Fostering Media Literacy Skills among Middle School Students through Animated Films: A Case Study in a Children's Defense Fund Freedom School Program

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In the highly technologized 21st century, students have more readily available access to various media information. It is essential that popular culture and media messages are included in the official curriculum to make the learning developmentally responsive to students' lived experiences, social needs, and academic needs. A case study was conducted in a Children's Defense Fund (CDF) Freedom School program during the summer to explore the potential of media literacy education to enhance young children's critical understanding of media messages. The animated film *Megamind* was utilized in the lessons, which centered on deconstructing media messages and stereotypical representations of characters and constructing students' media products. The study found that the integration of animated films in media literacy education enhanced students' understanding of media that is relevant to the real world and developed their competency as active agents. In this sense, media literacy education shows the potential to promote civic learning among adolescents.

Scholars have emphasized the need for media literacy education in the 21st century. In this information-rich age, students must develop critical thinking about the abundant amount of information that bombards them every day (Beatty, 2019; Breivik, 2005; Kellner, 2007; Ptaszek, 2019). Likewise, students should learn to employ appropriate mediums to develop their voices and be actively engaged in the construction of democracy (Burch, 2020; Kubey, 2004, 2005; Martens & Hobbs, 2015). In other words, the purpose of media literacy education should go beyond cultivating students with technological proficiency (Domine, 2011) or multimodal competency (Morell, 2018). It should aim at helping students use multimodal meaning-making tools to develop critical habits of mind and inquiry about media interpretation and production. It should also develop students' ability to "recognize and engage with the social and political influence of media in everyday life" (Hoechsmann and Poyntz, 2012, p. 1) as critical consumers and producers of various forms of media. In this sense, media literacy education can

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contribute to civic learning in school (Chamberlin, 2021; Domine, 2011; Media Literacy Week, 2021).

To gain an in-depth understanding of students' experiences with media literacy and of how media literacy skills can foster civic learning among children and young adults, we conducted a case study in a Children's Defense Fund (CDF) Freedom School in a southern state of the U.S. in the Summer of 2018. The CDF Freedom Schools program is one example of an alternative program that utilizes culturally responsive teaching practices with students in a classroom setting (Hale, 2011; Scott, Renbarger, and Laird, 2020).

In our case study, we used the MediaLit Kit as the framework of the lesson plans. MediaLit Kit was developed for K-12 educators by The Center for Media Literacy (CML), an organization that provides educational resources in media literacy education in the U.S. and around the world (CML, 2022). This framework contains educational tools that "reflect a philosophy of empowerment through education and articulate the key components of an inquiry-based media literacy education" (CML Framework). This framework was most appropriate at the time of this study because few research studies explored media literacy practices in middle schools.

In addition to describing how the adolescents in the study experienced exposure to media messages, this case study also explores an alternative pedagogy that can be developmentally responsive to young adolescents' academic and civic learning. The following research questions guided this case study:

(1) What are the experiences of adolescents when they are learning about media literacy through an animated film?
(2) Within the context of media literacy education, what processes facilitate the deconstruction and construction of media messages?

Literature Review
The Expanded Understandings of Literacy
Many scholars have advocated a broader understanding of literacy from the sociocultural perspective: literacy as multiple or multimodal socially and culturally constructed meaning-making practices (Bezemer and Kress, 2008; Cope and Kalantzis, 2009, 2018; Gee, 2004, 2009; Kress, 1997, 2001, 2009; Miller, 2007; New London Group, 1996; Street, 1997). Reconceptualization of literacy means the potential of diverse semiotic resources in meaning-making has been widely recognized, for example, in the realms of the visual, the audio, space, gesture, and so on (Alvermann, 2002; Kress, 1997, 2001, 2009; New London Group, 1996). In the age of technology with an increased focus on diversity, literacy should no longer be understood in the traditional sense, that is, linguistic systems as the only medium to make meaning in the form of written or oral texts (Cope and Kalantzis, 2009, 2018; Miller, 2007, 2015). Instead, literacy involves interpreting and constructing multimodal print and nonprint-based texts. In addition, in the "post-truth era" (Higgins, 2016), scholars broadened the understanding of literacy with the introduction of critical literacy and critical pedagogy (Bacon, 2017; Janks, 2014; Luke, 2012). Literacy has expanded to include the use of multimodal communication to "analyze, critique, and transform the norms, rule systems, and practices governing the social fields of everyday life" (Luke, 2012, p. 5). A broader sense of literacy also involves recognizing students' autonomy and making "a shift in the balance of agency" (Cope, Kalantzis, and Smith, 2018, p. 9) through multiple ways of meaning-making.

