

## In This Issue...

### **Theme: Media Literacy and the Globalization of Education** **02**

*The “knowledge economy” of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has led to a rapidly expanding global market in educational services. In this issue, we report on recent developments and examine their implications for media literacy education.*

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*In his commentary on CNN coverage of the September 2013 Washington, DC Naval Yard shootings, Daily Show host Jon Stewart gamely suggested that reporters speak (or scream) their unsubstantiated conclusions into a “speculation jar.” In this MediaLit Moment, your middle and lower level high school students will investigate why broadcast news reporters are so willing to report unverified information about breaking news stories, and they’ll have a chance to practice with guidelines for evaluating these stories.*

## Theme: Media Literacy and the Globalization of Education

It's likely that some of you who are reading this newsletter have taken your children to a Sylvan Learning Center. Sylvan Learning Centers are just the tip of an entire iceberg of education properties, however. In 1999, Sylvan Learning Systems was renamed Laureate Education Inc., and launched its Laureate International University Network with the acquisition of the Universidad de Europea de Madrid. Since then, the Laureate network has grown to include 75 institutions in 30 countries, with combined online and on-campus enrollments of about 800,000 students ([www.laureate.net](http://www.laureate.net))

In Qatar's "Education City," just outside the capital city of Doha, Cornell University has opened a medical school, and Georgetown University has opened a branch of its School of Foreign Service. Young women in traditional Qatari garb are welcomed to the Texas A&M engineering school with signs reading "Welcome Home, Aggie!" (Alberts, "The Globalization of Higher Education"). While students in these new (and newly acquired) schools may experience the benefits of intercultural exchange, there is no doubt these ventures are undertaken with the intention of capitalizing on the rapidly expanding global market in higher education.

Whether they're in Berkeley, New York or Doha, university admissions officers will be attracted to applicants with media literacy skills. Information literacy is essential to the "knowledge economy." Creativity and communication skills are essential to collaboration that takes place across different points of the globe. Skills in accessing new media and communications technologies make collaboration possible, and media production skills are frequently needed for participation in the media culture that binds the global economy together.

Traditional university systems have additional incentives for entering the global marketplace of educational services. As public expenditure on higher education continues to shrink, universities seek to supplement their incomes with online courses and offshore degree programs. Most foreign students who enroll at 'onshore' campuses pay the full cost of tuition, and so generate additional revenue for campus and local communities. In short, importing students and exporting learning services have become clear revenue streams (Hobson, "The Impact of Globalization on Higher Education," 480).

Student demand has also driven this market. In the recent past, online programs at for-profit schools such as the University of Phoenix were viewed as a "quick and dirty" route to a degree, with curricula and staff seen as inferior to those of brick-and-mortar non-profit institutions. And yet, even in traditional universities, student demand has been rising for more time-efficient courses of study, including short-term intensives and learning modules. And the increasing reach of programs which offer 'anytime, anywhere' learning—whether operated by the University of Phoenix or more prestigious institutions such as the British Open University-- has led to increased demand for programs which lead more directly to job and professional opportunities than traditional university programs (ibid).

The result is a highly mobile, highly competitive marketplace of educational services and student talent. Demand is increasing for information on international educational markets. A chemistry student in South Africa who aspires to graduate study in her field might consult global university rankings to shop for programs in Singapore or the U.K. In an interview with *Forbes* magazine, Ben Wildavsky, author of *The Great Brain Race: How Global Universities Are Re-Shaping the World*, offers one example of increased mobility of talent: “I think of a guy I spoke to in India. The IIT’s [Indian Institutes of Technology] are fiercely competitive. He came in No. 22 in the country on the national exam, which is extraordinary. He went to an ITT, and while he was there he won a place as a research assistant at a leading research institute in Switzerland. Then he landed an internship at UBS in Hong Kong, and after he graduated he worked for two years at UBS in Hong Kong and was transferred to London, where he is now” (quoted in Alberts).

In this issue of *Connections*, we report on the global education marketplace, and illuminate the place of media literacy education within it. In our research articles, we turn our attention to K-12 education. In this arena, we find that standards, benchmarks and outcomes for “world class” students often include skills needed for global awareness, and that these may be complemented by media literacy skills. In our resources section, we interview Robert Davis, Jr., Executive Director for Chinese Language and Culture Initiatives at the College Board, who has led many Chinese exchange programs, and promoted many Chinese language programs in U.S. schools. And, in our MediaLit Moment, we offer your students a chance to test their skills at evaluating the reliability of breaking news stories (and a couple of handy resources as well).

