

Slide 1

Media Literacy: A System for Learning

Any Time, Any Where...

Welcome to CML's Professional Development Module for Deconstruction

Slide 2 GOALS

We have three important goals in this presentation:

- To understand our relationship with media. This relationship is lifelong, and we like to add that divorce is not an option!
- In exploring this relationship, we will see how the convergence of media, technology and education all combine to change the way we learn and how we teach. Since children are typically spending more than 8 hours per day with various forms of media (Roberts, Foehr & Rideout, 2005), according to a Kaiser Family Foundation Study called Eight to 18, we know that they are growing up in an era where understanding media and technology is vital to their every-day lives.
- We've seen over the years that when a person truly understands their relationship to media, there is an AHA! moment that changes the way a person experiences media. We want you to experience this AHA! Moment and then, be able to apply what you've learned to a variety of settings, regardless of what type of media you're using, where or when. We want you to really "take in" this experience of media literacy, to internalize it and carry it with you. We've often heard people say that once they have learned about media literacy, they never look at media in the same way again.

Slide 3 ALPHABET GRAPHIC

OK, now we're going to see if you know your ABCs. Let's take each letter and see how many of us know it. (Go through the alphabet one at a time, quickly).

Yes...you are a VERY good class! You definitely know your ABCs (although some people seemed to know more about candy and sweets and some people seemed to know more about cleaning products!).

All right class, here are some questions for you: Did you learn something from this? Was this educational? How much money do you think that these advertisers spent to teach you the ABCs? Are these advertisers successful educators? Do they only reach your hometown, or are they world-wide? Do you think your students know these ABCs?

The alphabet is adapted from an artwork by Heidi Cody, www.heidicody.com. The products are: All, Bubblicious, Campbell's, Downey, Eggo, Fritos, Gatorade, Hebrew National hot dogs, Icee, Jello, Kool Aid, Lysol, M&Ms, Nabisco, Oreos, Pez, Q-Tips, Reese's Pieces, Starburst, Tide, Uncle Ben's rice, V-8, Wisk, Ajax, York mints, Zest.

Slide 4 CHALLENGE: MEDIA, TECHNOLOGY, EDUCATION

Let's reflect more about what we learned from reciting the alphabet:

- First of all, we've seen that all media are educational. We learn something from media, whether we think we have or not; whether we want to or not.
- Second, all media are carefully manufactured technology-driven cultural products. Think about it: did it take a lot of time to create these campaigns to teach you the ABCs? A lot of people? A lot of knowledge and planning? Didn't you get the message through some technology, like TV or through manufactured labels or packages? And since so many of us got the message, haven't these ABCs become an example of cultural phenomena? Something that we all share and understand together?
- Media may be entertaining...but media are NOT "just entertainment." Media producers often like to dismiss the power of media and the impact of media by saying "Media....well, it's only entertainment." But since we are learning SOMETHING from it, it's NOT "just entertainment." It affects us whether we think it does or not, and there's research to prove that media has definite effects on society.
- Engagement with media means having a relationship with media. We'll explore this more, but think of it this way: once you've seen an image, heard a song, or interacted with a game, you have taken that image, song, or game inside your head....and once it's in, it can't be removed.
- Media content is everywhere...look around you. There are logos on shoes and books and pens; there are all types of media in this room...so since media is such an integral part of our lives, we need to think critically about it, we need to have the skills to be able to make meaning of what we experience and have a "way of thinking" that helps us sort through everyday life.
- But these process skills aren't automatic. They take time and practice to learn, like learning to swim or to tie your shoes. They take practice, practice, practice, until we internalize them and make them our own, and take them with us wherever we go.
- And so, the combination of process skills plus content knowledge makes for lifelong learning, and though we may improve our ability, we will never really master all there is to know.

