

Leadership Report for Global MIL

COVID 19: Shaking up Education and Family Life **02**

It turns out that COVID is having long-term effects that no one could have anticipated. Education in the U.S. will never be the same.

Research Highlights **04**

CML conducted a representative survey of California parents to learn about their experience with COVID and media literacy. See highlights of the survey!

CML is privileged to have interviewed three California families regarding their experiences with COVID 19. See how they have coped with home schooling and their children's experience with media literacy.

CML News **27**

Webinars are proliferating in the age of COVID. CML has contributed...

Media Literacy Resources **28**

CML's representative survey of California parents is insightful and sheds light on the COVID experience and impact.

Med!aLit Moments **29**

Lexis Nexis provides up to date information through its Global Media and News Tracker. Help students explore this valuable tool.

COVID 19: The Disinformation Disease

COVID 19: an opportunity for media literacy

No one knows how education in the United States – and elsewhere – will change as a result of COVID 19, but change is certain as parents, through dire necessity, have learned that the present education model isn't the only one available to them, and that the present model may not be best for their children. Yes, the pandemic has been a tragedy for many families and for the nation – and the accompanying infodemic has been just as destructive. People realize more than ever that media have bias and that they cannot automatically trust the powerful images, words and sounds that comprise the media. Fortunately or unfortunately, this is a real “moment” for propelling media literacy to the forefront as a much-needed part of the social fabric, especially in regards to education, to public health and to media itself.

CML has addressed the current crisis in this issue of Connections by interviewing California parents from Los Angeles with children who attend public, charter and private schools. CML has also sponsored a representative survey ([link](#)) of California parents, to learn about how their children's school/teacher performed during the COVID shutdown, to find out whether media literacy is understood and desired by parents, and to see whether media literacy is being taught. Since CML supported California Senate Bill 830, sponsored by California Senator Bill Dodd, we decided to focus on California, to see if parents were aware of the legislation and whether they thought it has made a difference in instruction. Furthermore, California's size and diversity offer a snapshot of many races and ethnic groups, as well as a large mix of urban, suburban and rural public school districts.

With so much confusion around whether school districts will reopen or not, parents are scrambling for alternatives. Parents are forming “pods” with other families for studying and socializing, and for teaching and learning. Some parents are joining together to hire tutors or teachers, full-time or part-time. CML's Parent Survey revealed that more than 50% of parents would be happy to continue homeschooling – an ominous signal for public school systems. Undoubtedly, there has long been a need for systemic change in public school administration, school financing, innovation in curriculum and instruction, and staffing, particularly as the teacher population ages and teacher shortages become more frequent. Attempts at reform have failed time and again for generations now (as the Gates Foundation can attest).

But regardless of the setting for educating children, media literacy continues to offer a 21st Century approach to learning, exemplifying the 4 C's of Critical Thinking, Collaboration, Communication and Creativity. Media literacy can be scaled locally or globally as a way for everyone to acquire, contextualize and apply content knowledge. Using CML's 5 Key Questions is an easy – yet evidence-based – way to have a framework that positively impacts student knowledge, attitudes and behaviors. It is ideal for today's need for anywhere, any time learning – the type of learning that a smartphone demands of everyone.

CML's survey reveals that parents recognize this need and they want media literacy for their children; they realize that this is not the kind of education that their children are receiving in their schools.

Change doesn't always come easily, and yes, here we are. As the years pass, the conditions for media literacy education grow stronger and stronger. It is sad that it has taken the COVID pandemic to jolt people into reflecting and evaluating how we are educating our children – but such wake-up calls have their benefits. For now, we salute parents! They deserve great credit for their caring, their generosity and their hard work.

Media Literacy in the COVID Era:

California Parents Speak

The Center for Media Literacy and the Consortium for Media Literacy – CML – are pleased to announce a unique new initiative: a representative quantitative survey of California parents with children of children up to 21 years of age. The survey, designed by CML and conducted in late July, 2020 through AYTM, addressed California parents views on:

- Their level of satisfaction with home schooling and school/teacher performance to date during the COVID crisis;
- Their knowledge about and their desire for media literacy
- Their awareness of California legislation – Senate Bill 830, which calls for the California Department of Education to make available to school districts on its website a list of resources and instructional materials on media literacy, including professional development programs for teachers.
- Their perception of whether media literacy has been taught since 2018 (when Senate Bill 830 was passed)
- The prevalence of parents' speaking with their children about media messages.

The survey found significant differences between parents of children in public and private schools, as well as between parents at different income levels. Parents with children at parochial and private schools reported the most satisfaction with school/teacher performance than parents with children in public schools. Also, demand for media literacy education increased as parents' income levels rose.