## Research Highlights

### Examples of Global Education Initiatives

The search for international standards in education is nearly a century old. In 1926, Adolph Ferrière, director of the International Office of New Schools in Geneva, formally surveyed 17 leaders in educational reform regarding a proposed international curriculum effort known as *maturité internationale*. The curriculum was intended to address the concerns of parents of students at the recently formed International School of Geneva (founded 1924) over acceptance to universities outside of Switzerland (Sylvester, "Historical Resources for Research in International Education," 16).

Concern about standards for national education systems is at least as old as *A Nation at Risk*, the report commissioned by Ronald Reagan in 1983 which argued that the U.S. educational system was failing to meet the need for a competitive workforce. An excellent American society, the authors asserted, will be "prepared through the education and skill of its people to respond to the challenges of a rapidly changing world." (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 14).

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, regulatory agencies have sometimes played a role as standard bearers. The British Office of Communications (Ofcom) furnishes one good example. In 2009, the British Department of Culture, Media and Sport published the Digital Britain report, whose authors declare their ambition "To make the UK a world leader in research, innovation, technology and creativity, by inspiring the next generation and creating the environment for digital talent to thrive" (165). A supplemental Ofcom report addresses educational expectations. What will allow digital talent to thrive in Britain? The authors of the Ofcom report argue that media literacy skills must be embedded across primary, secondary and adult curricula. Skills in critical analysis are essential: citizens should be able to "evaluate the origins, context and motivations associated with digital media and communications" (30); and schools are expected to encourage young people to get involved as "digital participants and creators to develop their creative and critical thinking skills" (31).

Some organizations which administer external examinations issue their own international credentials. In 1995, the College Board introduced the Advanced Placement International Diploma as a "globally recognized certificate for students with an international outlook" (Hayden, 133). Since the mid-1980s, secondary students in the U.K. have taken General Certification of Secondary Education (GCSE) exams in individual subjects. An International GCSE was approved by Cambridge Assessments in 1988, and today Cambridge International Examinations administers International A or AS Level university entrance exams in any combination of 55 subjects. Media Studies has been added as a subject for 2015. Among other topics, the Media Studies syllabus covers "institutions and audiences," "critical perspectives," and "global media." ([www.cie.org.uk](http://www.cie.org.uk))

Mastery of world languages is an obvious advantage to international commerce, and a

perennial international standard for education. National cultural organizations such as the Cervantes Institute, Goethe Institute and Alliance Française issue informal but widely recognized language certificates. The Chinese Confucius Institute is a relative newcomer, but it has established nearly 500 centers in the U.S. alone, and the great majority of these administer multi-level language exams. Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of the rapid diffusion of these centers is the acceptance of Chinese language programs as a marker of educational quality in the culture of public schools. For example, in this video produced by the Confucius Institute at UCLA, disadvantaged students in the Boyle Heights neighborhood of East Los Angeles credit the Confucius Institute program in their school with raising their life and career aspirations:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fHyh7yY-qIE&feature=youtu.be>

In sum, international standards for education--whether formal or informal, whether created by national governments, international testing consortia or smaller non-profit organizations--have enabled the full participation of individuals in national and international commerce since the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. And some of those standards have regarded media literacy as a prerequisite for participation in the “knowledge economy” of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Standards for International Education and Media Literacy**

So far, we have addressed programs that exemplify international standards for education. Some of the connections between media literacy education and these standards have been integral, while others have appeared more incidental. Standards for what is most frequently called “international education” are another matter. From its inception in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the international schools movement has been devoted to “international-mindedness” as a primary aim. Today, the phrase is usually rendered “global awareness” or “global citizenship.” However these global skills are denominated, the thematic connections between international education and media literacy education are many.

Several national and international organizations have created K-12 curricular frameworks which include global skills. One notable example is the partnership between the Asia Society and the U.S. Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). The Asia Society’s framework of “global competences” is designed for direct application to the Common Core State Standards (organized and drafted in part by members of the CCSSO). Globally competent students have the skills to “Investigate their World,” “Weigh Perspectives,” “Communicate Ideas,” and “Take Action.” (<http://asiasociety.org/education/resources-schools/professional-learning/gps-future-success>). By comparison, media literacy students investigate the role of media in society and the world, learn how to examine media from multiple perspectives, form independent opinions about media and communicate them to others, and learn to empower themselves rather than simply accepting the current media culture.