Slide 5 THE MEDIA TRIANGLE

This Media Triangle is a very static image that represents a very dynamic interaction in regards to our relationship with media. Let's see how it works:

- In every piece of media, there is Text. Our five senses are how we experience Text, since Text may be visual, aural, sensual, or an odor or taste. The text carries the message to us; we detect the text through our senses.
- Production is the source of the Text and the SYSTEM that provides the Text to us. So, for example, there are the writers and directors and camera crews of television shows such as MadMen, who produce the text, and there is the system of distribution, the cable channels and advertisers and physical cables and televisions and DVRs that deliver the Text to us. So Production goes beyond the authors and also includes the means of publishing and distribution.
- The Audience is you and me and anyone who experiences the text and engages with it, consciously or not.

Now, imagine how dynamic this relationship truly is. Producers must provide a text, but without the audience, there is no interaction or experience. Each member of this relationship need each other in order to exist. And also imagine how the relationship can be influenced and how it can change, depending upon circumstances. So, for example, if I am a producer who has \$5 million to spend on marketing and distribution, more than likely, I can reach a much bigger audience than if I only have \$5. So in a case like that, the Production part of the Media Triangle would be much bigger than the Audience (at first), but then, as the Audience makes the Production its own, the Audience might grow bigger and demand changes in the Text, so that their favorite character does finally get to marry her sweetheart or the blogger acknowledges being paid for an endorsement or a celebrity acknowledges that the tanning spray really didn't work too well.

This relationship is very fluid and it is constantly changing. And so I ask you: if advertisers spend billions of dollars and schools spend billions of dollars, but schools don't spend time or resources to teach about media literacy and understanding our relationship with media, who has the advantage?

Understanding the dynamics and the power behind these relationships is the crux of the matter with media literacy, and with empowering audiences to take their part in the relationship. We will be learning more as we go along here....

Slide 6 CHALLENGE: MEDIA, TECHNOLOGY, EDUCATION

With media literacy, our goal is to empower the Audience, and with technology being available to us all these days, and with everyone being a media producer taking digital pictures and communicating with people from all over the world, we want the Audience to be capable of being:

- Efficient managers of information media. We need to know how to handle all the data and information that come our way;
- Wise consumers of information media, so that we can sort through information and make wise choices;
- Responsible producers of media, so that we take individual responsibility for our actions and act in a responsible way toward others, and
- Effective participants in society, capable of representing ourselves and others. As the saying goes, you need to know how the system works before you can capably navigate the system, and so we not only need to teach young people how to access the various social systems, but to represent themselves effectively through their own media texts and depictions.

Slide 7 THE EDUCATION CHALLENGE

(Read the quote.) This quote is all the more meaningful because it was said in 1975. And we in education are still in the throes of this transition. Certainly, we don't need our children to be information storage units. We don't need to pound the textbooks into their heads. Instead, they need to know how to find the right information at the right time from the right source for the right purposes. And that's a tall order!

This is NOT to say that content knowledge is unimportant. After all, who can separate the dancer from the dance? But it IS to say that without information process skills, finding the right content information can be like finding a needle in a haystack....and no one has time for that! Which is why having an ingrained understanding of process skills is so imperative in today's world.

Slide 8 A NEW WAY TO TEACH

Since our education system has been so focused on teaching content knowledge for so long, and because children used to have much more face-to-face interaction with adults – whereas now, they have screens with few or no adults – we are facing a profound shift in the way we teach and learn. This shift is especially impacting teaching strategies and styles. Teachers no longer need to be the font of all wisdom or knowledge, and in fact, their students may know more about technology or a certain subject than the teacher does. And so it's up to the teacher to give the assignments, set the parameters, and teach HOW to acquire the information and knowledge rather than be the SOURCE of the information and knowledge. As the saying goes, teachers are changing from being a sage on the stage....to a guide on the side. And that is a big change!

Slide 9 WHAT IS MEDIA LITERACY?

