasive by intentional design. The most significant point that warrants expansion in the research is that parents occupy their own blind spot as the most influential agents of socialization in the lives of their children – a fact that may be ubiquitous in psychological and sociological references but is overshadowed in media studies. However, in standard practice, parents may feel overtaken by the dominance of media and diminished by feelings of intimidation if they view themselves as digital immigrants (i.e., Bayne & Ross, 2007). But if media literacy researchers, educators, and advocates can synchronize their messaging to parents, the field could ignite a seismic shift toward clarity in the public sphere.

In the U.S., this developing body of evidence could be strengthened by incorporating more of the parent point-of-view in both instructional design and insights from their home media environments. Outside of the United States, targeting the design of responsive instruction through a parental lens, and framing parents

as media literacy educators within their own homes, stretches media literacy discourse in a social constructivist direction that extends beyond school learning spaces and into the community. Engaging the parent-participant as expert, advisor, learner, beneficiary, and then informal educator is a model that should be explored in U.S.-based research inquiries toward community media literacy education. Such an approach supports the belief that solutions for community-level confusion about media literacy will be found at and within the community level. Still, any approaches to educational solutions must begin by establishing universal understanding of the meaning and practical application of media literacy.

Scholarly significance can be noted in the investigative angles researchers applied to selected phenomena and attempts to chart new territory. The latter is evident in Austin et al.'s (2018) claim of conducting the first intervention "designed for parents and youth jointly to explicitly address communication dynamics among parents, their children, and media." (p. 196). Hindin et al. (2004), recruited parents of preschoolers to conduct what they claim to be the first intervention study to apply media literacy concepts and strategies to television food advertising. Further, while adolescent development is not a novel concept in media literacy discourse, identifying connections to the quality of parent-child communication, particularly in the context of sexual health, is an angle that advances scholarship design (Scull et al., 2019). In discussions of parental mediation, references to strategies widely accepted as foundational in the literature (e.g., active mediation, restrictive mediation, co-experiential mediation), were expanded by Varuhin's (2018) addition of subcategories to the concept of co-playing (i.e., overseeing, encouragement, and immersion), and the introduction of *support activities* as a fresh thematic dimension to foster examination of factors of facilitation and influence. With regard to explicit research statements concerning developments over time, prior works or studies yet to be done, no discernible patterns were identified within the sample. This may be due to the range of topics, contexts, populations, and originating locations for the studies, in addition to how media literacy education for parents is an emerging area of interest. Or, the absence of patterns may be explained as varied attempts to circumvent inherent challenges that lie in untangling the web of approaches to media literacy. Researchers may find that establishing a new baseline of coherence, as demonstrated by the three empirical firsts in research design featured in this

sample, to be a more productive, or perhaps more feasible, contribution to the field.

Addressing parents as learners in media literacy scholarship, instructional practices, and advocacy adds a new dimension to the field. But as this is an area of inquiry that is merely beginning to garner attention, best practices of media literacy instruction for parents have yet to be established. Within the parent population is the potential of propelling the media literacy movement beyond – and simultaneously for – K-12 students.

This literature review revealed strengths in both intervention approaches toward research design and exploratory investigations that engaged parent insights to inform the direction of instructional development and support. Publishing more scholarship that does not attempt to extend the media literacy discourse for the public's benefit risks further perpetuation of the field's confusion.

Instructional design applicable to parents/adults in community education may require a grounded approach where scholars put forth community-generated or scholar-community co-constructed knowledge. Future research must begin by settling a clear conceptualization of media literacy and media literacy education from the parent perspective, and then building instruction for parents from their insights.

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APPENDIX

Master code list

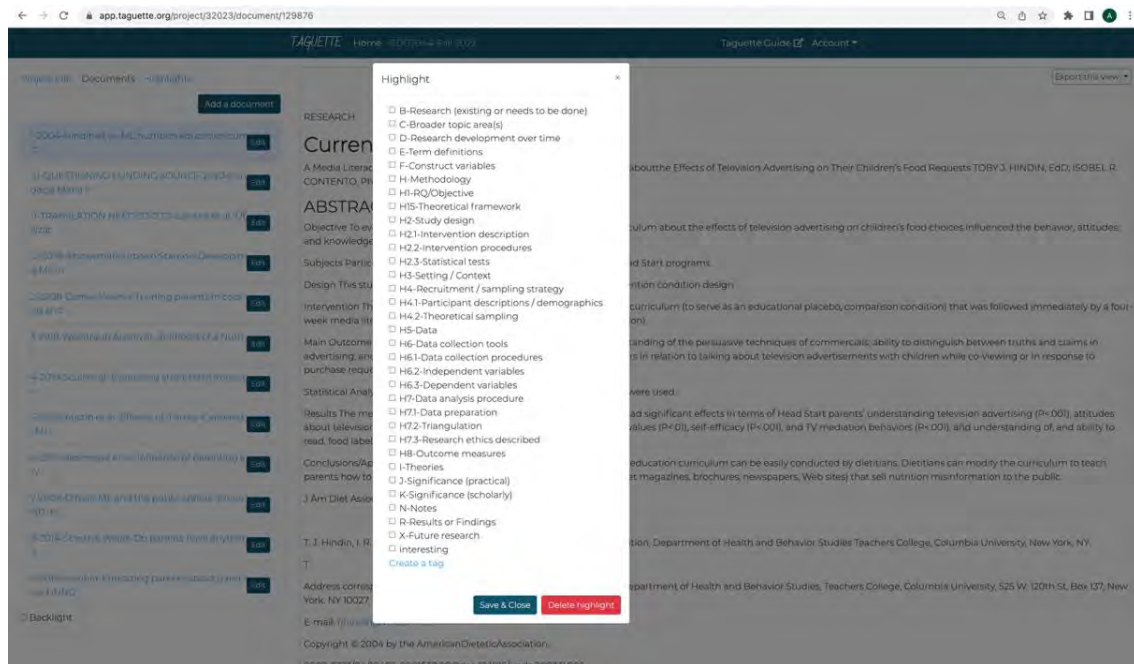


Figure 1. Snapshot of master code list (overlying interface) within Taguette qualitative coding software