Article 1

My first article is titled *Media Literacy* and was written by David Kamerer for Communications Research Trends. In his article, he discusses the topic of Media Literacy and the importance of teaching our students how to evaluate and use information presented to them from sources such as television, radio, YouTube, and Internet articles. While, Vacca, Vacca and Mraz addressed this same topic, he provides a second viewpoint on the subject and references interesting studies to support his views as well as demonstrating the evolution of Media Literacy in the U.S.

One of the more interesting studies that Kamerer presents indicates that much of today’s Media Literacy education may have only short term benefits. He points out that many of the studies that demonstrate that much of the Media Literacy education that we provide our students is delivered in a short period of time and then assessed immediately afterwards. He then points out that studies show that a longer period of instruction in Media Literacy can result in increased writing skills as well as the ability to critically evaluate sources much more effectively.

Based on this article, I am going to continue to address Media Literacy in my classroom throughout the year. I believe that by reinforcing the concepts used to evaluate todays digital media I can help my students validate the legitimate wealth of information they have access to today. Also, I hope to help them identify the worthless data they are exposed to from advertising, blogs, and personal websites while still keeping an open mind.

Article 2

My second article was *New Teachers as Literacy Leaders* written by J.D. Turner, M.D. Applegate, and A.J. Applegate for The Reading Teacher. The article addresses the challenges faced by new teachers and provides encouragement and strategies to help them overcome these challenges and become, as the title suggests, literacy leaders. It then addresses the importance of modeling the importance of reading and literacy.

This article left me with two takeaways, the first was the importance of using assessment data to adapt literacy teaching strategies. The authors point out that “teachers have the opportunity to assess elements of the literacy experience that are missing from typical accountability measures”. By analyzing this data and combining it with traditional assessment data teachers can build a more complete picture of their students’ progress and adapt their teaching strategy to better meet their student’s needs.

The second takeaway was the importance of modeling the lifelong love of reading for my students, showing them how reading is important even as an adult. I give my students 15 minutes every day to read for pleasure and while they are reading I too read in a conspicuous place. By allowing time for them to read what they want to read, free from testing or any other pressure I attempt to instill the joy of reading into my students. By reading myself where they can see me, I am attempting to model the value and importance of reading even as an adult. At the end of the week we take 15 minutes and discuss our book, they discuss the elements in the story without think about it, it has become second nature to them now.

Article 3

My third article was written by Todd Finley and is entitled *8 Strategies for Teaching Academic Language.* In his article Finley discusses the need to teach *Academic Language* to facilitate learning. He defines *Academic Language* as those words needed to understand a lesson but that are not the subject of the lesson. For example, a student may need to know what “equation” means to solve a word problem. It would be impossible to accomplish the word problem without knowing the meaning of “equation” but the definition is not the primary goal of the lesson. When teaching I’m constantly trying to remember to use academic language.

Todd Finley outlines 8 specific strategies he feels help facilitate the teaching of academic language. Several of his strategies match and reinforce what Vacca, Vacca, Mraz have proposed in our text book. For example Finley advocates having students diagram similarities and differences. However, his 8th strategy is the one I am most interested in implementing.

Finley’s 8th strategy involves teaching the key words that students need to know to understand how to take standardized tests. With the new Smarter Balance testing occurring at my school in just a few weeks I will be ensuring that my students understand the *Academic Language* that the test will be using. I think that by giving them the tools they need to understand what the test is asking I will be helping them demonstrate their true depths of comprehension and showing how well they are meeting their potential.

#### References

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