Now, let's look at a definition of media literacy to further explore what these process skills are:

- Media literacy is a 21st century approach to education. In other words, with the 20th century well behind us, and with technology driving our ability to provide new forms and quantities of information in the classroom, we need the process skills of media literacy as well as the content knowledge provided through traditional disciplines such as language arts, math, social studies and the arts.
- Media literacy provides a framework. That's an important idea. Instead of emphasizing factual knowledge, media literacy provides a framework or guidelines, so instead of being a "cookbook" for learning, it's a "formula" that can be flexibly applied, but that has basic truths to operate from.
- ...to access, analyze, evaluate, create and participate with messages in a variety of forms – from print to video to the Internet. So...if we already have lots of information, we need to know how to sort through it and select from it. We need to know how to use it for ourselves, master it, depict it and share it with others, and repeat the whole cycle again and again.
- Media literacy builds an understanding of the role of media in society....and we know that media DOES have a special role, with the 4th estate, in a democracy. This is a vital role and one which is rapidly changing with technology (think of the newspaper industry, which is now struggling for survival).
- ...as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for *citizens* of a democracy. Essential skills! As citizens, we must know how to question, how to represent ourselves and those we love effectively, and how to effect change. And with the means and knowledge of communications at our disposal, we can be active, not passive.

Slide 10 WHAT IS NOT MEDIA LITERACY?

Just as it's important to know what media literacy IS, it's important to know what it is NOT. Consistency in approach and in philosophy are very important in implementing media literacy programs.

Slide 11 WORLD-WIDE MEDIA LITERACY

It's important to know that the need for media literacy doesn't stop with teaching American children these skills. As the world is increasingly integrated and in communication, it is important to develop common language and common understandings of information process skills. Other countries are very active in addressing media literacy; for example, Canada requires media literacy for high school graduation. The European Union has guidelines for media literacy, and countries from throughout the world are pursuing media literacy education programs (such as Peru, Australia, China, India). There is a world-wide recognition that media impacts culture, and that media systems are world-wide.

Slide 12 THE ULTIMATE GOAL

Wise choices. That's what it's all about.

Quote from: Paulo Freire & Donaldo Macedo, *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World*, Westport, Conn: Bergin & Garvey, 1987, p11.

Slide 13 A NEW LOOK AT THE WORLD

This video clip, from the popular TV series *West Wing*, gives a good perspective on how new ways of looking at the world, and asking questions, can literally change the way we “see” the world:

(After showing clip):

OK, let’s do a quick deconstruction of this video, while emphasizing some key words to think about:

- Who was the original AUTHOR of the map that most of us are familiar with? (Mercator)
- Who was the AUDIENCE that that map was primarily designed for? (sailors)
- Why was the map designed for sailors? Did the map have an economic/commercial PURPOSE or was it designed to influence people or show power? (It was designed to help with navigation for commercial purposes).
- What FORMAT and techniques did the Mercator map use that made it a good tool for sailors? (It provided latitude lines that were easy to follow even though it distorted land masses.)
- Were there any values or biases or worldviews that came through the CONTENT of Mercator's map? (Yes, Germany is in the center, the map has the Northern hemisphere bigger and at the top, for example. It’s a Euro-centered map, from a European perspective.)

We learned a great deal of information from a relatively short video clip. And we were able to analyze the clip quickly, too. This is the world our children are living in...and we must prepare them to cope and to succeed.

(Note: there is an activity in CML’s book, “Five Key Questions that Can Change the World,” that complements this video clip very well. See Lesson 1E)

NOTE: This video clip can be accessed on YouTube at

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n8zBC2dvERM> under the title: West Wing - Why are we changing maps?

Slide 14 CRITICAL THINKING

It's important to note that we want to encourage skepticism, not cynicism. Pollyanna's assume....THE BEST. Cynics assume....THE WORST. We want SKEPTICS, not cynics! We want to encourage questioning; we don't want to tell students what to believe, but instead, give them a methodology for thinking critically so that they can make their own decisions.