One of the more dynamic forces in the international schools movement today is the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). Initially a “curricular service” offered to

international secondary schools in 1962 by the Geneva-based International Schools Association, the IBO now offers four curricular programs (Primary Years Program, Middle Years Program, Diploma Program, Career-related Certificate), and serves as an accrediting agency for schools which implement their programs. Currently the IBO works with over 3,700 schools in 147 countries serving more than one million students ([www.ibo.org](http://www.ibo.org))

The curricular frameworks of the IBO and the U.S.-based Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills both combine global citizenship and media literacy skills. On January 27<sup>th</sup>, the Partnership announced a year-long initiative to “re-define and re-imagine 21<sup>st</sup> century citizenship,” in consultation with “leading global awareness, civic learning, and digital literacy experts” (<http://www.p21.org/our-work/citizenship>). In addition to promoting digital literacy, the P21 framework directly addresses media literacy skills, including skills in critical media analysis and creation.

IB students are encouraged to embrace the “IB Learner Profile,” a series of ten attributes “valued by IB World Schools,” all of which address some aspect of global awareness. While IB programs do not address media literacy directly, the Diploma Program’s core “Creativity, Action, Service” requirement reflects the creativity and empowerment aspects of media literacy education. The “Theory of Knowledge” core requirement, whose central question is, “How do we know?” asks students to “become aware of themselves as thinkers,” and to “become aware of the interpretative nature of knowledge.” These are learning, self-reflection and critical thinking skills which are all prized in media literacy education. In addition, the Diploma Program requires at least one course under the rubric of “Individuals and Societies,” one of which includes “Information Technology in a Global Society.” The course features a conceptual diagram which may appear familiar to media literacy educators and students. It sketches out relationships between “IT Systems,” “Social and Ethical Significance,” “Stakeholders,” and “Application to Specified Scenarios.”

The international schools movement originated in a desire to avoid repetition of the violent conflicts of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and some international schools still place a premium on the value of international peace. At times, these idealistic aims have appeared entirely separate from the task of providing student with the skills they need to participate in a global economy. But a global economy entails global problems, whether social, political, environmental or economic. Frameworks for global competence, with their emphasis on collaborative inquiry, self-reflection, perspective-taking, and asking key questions about specific cases or issues help students become problem solvers who can adapt their thinking to the scale and context of any problem they encounter.

### Author profile

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Researcher Chiara De Luca interviewed CML Director Tessa Jolls for a study on youth empowerment.

### **The Opportunities Created by Media Literacy for Youth Empowerment and Community Development in the L.A. Metropolitan Area**

Academic scholars currently struggle with proposing effective teaching practices that can encourage students to partake in building sustainable societies. UNESCO (2012) envisions education for sustainable development (ESD) as a combination of skills, beliefs and knowledge that aim at worldwide social change for the prosperity of all human beings within environmental limits. However, there is still disagreement on what ESD really entails. The impacts of media literacy (ML) on students' engagement for community development have been overlooked in the literature. This Master's thesis project searched for evidence that ML could contribute to ESD by fostering youth's analytical thinking and social engagement while decreasing their risk exposure to crime and poverty-related factors in deprived urban neighborhoods.

The project set itself one overarching goal, to explore the connection between ML skills and community building via youth empowerment amongst low-income youth in the mostly Latino neighborhood of Pacoima, Los Angeles. In what way can ML provide youth with the possibility to make real change in their local community? How can ML practices help youth build trust by cultivating local networks and nurture a participative sense of community - golden rules of a sustainable community? To address these questions, the research employed a "transdisciplinary" approach in that it tapped into various sources of knowledge and information. Through semi-structured interviews and desk-based review of video productions, the study outlined the perceptions of staff and students involved in the media activities of the non-profit Youth Speak! Collective (YSC) based in Pacoima as well as the perspectives of some California-based media scholars, among whom Tessa Jolls, Director of the Center for Media Literacy (CML).

Some of the after-school programs offered by YSC engage Pacoima youth by teaching media production, digital photography, web design and other high-tech skills. Classes include both theory and practice, teaching students how to become effective media makers by using media tools to campaign for the things they believe in. YSC media programs let youth express themselves and raise awareness on issues affecting them directly in Pacoima (e.g. immigration reform, lack of school facilities, high drop-out from school, gang

violence, teen pregnancy).