Overall satisfaction of parents with school/teacher performance during COVID 19 in the spring semester of 2020 hovered around 60%. Parents also reported that few efforts were made to teach children to think critically around media messages addressing the COVID pandemic.

Fewer than 31% reported that they were aware of the passage of Senate Bill 830, nor did they see any difference in instruction after passage of the bill in 2018. One encouraging sign is that 84% reported discussing media with their children.

One hopeful message from the survey came through loud and clear: parents want media literacy education for their children! They believe that critical thinking and acquiring the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, create and participate with media messages is essential.

Interviews Regarding COVID 19 experiences and media literacy: Los Angeles Parents



Public School Parents and Children

Andy and Molly Jolls
Evan and Riley Jolls

Andy and Molly Jolls

Center for Media Literacy (CML): Homeschooling used to be the exception. But this year, nearly all parents became homeschool teachers, with little

to no forewarning. That put parents in a unique and challenging situation. Before we discuss this further, please tell me about your family.

Andy Jolls (AJ): Evan is our 11-year-old son. He is just finishing the fifth grade. Riley is our 10-year-old daughter, and she is just completing the fourth grade.

CML: What kind of school do Evan and Riley attend, and what is it normally like?

AJ: They attend a public school. It's rather small, with around 150 children per grade. I rate parent involvement at the school as "medium to high." We have an active PTA, and we hold fundraising activities that enable the school to offer more to our kids. Each family commits to donating \$1,000 per child to the school. Parents also add to the curriculum by volunteering to teach classes that otherwise wouldn't exist, such as art, nutrition, gardening, etc.

CML: The school doesn't offer classes like art, etc.?

Molly Jolls (MJ): Our area has one of the lowest funded school districts in California. They may teach art to the older students in middle or high school. But, in primary school, it's up to parent volunteers to provide those kinds of classes.

CML: You live in a middle to upper-middle class area. Why is school funding so low?

AJ: Our town has a very high number of rental properties. School funding mostly comes from property taxes. So, if you look at funding on a per-student basis, we end up second or third lowest in the state.

CML: So, even though housing prices are relatively high in your neighborhood, that doesn't necessarily equate to adequate funding for your schools?

AJ: Correct.

CML: Please tell me a little bit about schooling during the COVID-19 lockdown.

MJ: One of the biggest surprises I've noticed is how vastly different our two children's experiences have been, only based upon different teachers' living situations. Teachers didn't have time to prepare for this change any more than parents did. Riley's teacher has her own children who are older, so they don't demand too much of her attention. She tends to provide more structure, and Riley has a pretty consistent workload.

The system is not setup for the teachers' success. Each teacher has a different home environment. Evan's teacher has a toddler at home. So, her living situation does not provide her with the same level of uninterrupted time to teach students. Our daughter's teacher's kids are grown or older. So, our son is not experiencing as rigorous a learning-from-home experience as our daughter. Riley has a 30 minute class call she is required to attend every school day. Evan only has one call a week. Evan is usually done with classwork by 1:00pm. Often, Riley isn't done until 5:00pm. It really isn't equivalent.

AJ: The teacher's situation is part of the equation. The other part is parents' availability to teach at home. Teachers' actually "teaching" has gone away, for the most part. I am available to be the family point-person for homeschooling because I am not working full-time right now. So, I have time available to help the kids with assignments, answer their questions, etc. Teachers are basically only able to organize and provide structured assignments. For example, Riley's morning Zoom call is mostly an opportunity for the teacher to take attendance and give students new assignments. But, I'm actually doing a lot of teaching. When the kids are struggling with an assignment, they come to me. That one-on-one time with the teacher just isn't there anymore.

Accountability is an issue, too. First of all, there are no more grades. The school has gone to "pass/fail" for the rest of the school year. And, the teachers don't seem to be keeping track of whether assignments are turned in, whether they are on time, etc. At least, not like they used to. So, it's easier for kids to, "phone it in," if you know what I mean.

MJ: They also miss out on getting help from their classmates. Evan had one writing assignment where the teacher asked the students to work with a "partner." He and the other student would get on a call together every day at 3:00pm. Evan really thrived. He would say to me, "Mom, it's 3:00pm. I have to get on my call!" That assignment ran for about two weeks. Too bad there wasn't more of that. Having a scheduled, dedicated time to work on the project was very good for him.

CML: How does the reduction of your children's interaction with their teachers and other students affect you as parents?

AJ: In short, most of the teaching is up to us. That is a big responsibility that, frankly, we were not prepared for. We are really hoping it is safe for our kids to return to regular, in-person classes in the fall.

CML: How do you think your family's experience differs from families who have children enrolled in private schools?