Slide 15 Q/TIPS

As you can see on this chart, the Center for Media Literacy framework, called Q/TIPS, provides a way to teach a methodology for critical thinking and a process of inquiry. The Five Core Concepts shown here are based on the work of Len Masterman, a media studies academic from Great Britain. Originally, Len postulated 18 concepts, and then, when media literacy migrated to Canada, Canada had eight core concepts. When Elizabeth Thoman, CML's founder, helped introduce media literacy in the U.S., she compressed the concepts into Five Core Concepts. CML has found that teaching questions to students is more engaging for them, and also gives them an easier process for analysis. So we have designed Five Key Questions to correspond to each of the Five Core Concepts. When you are a consumer of information, focused on deconstructing messages, the Five Key Questions on the left of the chart apply. When you are a producer of information, focused on constructing messages, the Five Key Questions on the right of the chart apply. This allows for the different points of view that consumers and producers have, but the Concepts still hold true regardless. And also, as you are producing messages, you are also deconstructing or consuming them, so it can be a very interactive process. CML has designed "Key Questions for Young Children," as well, which break down the questions into simpler form. Today, we will focus on understanding and applying the Core Concepts and the Five Key Questions for Deconstruction/Consumers, since understanding media analysis is the place to start in being able to "take media apart." But keep in mind that media literacy involves both "taking media apart" through deconstruction, and "putting media together" through construction or production. Media literacy involves both sides of the coin, like reading and writing. But like reading and writing, before you can write, you must be able to read.

Q/TIPS serves as a "metaframe" that both teachers, students and parents can grasp and begin to use immediately as a starting point; as training, curricula and assessments are built around the metaframe, the inquiry process deepens and takes hold as the central methodology for critical thinking and learning across the curriculum. Furthermore, this metaframe is an easier way to introduce 21st century skills than some of the more complex frameworks which, although representing desirable outcomes, are very difficult to implement and immediate engage teachers.

CML has long said that if every student in the US would know the Five Key Questions and how to apply them by high school graduation, all its efforts would be an unqualified success. Let's get started! We will examine each of the Core Concepts and Key Questions, one by one.

Slide 16 KEY QUESTION/CORE CONCEPT #1

When we construct media, we put media together, much like building a house or preparing a meal. SOMEONE has to do this, and so we ask the question, "Who created this message?" Let's go a bit further to understand this idea of media construction. Here's a trick question: When you watch a TV program on Animal Planet about BEARS, what do you see the most of? Now, I'm going to show you a picture, and I'd like you to answer that question. Remember, this is a *trick* question!

Slide 17 BEARS Continued

Yes, yes, yes....most people say "bears" or "green" or "plants." That's very common. And think about it, even from this one picture, we learn some things about bears: they live in a very green and plant-rich habitat, for example. But the correct answer – and remember, you were answering a trick question – is that we are seeing PICTURES of bears. We are NOT seeing bears. We are seeing a mediated version of bears, where someone decided what to show you, what frame or shot to share, where we are seeing a second-hand or third-hand version of bears. There is a LENS between you and the bears, and that lens reflects the constructed nature of all media and the authorship of all media. Media may "look real," but it's NOT real.

The reality shows popular today are great examples of the constructed nature of media.

Slide 18 KEY QUESTION/CORE CONCEPT #2

This Core Concept and Key Question relate to the arts: visual arts, music, performing arts/theater/storytelling, dance – all of the arts play an important role in media messages. And the type of technology used to convey the message also has an impact on the message, so that, for example, a webpage requires a different display and amount of content than a cell phone screen. In every case, there is a creative language associated with the particular forms being used. So, for example, music has notes and a distinct way of describing sounds. Dance has choreography and ways of describing dance steps. Websites have home pages and navigation bars and other words to describe their functionality. Let's look at an example of how these techniques influence our understanding.

Slide 19 KEY QUESTION/CORE CONCEPT #2 Continue

This video clip has three parts to it. As you are watching, please shout out the feeling that you get from the particular portion of the clip.