Freire (1985) said that writing and reading is an artistic event. This is especially the case in the 21st century. As viewed from the sociocultural perspective, "literacy is aesthetic, material and multimodal" (Rowsell and Pahl, 2015, p. 1). Reconceptualization of literacy means the disruption of monomodality that has dominated Western culture and the extension of the scope of literacy pedagogy and transformation of literacy practices (Rowsell and Pahl, 2015). In other words, diversity as a pedagogical asset requires the inclusion of diverse social semiotic symbols in knowledge construction. The purpose of integrating multimodal literacy practices in literacy learning is to disrupt the centrality of linguistic symbols. Various semiotic systems, such as visual or audio presentations of artistic work, numbers, body languages, popular

culture, etc., intrigue students and allow them to use their imagination to communicate with others and develop their voices in the dialogue through their artistic expression works. They are no longer passive receivers of official knowledge but active creators of their own knowledge. They also disrupt the existing power relationship of the social contexts they inhabit. In this sense, literacy is more than the capacity for cognitive development of linguistic skills; it also refers to empowering people through dialogue and creation.

The Broadened Understanding of Media Literacy and Media Literacy Education

The reconceptualization of literacy and the emergence of media literacy education have also generated a broader understanding of media literacy. Media literacy is no longer associated with the ability to assess, understand, analyze, and evaluate media messages in multimodal meaning-making tools; rather, in an era of technological revolution, it is often related to the ability to interpret and analyze the technology-mediated messages (Diergarten, Mockel, Nieding, and Ohler, 2017; Domine, 2011; Hobbs and Moore, 2013; Kellner and Share, 2005). Besides this, media literacy has broadened its purpose and includes the capacity to critically weigh media information and use reasoning to think and act according to ethical standards (Domine, 2011). In this sense, media literacy aims at empowering people by encouraging them to be critical thinkers and creative producers of media messages.

Recent decades have witnessed a critical turn in media literacy and media literacy education at all levels (Marlatt, 2020; Stoddard, Tunstall, Walker, and Wight, 2021; Trope, Johnson, and Demetriades, 2021; Walker, 2021). The focus of media literacy activities is no longer limited to utilizing multiple modes of meaning-making to produce media messages. Instead, these activities also aim to use these multimodal media as powerful tools to frame the issues related to bureaucracy, marginalization, or injustice in order to demystify the normalcy concealed in media messages and to disrupt the dominant ideologies and the social structure of power (Chamberlin, 2021; Funk, Kellner, and Share, 2016; Hobbs, 2020). In this sense, the broadened understanding of media literacy includes the competencies that empower people by helping them develop "the habits of inquiry and skills of expression that they need to be critical thinkers, effective communicators and active citizens in today's world" (National Association for Media Literacy Education, 2020).

Domine (2011) points out that the "primary challenges of education in the United States are not technical, but rather social, political and economic in nature" (p. 8). Therefore, the introduction of media literacy education in education, in school or outside of school, is conducive to civic learning. When students can produce and reproduce their own media messages, they can engage in hands-on and minds-on practices. Because in this learning process, students are not only playing with media (hands-on) but also working with ideas (minds-on) and thinking about what they are doing and learning (Hobbs, 2016). The act of media making and sharing leverages creativity and imagination and gives students space and opportunity to present their opinions. That is why media making and sharing, according to Trope, Johnson, and Demetriades (2021), is a necessary form of civic engagement. In addition, media making motivates students to imagine a better world, which requires them to examine the civic issues, conflicts, and opportunities (Stoddard, Tunstall, Walker, and Wight, 2021), and this aligns with the purpose of civic education (Carretero, Haste, and Bermudes, 2016).