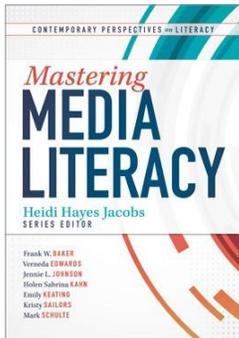
The study found that media activities could lead to change in multiple ways. For example, they can become a source of extra funding to support projects that aim at community building and learning, offsetting state budget cuts recently enacted on after-school programming in California. With the media skills gained through YSC training, youth can create media productions for other non-profits and small businesses in Pacoima. This way, they get paid and can provide further funding to the organization. The extra financial resources are used not only to buy brand-new media equipment for YSC but also to start projects that involve youth and their families, such as the construction of sports facilities and a community garden. These projects all aim at inspiring the entire community into sustainability learning and living.

Furthermore, media activities were found to contribute to the growth of empathy-based relationships within YSC. The youth interviewed stressed that ML changed their lives to the extent that they were able to look at things from multiple perspectives and open up their eyes to different situations - all key aspects of critical thinking and acknowledged ML benefits. Supported by understanding caring mentors (the YSC staff), youth explore their environment with no fear of failure and cultivate social capital by networking and team working with peers from the same community or bordering neighborhoods. During the interviews, this was said to boost youth's self-esteem and permeate of trust their interactions with peers and adults. Indeed, empathy-based relationships were indicated to help spread trust and social cohesion in Pacoima.

Tessa Jolls recalled in the interview that ML is only "practiced in the USA by passionate people, teachers who want their students to have an opportunity to understand media". She described ML as an analysis-based activity, a student-centred training to be applied "to any media, in and outside of school, and to any subject matter". For Jolls, there is never an ending point with ML because people "can always become more media literate". ML itself is tied to social justice and sustainability discourses because it calls for a deeper understanding not only of how the multifaceted media system functions but also how "the power structure is represented [and perpetrated] to us" (Jolls). As the CML Director stressed, ML stands as an indispensable "citizenship skill" leading to action change and as such, it opens up opportunities for youth to become better educated and knowledgeable about how to go about living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as responsible citizens.

The key rationale for this study was thus to construct evidence on the beneficial opportunities that ML could create for youth empowerment and community development. Media literacy via youth empowerment seems to be contributing to community regeneration in Pacoima. It appears that ML can contribute to empower youth with analytical and "citizenship

skills” so as to grow as community leaders in a more sustainable local society. Exploring other opportunities generated by ML education for youth’s evolution as next leaders of local communities is a pressing concern to deal with in academic research for the eventual establishment of more sustainable neighborhoods in 21<sup>st</sup>-century metropolitan areas.



**New Resource *Mastering Media Literacy***

*Mastering Media Literacy* with contributions by Frank Baker and other experts in the field is now available. Edited by Heidi Hayes Jacobs.

Book description: Discover the role media can play in preparing students to compete in a global society in which cultures, economies, and people are constantly connected. Learn how to merge technology and instruction successfully, giving students greater access to knowledge and making learning more meaningful. The authors provide practical tips for incorporating media literacy into the traditional curriculum. [http://www.frankwbaker.com/mastering\\_media\\_literacy.htm](http://www.frankwbaker.com/mastering_media_literacy.htm)

**CONSORTIUM  
for MEDIA LITERACY**

*Uniting for Development*

**About Us...**

The Consortium for Media Literacy addresses the role of global media through the advocacy, research and design of media literacy education for youth, educators and parents.

The Consortium focuses on K-12 grade youth and their parents and communities. The research efforts include nutrition and health education, body image/sexuality, safety and responsibility in media by consumers and creators of products. The Consortium is building a body of research, interventions and communication that demonstrate scientifically that media literacy is an effective intervention strategy in addressing critical issues for youth.

<http://consortiumformedia literacy.org>

## Resources for Media Literacy

### Interview with Robert Davis, Jr., The College Board

While information may be readily accessible globally, new organizational structures are needed if students around the world are to access high quality instruction and support. Through this interview, we offer the College Board's Advanced Placement exams and the Confucius Institute as concrete examples of such structures.