The first clip: yes, boring. Static. Why? Because the sound is missing! This is a "quick trick" in working with students: shut off the sound, and it's amazing how the visual message becomes the focus.

Second Clip: happy, light, airy....Here's a question: was this the same text as you saw at the beginning?

Third Clip: scary, tense, foreboding. Again, was this the same text as you saw before?

Yes, the text is the same. But think about the message and how different it becomes, depending upon the sound and the music. Music is the language of emotion; it tells us and cues us as to the feelings that the producers of the text want us to experience and feel. For that reason, sound is probably the most influential component of media.

Access the video clip: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sxOsuwOEUfs>

Slide 20 KEY QUESTION/CORE CONCEPT #3

Another Trick Question: When you go to a movie with a friend, do you “see” the same movie?

Yes and No. We’re all right! We see the same TEXT, but we EXPERIENCE a different movie because we are who we are. And so just think, every time a movie is released, there are sometimes MILLIONS of versions of the movie dancing in people’s heads.

With this Core Concept and Key Question, the focus is on the audience and the fact that all people are different. And from the point of view of a producer, audiences are targeted, so that the message is honed to attract a certain audience.

Slide 21 KEY QUESTION/CORE CONCEPT #4

This Core Concept and Key Question refer to the Content that a producer represents. Keep in mind that NO content can ever represent EVERY lifestyle, values and points of view, so choices must be made.

If you make a circle with your hand in front of your eyes, just like a camera lens, you'll see that you choose to include or omit certain visuals you are FRAMING. When you are choosing, you will automatically represent yourself in those choices. You "bring yourself" to every decision you make, and although you may try to be fair and impartial, you will, by definition, always have bias because you cannot possibly show everything from everyone's point of view. And so, by definition, media is always biased. Let's look at a short video clip that illustrates lifestyles, values and points of view...

Slide 22 KEY QUESTION/CORE CONCEPT #4 Continued

This video was produced as part of a parent media literacy program that CML conducted at Leo Politi Elementary School in Los Angeles from 2002-2005. Based on this short clip, what can you tell me?

(Some guiding questions: Whose point of view is the story told from? What kind of person do you think this lady is? What are some values, lifestyles and points of view that she represents? Who is omitted? What other values, lifestyles and points of view are omitted?).

In a very brief encounter with this person, we learned a lot about her story. And keep in mind, since this clip was also constructed, we could analyze or deconstruct the clip itself as a way of determining the authorship and the purpose of the video clip.

Access the video clip: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kDNOxoxP41A>

Slide 23 ALPHABET GRAPHIC

Let's look again at the ABCs. What about these brands? Do they represent – or omit – values, lifestyles and points of view? Let's take the P for Pez as an example. What do the block-style components of the P remind you of? What kind of feeling do you get from this depiction of a P? Who do you think the target audience might be? Why?

The alphabet is adapted from an artwork by Heidi Cody (www.heidicody.com). The products are: All, Bubblicious, Campbell's, Downey, Eggo, Fritos, Gatorade, Hebrew National hot dogs, Icee, Jello, Kool Aid, Lysol, M&Ms, Nabisco, Oreos, Pez, Q-Tips, Reese's Pieces, Starburst, Tide, Uncle Ben's rice, V-8, Wisk, Ajax, York mints, Zest.

Slide 24 KEY QUESTION/CORE CONCEPT #5

In presenting this Key Question and Core Concept, we have often found that young people do not know what the word "profit" really means. Here's a brief and simple definition: Profit (or Loss) = Income – Expenses. It's worth reviewing that definition to make sure that everyone has a consistent idea. In regards to the word power, CML's intent is to use the word power in a broad sense, meaning "influence." EVERYONE is trying to influence, every day, in some way or other.

Now, in rearranging the sentence, we are examining a saying which many of us have heard on commercial television for many years. "This program is brought to you by the sponsor." Think about how you would rearrange the sentence to more accurately describe the relationship between the program, the audience and the sponsor.