Media Literacy Education and the Educational Standards

Media literacy education was introduced in the K-12 classrooms in the U.S. throughout the 1990s (Hobbs, 2004). Its significance has been recognized in educational standards at various levels. Take Common Core State Standards as an example. Developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) to center on students' college and career readiness, Common Core Standards were adopted by 41 of 50 states in the U.S. in 2010. Within the framework of English Language Arts (ELA) of Common

Core Standards, media literacy is implicitly or explicitly mentioned. For example, the *Speaking and Listening* section of the standards for second grade implies media literacy practices: it says students should be able to "recount or describe key ideas from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media" (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.2.2). The *Writing* component for fifth grade explicitly addresses media literacy knowledge:

> With some guidance and support from adults, [students should be able to] use technology, including the internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of two pages in a single setting" (CCSS.ELA-LITERATURE.W.5.5).

Similarly, in the Texas Education Knowledge and Skill Standards (TEKS), the official standards adopted by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for the state of Texas, media literacy objectives are also explicitly stated at each grade level. Most of these objectives align within the ELAR framework, such as ELAR Standard 110.12 (b) 12A, which focuses on cultivating abilities to analyze advertising techniques' positive and negative effects. All these statements in the various educational standards suggest that media literacy education for young children has been recognized.

Nevertheless, even though "all state curricular frameworks now contain one or more elements calling for media education" (Kubey, 2004, p. 75), most children are not media literate because many schools still concentrate solely on the study of conventional forms of literacy. However, in the 21st century, traditional training in literature and print communication is no longer sufficient in developing students' critical thinking about the media students are exposed to in their daily lives, such as advertising, comic books, and animated films (Kubey, 2005; Marsh & Millard, 2000).

The Use of Animated Films in Adolescent Learning

Multimodal communication is complicated by the development of technology in the digital age and globalization. However, it also suggests the opportunity to introduce multimodal literacy into classroom teaching, for example, animated films. Animated films should be considered a valuable teaching resource because of their entertainment and educational value (Asseel, 2020; Champoux, 2012; Turkman, 2016). Animated films depict a form of life humorously and joyfully through moving images, colors, and sounds, which mesmerizes young children (Turkman, 2016). Moreover, this can be an entry point for learning in different disciplines. In the mixed-method study of a social studies course, Fidan and Ay (2016) find that operational environmental literacy activities organized around different media, including news stories, documentaries, cartoons, films, and animations, helped enrich students' environmental literacy and shaped their perceptions of environmental responsibility. Moje, Overby, Tysvaer, and Morris (2008) discover that in literacy education, the connection between the Japanese animated cartoons and the reading of mange shaped how young people read and write print and other symbols.

However, there are controversies over the use of animated films. One of the concerns is that animated films may misrepresent the world. For example, humor hides violence (Turkmann, 2016), or euphemism disguises the ideological and power issues through animated films (Asseel, 2020). Moreover, it is uncertain whether animated films can enhance young children's cognitive and logical reasoning (Turkmen, 2016). Research has found that children may find it hard to distinguish fiction and fact at a young age, which will increase their vulnerability to the fictional life presented in animated films (Turkmen, 2016).

There has been recognition of the impacts, positive or negative, of animated film on children because of its manipulative and interactive nature (Asseel, 2020; Attard & Cremona, 2021; Huang, 2016; Middaugh, 2019). For example, Brocato, Gentile, Laczniak, Maier, and Ji-Son (2010) examine the effects of cartoon programming on children in their study. Their study points out shows like *Scooby-Doo* and *Looney Tunes* display mild to extreme forms of violence that encourage negative behavior among young children. Although there is a growing number of studies that have explored

integrating films into media literacy education among students at different levels (Dehart, 2020; Domke, Weippert, and Apol, 2018; Hobbs, 2007; May, 2007; Stuckey & Kring, 2007; Vandermeersche, Soetaert, & Rutten, 2013), not enough attention has been given to the role of media literacy education in empowering children through animated films. Considering that around age ten, children have already developed the ability to understand such abstract ideas as morality, ethics, civic action (Diergarten, Mockel, Nieding, & Ohler, 2017), adolescents must be equipped with media literacy knowledge and skills and learn how to take a critical stance at the media messages that they are exposed to in their daily life.