AJ: I've always looked at private school as something that is only important for children on the "edges." If a child is a really exceptional student, a private school that meets their needs is the best option. Those kids can become bored or disengaged if the regular school curriculum isn't challenging enough for them. Private education is also very good for children who struggle with academics and those who need additional structure. A private school with a special curriculum can keep them from falling behind. That's what my parents raised me to believe. I was a good but not exceptional student. So, I was engaged in public school, not bored, and I progressed well.

MJ: I was raised the same way, but there are times that I see things differently. Riley is shy, and had a hard time making friends in the first grade. At the same time, I had a good friend whose daughter was struggling with her teacher. My friend decided to enroll her daughter in a private school. It was a really great school, and it wasn't outrageously expensive compared to a lot of other private schools in the area. I said to Andy, "We should look into this, because I think Riley would do better in a smaller classroom." I wasn't working at the time. So, financially, it just wasn't feasible. But, when Riley started second grade at public school, things got better for her. She had a really great teacher, and she made a few close friends. Now she does very well in public school.

I do think that the private schools have a much better handle on online teaching. My friend's daughter is in class from 8:00am to 3:00pm, and the teachers are online with them the whole time. So, I may consider private school again, if classes are still online in the fall. But, if we return to in-person schooling, I don't feel it will be necessary.

CML: Why do you think private schools do a better job at online teaching?

AJ: Private school administrators know that parents are writing them big checks. Parents won't pay that kind of money to have their children participate in ineffective teaching over Zoom. So, from the beginning of this crisis, private school administrators knew they had to figure out how to provide kids with a valuable education, in spite of new protocols. Honestly, it was a case of capitalism prevailing. You don't pay money for something if it isn't worthwhile.

CML: Is there anything you believe your children's school can do to improve teaching during COVID-19?

AJ: I don't mean to sound overly harsh toward our school. They face systemic problems, and they've done the very best they can under the circumstances. They have done a great job communicating with families. We've received emails from the superintendent and the principal telling us about their plans, their approach to online teaching, etc. Teachers are also doing everything they can with the tools they have. There are just a lot of harsh realities right now. For example, we recently learned that the state is going to slash \$1 million from our school's budget.

CML: Losing that much money can have a big effect on kids. Is there any way to make up for at least part of that shortfall?

MJ: Unfortunately, our school's biggest fundraiser of the year was scheduled for the end of March. It had to be cancelled due to COVID-19. That is a disaster, in terms of timing. That fundraiser usually brings in about \$1 million, so we would have been fine for at least another year. Ticket sales had already gone online, and about \$250,000 was already raised prior to the shutdown. So far, no one has asked for a refund, because everyone knows how important that money is for our school and our kids. They also put the event's auction online. So, as parents and as a community, we are all really stepping up as best we can.

However, we need to be realistic. The school can't lose \$1 million in funding and then expect to be able to add safety protocols such as staggered schedules to smaller class sizes. The school is going to need more support from families and the community.

CML: It sounds like more and more responsibilities are being transferred to parents – teaching, providing funding and more.

AJ: That’s definitely true.

CML: Additionally, with so much uncertainty about COVID-19, misinformation about potential treatments, risks and prevention is rampant. Parents are also tasked with ensuring their children have accurate, age-appropriate guidance about information they may see or hear. Media literacy education provides students of all ages with skills that help them to think critically about news and other types of communications. Is your children’s school providing any media literacy education to help students navigate information?

AJ: The schools are not doing much around media literacy, at least not at the elementary school level. The problem is lack of awareness. Many people still don’t even know what “media literacy” means. They mistake it for fact checking, or they think it only has to do with fighting so-called “fake news.”

MJ: Especially now, our school is focusing on the basics – like math and social studies.

CML: Bringing media literacy into the education system is not as complicated as many people think. Critical thinking skills can be taught and applied while students are learning math and social studies. Or, when they are learning to be safe online and to make wiser decisions about what to believe, create or share on social media.

MJ: It’s crucial for students to learn media literacy and critical thinking skills right now. When Evan was working on a school project about Bill Gates, he naturally started his research on Google. I want my son to know that when you Google a subject, it’s not enough to just click on the first story that comes up and then stop searching. I want him to read a variety of different articles and gather and evaluate information. I also want him to understand that it’s important to ask questions about the information he finds – to ask questions such as: Who wrote this? Why did they write it? What are they doing to get my attention?

AJ: Yes. As another example, imagine one of our kids asks Alexa to tell them about the war of 1812. Alexa will draw information from Wikipedia. It’s important for our kids to understand that there is a human who has made the decision where to draw that information from, and that someone is monetizing that.

CML: That has everything to do with understanding who is choosing what information to provide and why. That is media literacy.

AJ: That’s right. I’m hopeful – I’m always hopeful – that as human beings we will learn and get better. That includes transforming a crisis like COVID-19 into an opportunity to learn and provide better education to our children in the future.