Slide 25 STATEMENT: MORE ACCURATE

Yes! YOU are brought to the SPONSOR by this PROGRAM. Why is this more accurate? Because it is your eyeballs that are being bought and sold. It is YOUR EYEBALLS that are at stake in the relationship. The program is just a lure. What happens if a program doesn't draw a big enough audience? It gets cancelled. Why? Because the sponsor isn't getting a chance to sell enough products or services to an audience big enough to pay for the commercials and the program. So it is YOU who really matters.

Who has the power in the relationship? YOU DO. You are the person with the choices. You are the person who tunes in or out.

Slide 26 THE MEDIA TRIANGLE

OK, let's look at what we just learned from a different angle: the Media Triangle. What is the Text? (the TV show). What is the Production? (the sponsor/advertiser/show producers/cable channel/network). What is the Audience (we are; our eyeballs). With this relationship in mind, we are better prepared to make our choices.

Slide 27 WORLD-WIDE APPLICATION

Profit motives are often fairly easy to detect, although understanding the economic and commercial systems is a challenge because these systems are complex and global. Power motives can be global as well, and examples of power motives are advocating certain world-views or ideologies such as religious movements or political movements.

Today, the internet provides easy access to information about all sorts of issues from every level of society. One of my favorite examples of a website that had a power motive was that of a young high school student whose school was considering a name change for its sports team, from an American Indian name to a more generic animal name. This was a controversial move in the community, and the student, who wanted the present school name maintained, started a website to advocate for his point of view. Since this type of issue was of interest to many people in other communities affected by the same issue, this student's website gained a world-wide following and he was soon getting thousands of "hits" on his website every day. Was he in it for the money? No. There was no money involved, no advertising dollars, no fees. But this student definitely wanted to influence people and their perceptions and opinions! That is an example of a power motive.

Now let's look at a website which also represents a power motive:
www.martinlutherking.org

Slide 28 POWER MOTIVE

This screen shot of www.martinlutherking.org was taken in March 2010 and is an exact reproduction of the website's homepage at that time.

What do you notice about this homepage? (Audience responds.)

What are some "flags" on how this website might depict Dr. King?

(The hotel room references and obscenities/sexual intimations; Why the King holiday should be repealed; Black invention myths; Jews and civil rights/Who led the civil rights movement).

There are definitely mixed signals from this homepage; this is a well-known hate site promoting a world view of racial discrimination. This website is a prime example of a power motive, in which influencing people's hearts and minds is the most important objective.

Certainly, there are situations in which both profit and power are motivations (generally one reinforces the other), but it is important to recognize that in some cases, power is more important to people than money!

Slide 29 SO WHAT? THE EMPOWERMENT SPIRAL

Now we have a better idea of what the Five Key Questions and Core Concepts of Media Literacy are and how they can be applied. But so what? Just understanding these big ideas does little. CML provides the Empowerment Spiral as a way to focus students' attention on making their own decisions about the information they acquire through media.

Through a cycle of Awareness, Analysis, Reflection, and Action, we make our choices – whether to do something, or to do nothing....both are a choice, and just as one question leads to another, one choice inevitably leads to another, as well. There is no end to this cycle, and the more one practices it, the more equipped one is to understand and to contribute to the world. There are no victims; only volunteers!!

Slide 30 BENEFITS OF MEDIA LITERACY EDUCATION

The benefits of media literacy education are profound: media literacy equips citizens to exercise their choices and represent themselves effectively and responsibly on a world-wide basis. From an education standpoint, using the Five Core Concepts and Five Key Questions provides research-based pedagogy rooted in academic tradition; a common vocabulary to enable communication regardless of disciplines or subjects, or geographic boundaries; a quick, internalized methodology for analysis; a way to integrate and unify analysis of all subjects and content areas, and a way to meet and help integrate State Education Standards for problem solving and projects. We hope that you have shared an Aha! Moment along the way, and that you will be able to help your students experience the same.

Slide 31 CONTACT INFORMATION FOR CML