In November 2013, CML President and CEO Tessa Jolls traveled to China as part of the Chinese Bridge Delegation sponsored by the College Board and Hanban, the Chinese government agency which oversees the Confucius Institute. The Chinese Bridge Delegation offers American K-12 educators and administrators an inside look into Chinese primary and secondary educational institutions.

The 2013 Delegation, known as "Sticky Rice," had an experienced leader in Robert Davis, Jr., who is Executive Director of Chinese Language and Culture Initiatives for the College Board. Before joining the College Board, Bob served as both Director of World Languages and International Studies and the Confucius Institute of Chicago at Chicago Public Schools. In 1999, he established the Chinese language program for Chicago, which grew to be the largest Chinese program in the nation with over 15,000 students enrolled each year. He has served as an advisor on Chinese language and cultural issues to Chicago's Mayor Richard M. Daley and President Obama's 100,000 Strong Initiative. In 2011, Bob was a member of the hosting committee to China's former President Hu Jintao, who visited the Confucius Institute he established in a historic visit to Chicago. In this interview, Davis offers his insights on the globalization of education and nurturing the growth of foreign language programs in U.S. schools.

**CML:** In this issue of *Connections*, we're focusing on the globalization of education, in the United States and abroad. We're very interested in hearing about your work with the College Board and the Confucius Institute. We're also hoping that you can speak to the broader trends in the globalization of education. We're hoping to capture your impressions of the changes you've seen over the years you've been with the College Board, and we'd also like to focus on your advice for educators who are considering the possibility of organizing teacher and student exchanges into their programs here in the U.S.

**RD:** It is an interesting time, not just in the U.S., but globally. There's been a revolution in technology that has enhanced access to information and facilitated dialogue. With these changes, we've been able to look at each other's best practices, and we're finding that there's not just one answer to what makes a strong educational system. What we see is the U.S. looking to other countries, to countries in Scandinavia, and in Asia, like Singapore, South Korea and China, to see their best practices around instruction and teacher training. And these countries have been looking to the U.S. as they attempt to understand the fostering of individuals in our educational system, trying to examine what gives America a sense of

individualism and creativity that defines us in so many ways.

That's the main reason why I've gotten involved with the Chinese Bridge Delegation. It offers many opportunities for educators and administrators to spend time with each other and with global partners. It offers a chance for them to get their heads together, visit schools and set up ongoing conversations so that they can learn from each other and partner on interesting solutions for global education.

**CML:** The scale of the Confucius Institute is widespread, operating in many different countries, and with numerous U.S. locations. How do you see the work of the Institute?

**RD:** The specific goal of the Confucius Institute is to promote the Chinese language and the culture of China. They strongly believe that it's a way of bringing people together, by having people have some understanding of Chinese culture, and having opportunities for exchange. Ultimately there are political implications, depending on the strength of those dialogues. Hanban has been an independent organization since 2003. In that time, they've grown tremendously. There's nothing at that scale elsewhere in the world. The organizations that have gone before them, like the Cervantes Institute, the Alliance Française, the Goethe Institute and other organizations—the step up in scale has been quite remarkable. Every year they convene a meeting in December at the World Confucius Institute. Colleagues come from the Middle East, Africa, Asia, all over. You're sitting with people who are doing similar work in radically different environments.

**CML:** What do you see as some challenges in the U.S.?

**RD:** There's a great interest in world languages in the U.S. There's always interest, but there's often a disconnect in implementation. You have the challenges of curriculum, with the battle for minutes and packing away as much as you can in the time provided. We have a much shorter school day and year than in other countries. It's not always a level playing field. We started Chinese language programs in Chicago public schools in 1999, and it took a lot of work. There wasn't such an interest in Chinese. At the time there was an early opening of reform in China, and in the role the Chinese were playing internationally. As financial markets opened, it translated to the concept here that there were greater opportunities for exchange. Secretary Clinton has been a huge advocate for teaching Chinese, and that's really how people started paying attention.

Despite our best efforts, we're far from where we should be with second and third language education--despite the fact that we have such a diverse, multicultural population, and that we have all these fantastic resources. We are seeing progress, however. It takes some time. You can't just flip a switch. There's a process involved, including the certification, training and licensing of teachers. Initially the interest was not there. A lot of my work involved talking about why China was important. Now, districts are asking, 'How can we get this started right away?' So many schools, parents and families are interested now, but how are we going to

meet the need?