Methodology
The Overview of the CDF Freedom School Program

Established in 1995, the Children's Defense Fund Freedom School program has had 182 program sites across the U.S. and has reached more than 150,000 children (K-12) (Children's Defense Fund, 2021). CDF Freedom Schools partners with local congregations, schools or school districts, universities, community organizations, and juvenile detention facilities to provide a summer and after-school literacy enrichment program for children and young adults (known as *scholars* in the CDF Freedom Schools)in communities of need with the purpose of empowering them so that they can "excel and believe in their ability to make a difference in themselves and in their families, schools, communities, country, and world with hope, education and action" (Children's Defense Fund, 2021). This program's academic and social learning is realized through the research-based, multicultural Integrated Reading Curriculum (IRC). This learning not only stems from summer learning loss but also foster these scholars' civic engagement (Children's Defense Fund, 2021), that is, the way the scholars participate in public life and improve conditions for the common good (Adler and Goggine, 2005; Martens and Hobbs, 2015).

Research Context and Participants

This case study was conducted at a middle school in Central Texas. The participants were in a Freedom School program sponsored by a local university and school district. The seven-week-long Freedom Schools program is a literacy enrichment program aiming to prevent summer learning loss and provide culturally relevant teaching practices to foster academic motivation and engagement among participants.

The qualitative research design of this study utilizes a narrative case study methodological approach. Case study research is a form of interpretive research (Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995). Narrative inquiry is a methodological approach informed by Plokinghorne (1995)'s concept of narrative inquiry that "uses paradigm thinking to create descriptions of themes that hold across stories or taxonomies of types of stories, and narrative analysis" (p. 31). Based on the premise that one builds meaning through social interactions, experience, and a story, narrative inquiry concerns the participants' lived experiences, perceptions, and interpretations. Grounded in hermeneutic and phenomenological contexts, this type of qualitative research seeks to examine how a story is constructed, by whom, and the discourse of the experience. In this case, a narrative inquiry was most appropriate for this study because it provides a detailed account of participants' experiences, harnessed in understanding how they constructed their own stories around the experience.

This case study focused on the lived experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of the student participants in the Film Studies afternoon activity. Convenience sampling was adopted in the case study because of the time, availability of the research site, and participants (Merriam, 2009). Fifteen students were chosen, and consent forms were given to the parents/guardians. Of the fifteen consent forms received, six were determined to be the final participants of the study. These six students were all local and came from low-socioeconomic families: five Hispanic/Latinx ethnic origins and one Caucasian. Of the six students, four were identified as male and two as female.

Research Design

The CGI animated film *Megamind* was chosen for this study. It was produced by DreamWorks

Animation and released in 2010. It tells the story of an alien supervillain, Megamind, and his nemesis. There are three elements in this film that make it ideal for this case study: villain as the protagonist, emotional backstory, and redemption. The film *Megamind* puts the villain front and center as the main protagonist and narrator, and the events are portrayed through his perspective. It is an uncommon choice in animated films because the narrator offers a counter-cultural perspective of good and evil. While it's possible that the mixed message about good and evil conveyed in this film may arouse people's concern, we must realize that the artistic presentations of these mixed messages, for example, humor and irony laced with the counter-cultural belief of good and evil, are used to balance out the dissonance. This element provides opportunities for students to develop a critical understanding of the presentations of media messages, including why the choices were made, how they affected people, and who can benefit from these choices. Students became aware of how complex and controversial themes are presented in a film, even a funny animated film, during the analysis process. The element of redemption in this film is especially worth studying. It can provoke students' thinking about obligation, justice, and consequences of one's behaviors. In a nutshell, each of these three elements in *Megamind* can inspire students' critical thinking about the values and viewpoints depicted in the film.

The two primary instruments used for data collection were surveys and lesson plans. In a 90-minute session, informal interview questions that we composed according to the research questions were asked to help us assess students' prior knowledge about media literacy. After participating in the seven lessons and activities designed to help them understand more about media literacy skills, students took part in a post-survey in a 90-minute session to assess their learning growth and the effectiveness of the lesson plans (See Appendixes). Brooks and Brooks's (2004) five principles of implementing constructivism in the classroom were applied to the design of the five lesson plans in this summer program. To elaborate, (1) posing problems

that were relevant and student-focused; (2) structuring learning opportunities around primary concepts; (3) seeking and valuing students' perspectives and points of view; adapting instruction to address student needs; and (5) assessing student learning in the context of teaching; remained the focus and modifications were made based on the deep alignment of these guiding principles (Brooks & Brooks, 2004). Using CML's MediaLit Kit as the framework, the lessons started with a question that guided students' discussion in their exploration. The researchers took field notes and made memos of students' participation and interactions. Changes were made to the lesson plans according to students' progress and interest. After each lesson, the researchers documented reflections on the process.