**CML:** What advice would you have for districts that are interested?--or for whatever entity that sees this as a priority? If a district were looking closely at the possibilities, and asking how they could overcome some of the barriers, what would you say?

**RD:** It's very complicated, but mostly because every community is different. Ultimately the choices made for curriculum in schools should be really well thought out—not like the way Spanish has been taught in this country, where it comes and goes. You're essentially setting students onto a trajectory and then taking them out midway through. I personally believe it's most important to learn a world language. Chinese might not be the best fit for every community. Some communities have great professional opportunities with China, like some communities that have worked with China in the manufacturing sector. Others may have better choices in Spanish or Arabic. But I very much urge programs to be planned in advance. Schools should be able to take a reverse look. What will the program look like when it's complete? How is it articulated through grade levels and benchmarks? At the College Board, we obviously call for strong assessment and a unified curriculum, with backward mapping of curriculum so that schools can have a comprehensive view of the end goal. It needs to be formulated before the program starts. We like to see progress at the elementary level in communities where high schools would be willing to start. I really think that that's worked. It's helped teachers plan curriculum. If you're using the AP Chinese exam as an endpoint, what does that mean for instruction? You do that so that teachers can have that luxury—and it is a luxury—to have a complete picture of what the curriculum might look like, and to be able to say what the benchmarks are for each level.

Engaging parents can be very helpful. I've never worked with a group of people as powerful and influential as parents. They do need to know what they're talking about, and why they're talking about it. They need to have facts about learning the language, and the benefits. Then they can make that decision and become advocates. I have seen them take strong stances on language instruction in board meetings, to the point where districts have implemented them. They will support students in homework, and become stakeholders in the program.

It's also important to stress that, at this point, when you're getting started in the field, you're not doing it alone, or starting from scratch. There is a sufficient number of districts that have done this so that people from other districts can say, 'Hey, can you walk me through this?' They've already put some blood and sweat into it. It's a community of learners sharing best practices. The more we can talk, the more we can ensure that programs are starting on a good foot.

**CML:** Do you see that the benchmarks are becoming more globalized?

**RD:** AP has become a very international assessment, and it's growing every day. It's one of the assessments recognized for U.S. higher education admissions, and there's a certain path for students around the world who are continuing into higher education in the U.S., and they

depend on AP assessments. There are similar programs at the International Baccalaureate, with a similar group of students. Other countries are looking at the curricula, and seeing that they've been tried, with reliable testing, and with good security, so there isn't any corruption in the system. So AP can bring prestige to schools when their students are achieving high marks on these assessments.

AP does exist in China, but on a small scale. China has a very interesting approach. They're open-minded, but within a certain scale. They try other approaches out as a pilot among certain schools. When you're scaling up in China, you're scaling up for a quarter of the world! And there's a lot of economic and cultural diversity in China. A group of cosmopolitan students will be very different from a group of rural students.

**CML:** Media literacy trains students in critical thinking skills, and the field has emphasized critical thinking for media production as well. In China, we saw examples of media production in Chinese schools, but there wasn't so much of a focus on project-based learning or critical thinking. From a broader perspective, do you believe that learning a foreign language—like Chinese in the United States—has some benefits for critical thinking? Does it offer any advantage for improving the ability of students to operate in a conceptual world?

**RD:** Learning a foreign language, especially thinking in a foreign language, will often challenge how we think in our own language. In Chinese you say things in such different ways. And once you get to idioms and storytelling, there's such an interesting difference in language that it's simply lost in translation.

I often ask American students, 'What do you think is the potential that you will use Chinese in the future?' They're not exactly sure. We really work to give tangible examples in a professional setting. The chances are that multilingual students who are in school today will have far more opportunities for doing what they choose to do with their lives. If you're a business analyst, you will still be able to do that job in a different language.

**CML:** When you were talking about the disjointed implementation of foreign language programs here, it is a reminder of the more general disconnect that we've seen between elementary, middle and high school education. We really need to make sure that those connections are made.

**RD:** Certainly, there's a disconnect between K-12 and higher education -- we work with that quite a bit. When you have students who have taken the AP Chinese exam enrolling in Chinese 101 at the university level, it doesn't always work. We've challenged the higher education community to offer higher levels, especially when we have students entering at what would be considered level three or four.

**CML:** Universities can also be trailblazing, especially with the long tradition of international students who have come to universities in the United States and the U.K., when they've

received the preparation for it.