All five questions that guided the lessons were centered on the discussion of *Megamind*. There were different discussions: think-pair-share, a yes/no paddle name, and direct questioning. Establishing their answers to the discussion questions is a constructivist activity that allows students time and space to construct different products based on their shared opinions and explicit information. Table 1 examines the lesson plans and the activities designed for them. For the final lesson, a concluding survey aimed to understand whether students had increased media literacy skills and knowledge.

After the data was collected, it was coded and categorized according to a qualitative study protocol. CML's MediaLit Kit was used to identify responses by themes to address the research questions during the categorizing process. In utilizing the survey instrument, most frequent responses were noted and were organized to form sub-categories, categories, and more significant themes. Lesson plans provided overarching questions to be answered, so these questions (and the frequency in types of responses) guided the organization of findings, and peer debriefing sessions allowed for inter-coder reliability and saliency of the themes presented in the study.

Table 1. Lesson Plan Study Schedule

Lesson	Focus Question	Activities
1	Who created this message?	Students engaged in discussion, an internet search activity, and a group poster project to answer this question about *Megamind*.
2	What techniques are used to draw your attention?	Students participated in an analytical discussion of scenes from *Megamind* and recorded short videos based on an assigned emotion.
3	How might people understand this message differently than me?	Students participated in discussing and analyzing movie reviews written by various individuals with opposing opinions on *Megamind*. Students then wrote and recorded their reviews of the film.
4	Why do people create media messages?	Students participated in a discussion and game about representation in *Megamind*. We determined whether certain people and views were represented or omitted in the film. Students then created their characters, specifically persons whose viewpoints were not represented in the film.
5	Why do peeople create media messages?	Students participated in the discussion and a writing exercise. We then began a final video project which spanned one additional meeting.

Findings

The Role of Children's Prior Knowledge about Popular Culture and Media in Media Literacy Education

Marsh and Millard (2000) state that children's experience with popular culture outside the classroom has been ignored in the official curriculum because parents and teachers are often concerned about sensitive topics such as sexism, racism, violence, and commercialism. Our case study confirmed their point that children in the 21st century are exposed to popular culture via various forms of media. Their experiences with these cultural texts can be navigated into the official curriculum and contribute to children's development.

Our pre-survey showed that before our media literacy lessons, all student participants but one had viewed the animated film *Megamind* when they were significantly younger- some as young as five. Their

parents/guardians/caregivers independently decided that this film was an appropriate media act even though the reasons remained unknown. This finding supports the idea that popular animated films are part of children's culture, and their integration into the official curriculum should be considered.

Media Literacy Knowledge & Skills and Expansion of Children's Understanding of the Society & Themselves

Lesson Three in our study was designed to stimulate students' understanding of the value of various perspectives. Students worked independently to write their own movie reviews and then with a classmate to film their movie reviews. By reading movie reviews of Megamind by very different people with very different opinions, students learned to analyze and compare the perspectives with their own. They were also challenged to explore the impact of media on their perspectives.

Students were asked to reflect on their perspectives displayed in their analysis of *Megamind*. During our case study, students realized how the media influenced societal perspectives. This resembles the findings of Boske and McCormack's (2011) study, in which high-school Latinx students were tasked with analyzing different societal perspectives displayed in the animated film *Happy Feet*.

Students in our study also learned to think critically about the representations in the film and the intentionality of the message presented. After watching clips from *Megamind*, students were tasked to create a character that was not represented in the film, drawing it on a piece of paper and writing 2 or 3 sentences about this character. Later, they were asked to make a video introducing their character. When doing so, students learned to develop a critical understanding of the figures in the films and make connections to the experiences of minority populations. Their commentary

everything needed in the scene was visible. Most of the tasks were in the form of group work. In other words, teaching activities in our study facilitated the construction of new knowledge based on prior knowledge in a socially constructive environment and aligned with the characteristics of constructivist teaching (Brooks & Brooks, 2020; Domine, 2011; Sjoberg, 2007).

However, the purpose of media literacy education goes beyond that. Media literacy should also involve critically analyzing and deconstructing media messages (DeHart, 2020; Hobbs, 2007; Kubey, 2005), a call of digital citizenship in the highly technologized 21st century (Buchholz, DeHart, & Moorman, 2020). In our study, students learned to identify the lack of representation in the animated film. It is a starting point to develop a critical awareness of biases seldom covered in the official curriculum. Students also began to appreciate different perspectives and made their

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on the inclusion of Hispanic characters in *Megamind* brought forth modern and even personal concerns about society. As Kubey (2004) argues, students who want to participate and make change within the political sphere must be given maximized instruction on ways of communication. Student participants in our study gained opportunities to analyze the misrepresentation and lack of presentation in media when deconstructing the existing media messages and constructing their own media messages. In this sense, media literacy lessons helped develop children's critical understanding of society.

Discussion

In our study of students' experience with media production and media analysis, participants showed increased competency for filming by initiating retakes, being precise about the angles, and making sure

media messages by constructing their media products. In this sense, media literacy education could contribute to the civic education of young children by integrating popular culture and media into the official curriculum.

Implications and Recommendations

This case study sheds light on the media literacy education facilitated by the integration of animated films. It could help to understand the experiences and perceptions of middle school students, who are at a critical stage of learning to develop critical thinking. Our study proved that media literacy education could be helpful not only in enhancing their literacy learning but also in civic education. During the deconstruction process, students learned to appreciate the different perspectives. Moreover, they learned to identify the unrecognized biases in the media messages and develop critical thinking about stereotypical

representations in popular culture. Students became active agents when employing media literacy knowledge and skills to construct their own media products, "articulating their problems, competence of understanding, explaining and changing communities for the better" (Ivanovic, 2014, p. 442). This finding aligns with what McArthur (2016) says about media literacy as a means of activism.

Therefore, teachers could consider integrating animated films into the official curriculum. Media literacy curriculum is a great way to facilitate learning new skills. It provides students with opportunities to explore multimodal literacy practices, including editing, filming, and other aesthetics, rhetoric, and strategic ways of communication. In short, conventional forms of literacy learning are expanded. In addition, when it comes to applying media literacy knowledge, students learn to use different media to make critical reflections on their experiences with media and develop a critical understanding of the media messages. In a nutshell, in this highly technologized 21st century, media literacy knowledge and skills are necessary for studying different subjects.

Limitations

There were a few limitations in this study. First, the study was conducted in a Freedom School program instead of a traditional school or educational context. It is a summer literacy enrichment program that subscribed to differences in pedagogy and practice with lesson plans created with a traditional school environment in mind. It was not a disadvantage to the design of the lessons but might impact the implementation of the lessons. Specifically, some techniques and philosophies structure Freedom School, which were not considered during class. As such, student demographics and overall curricular and instructional approaches were modified completely – all of which could have drastically impacted the outcomes of this study.

Secondly, this study followed the principle of convenience sampling to select the participants during the summer months. Students have had disinterest and/or increased interest regarding the content and

topics. This consideration also shaped the intended outcomes of the study.

Finally, middle school students were utilized as participants due to the parameters for recruiting and sustaining participants throughout the study. In this regard, the limited range in the youth demographic should be noted as a possible study limitation.

Conclusion

The study of media literacy is becoming more important as access to various forms of media becomes more readily available for students at different levels and different ages. Popular culture and media messages should be included in the official curriculum to make the learning developmentally responsive to students' lived experiences and academic and social needs. Our case study revealed the motivating potential of students' prior experience with media on their learning of media skills and participation in civic education as active agents. The study also implies the potential of media literacy education in developing young children's critical thinking and understanding of the media messages relevant to the real world.

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Appendix A: Pre-survey Questions
1. Have you ever seen the movie *Megamind* before tonight?
2. What did you think of the movie?
3. What did you like about the movie?
4. What did you dislike about the movie?
5. Do you think the creator of the movie was trying to tell you something?
6. What do you think the creator of the movie was trying to tell you?

Appendix B: Post-survey questions
1. Have you ever seen the movie *Megamind* before we watched it as a class?
2. What did you think of the movie?
3. What did you like about the movie?
4. What did you dislike about the movie?
5. Who created Megamind?
6. What techniques were used to attract your attention?
7. How might different people understand this message differently than you?
8. What lifestyles, values, and points of view are represented and omitted in Megamind?
9. Why was this message, Megamind, sent?

The lessons for the unit can be provided by request.