**RD:** I can't really say if it's a good thing or a bad thing, but it changes part of the university when you have a critical mass of students from one place. When you have such a huge group of foreign students, you have to target services to them as well. There is also a bit of stereotyping going on. What happens if you have Chinese students who aren't brilliant? They're still human. There may be other factors going on in their lives. Just because you've accepted 100 Chinese students into your engineering program doesn't mean that it will be transformed into this path breaking program. There are no absolutes.

**CML:** Do you see any tensions between the pragmatic, skill-driven aspects of language programs, and more general outcomes, such as 'international-mindedness?'

**RD:** Given that I work for AP, I'm working in a specific field, focusing on specific skills in an academic environment. We see Chinese as something with a certain amount of rigor that should translate to higher education. We do see Chinese language instruction as a catapult for students who want to go into interesting higher education situations. There are very few students now, about 10 percent, who enter U.S. universities speaking Chinese. Students who do well stand out as candidates. There are not enough of them in this day and age. If you took the other approach, students would be studying eight centuries of classic Chinese culture—but really, in the end, they would know about pandas and paper, and that's not going to cut it. Universities are seeking students who can speak Chinese well, and if they don't know how to use the language in the proper setting, it won't be useful at all. Chinese is new enough to the U.S. that the approach to it is a lot more pragmatic. There's very little discussion these days among students of learning Chinese so that they can do a junior year abroad. Most students know that they're doing it so that it can translate into professional opportunities for them. Still—students need to know a lot of things to be global thinkers. For me, certainly, it's done a lot. I have an art history degree from a state university in Illinois. But because I had learned Chinese, it opened all these doors for me.

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## MediaLit Moments

### Breaking Down Breaking News

“The fact. . .that this individual has been described as someone dressed up in a black top, black jeans—what does that say, if anything, about a possible motive, or whatever? Can we begin to draw any initial conclusions? And I want to alert our viewers, sometimes these initial conclusions can obviously be very, very wrong.” -- CNN correspondent Wolf Blitzer, speaking about the Washington, DC Naval Yard shooting of September 16, 2013.

News commentary of this kind raises some serious questions. What is the difference between “initial conclusions” and pure speculation? And why would a respected correspondent like Blitzer be so anxious to offer them? In this MediaLit Moment, your middle school and early high school students will have a chance to tackle such questions about breaking news stories, and they’ll receive resources to help them keep asking relevant questions about what they see and hear.

*Ask students to consider the reasons why broadcasters convey inaccurate or unverified information about breaking news stories.*

**AHA!:** Breaking news reports can be really, really wrong!

**Grade Level:** 8-10

**Key Question #5:** Why is this message being sent?

**Core Concept #5:** Most media messages are organized to gain profit and/or power.

**Key Question #2:** What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?

**Core Concept #2:** Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules.

**Materials:** computer with high speed internet access; speakers to amplify volume of podcast file; handout to accompany lesson

**Activity:** NPR’s *On the Media* website features a TLDR [“Too Long Didn’t Read”] blog that posts original stories on contemporary media issues. Point your browser to this TLDR blog entry: “The Breaking News Story Handbook,” from September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013. Currently, the blog post is archived here: [http://www.onthemedialit.org/story/breaking-news-consumers-handbook-pdf/?utm\\_source=local&utm\\_medium=treatment&utm\\_campaign=carousel&utm\\_content=item5](http://www.onthemedialit.org/story/breaking-news-consumers-handbook-pdf/?utm_source=local&utm_medium=treatment&utm_campaign=carousel&utm_content=item5) In the text of the blog post, you’ll find a link for a “handy, printable PDF” which offers tips for “sorting good information from bad” about breaking news stories.

Select an excerpt from the podcast story which accompanies the blog post, and play it for your students.

Ask students, why are breaking news stories often inaccurate? Why would news outlets broadcast them if they’re not sure of their accuracy? Direct students’ attention to Key Question #2 (about news gathering techniques) and Key Question #5 (motivations for early reporting).

Share and discuss the breaking news tip sheet with students.

**Extended Activity:** Use the podcast, handout and Key Questions to help students practice their skills with a current breaking news story.

The Five Core Concepts and Five Key Questions of media literacy were developed as part of the Center for Media Literacy's MediaLit Kit™ and Questions/TIPS (Q/TIPS)™ framework. Used with permission, © 2002-2014, Center for Media Literacy, <http://www.medialit.com>