Evan and Riley Jolls

CML: Hi Evan and Riley. Let's talk about your school experience, both before COVID 19 and your online classes now. Would you please tell me about your school and what grades you're in?

Evan Jolls (EJ): I'm finishing up the 5th grade, so I'll go to middle school in September. My teacher is good, and I've learned a lot – especially math. Next year, I'll be in a program called “extra math,” which is for kids who are successful math students. I also learned a lot about social studies, language arts, and we were doing science experiments. Last year, we just watched science videos, but the experiments this year taught me a lot more.

CML: You've been learning at home for a while now, right?

EJ: Yes.

CML: Are you doing the experiments from home?

EJ: No, now we've gone back to videos. After watching them, we write an assignment. We don't learn as much science as we did before we started online school.

CML: Can you tell me something you like about learning at home?

EJ: I really like that I get to spend more time with my family. Sometimes that gets a little “over the top,” but mostly I really like it.

CML: Is there anything you really don't like?

EJ: What I don't like is that I don't get to see my friends that much. That, and I learn much more from my teacher in a classroom than I do online

CML: I would imagine, especially when you have a good teacher.

EJ: Yes.

CML: What about information about what is going on with COVID 19? Are you hearing about that? If so, where does the information come from – your parents, the news, your friends?

EJ: I hear about it from my mom. Sometimes, she goes on the internet, and she says, “Oh, there are this many cases in this city,” or whatever. I hear about it from a lot from my friends, too. I feel like it's getting better, but it's also getting worse at the same time. I think we all can be doing more to stop the pandemic.

CML: Riley, you're just finishing the fourth grade. You've had to make a lot of changes in the way that you learn due to COVID 19, too. What have things been like for you these past several months?

Riley Jolls (RJ): I don't really like homeschooling, because I get behind more, and the projects are harder.

CML: When you were learning in the classroom, and you had a hard project, what did you do then, versus now?

RJ: Well, in the classroom, we were usually assigned a partner to work with on a project. So, we could work out the hard parts together. Now, we are working on projects alone.

CML: What about asking your teacher to help. Can you still do that?

RJ: Yes. I can still do that. It just isn't quite the same.

CML: How about you Evan? Do you feel you like you have the same access to your teacher as you did when you were in the classroom?

EJ: It's different. My teacher has a young daughter who she has to teach in the morning and take care of during the day. So, she only has about two hours a day to work with our class. It's hard to schedule online meetings with her. If I can't reach my teacher, I ask my classmates questions, and they ask me for help when they need it, too.

RJ: My teacher has kids, too. But, they are teenagers. They don't need as much help as younger kids, so she can be there for our class during the day.

CML: Can you think of anything that would make the learning from home better for you?

EJ: More online class meetings would help me. Riley has a class Zoom call every day for 30 minutes. We have one just once a week. It doesn't seem like it's enough.

CML: Riley, how do you feel about your online class meetings?

RJ: It's mostly just so the teacher can take attendance. But it let us see each other and ask the teacher questions. So, it's good.

CML: Evan, do you think having calls every day like Riley does would be better?

EJ: Yes. Especially because my teacher is not as available during other parts of the day. I would want to have a call for 30 or 45 minutes at least once or twice a week.

CML: Overall, do you prefer that school stay the way it is now, or do you prefer to go back to learning in the classroom like you did prior to COVID 19?

EJ: For sure, I want school to go back to the way it used to be.

RJ: Yes, the same.

EJ: We used to have recess and lunch when we got to go outside. We would play for 15 or 20 minutes during snack time in the morning, and then have a longer lunch break in the afternoon.

CML: Are you not getting outside as much now?

EJ: Well, we just go out at the end of the day, instead of going for breaks.

CML: How about you, Riley?

RJ: My teacher was talking about getting enough vitamin D, because we don't really go outside as much. She told us how important it is to go outside and exercise.

CML: That's important for people of all ages. Thanks so much for talking with CML!



Charter School/Public School Parents and Children

David and Aracely Castillo Arlynn and César Castillo

David and Aracely Castillo

Center for Media Literacy (CML): Aracely and David, you have two children who both attend the same public charter school. Aracely, you are a mom and a student at a Los Angeles community college. To start, would you please tell me about your children and the school they attend?

Aracely Castillo (AC): Of course. Arlynn is my 15-year-old daughter, and Cesar is my 12-year-old son. Arlynn just finished the ninth grade, and Cesar just finished fifth grade. Prior to COVID 19, there were issues with the

school. I felt that the teachers needed to be more involved with the students' learning. They taught, but they rarely checked in to see if children were truly understanding the concepts, and I wished that they offered the kids more resources for learning. But, I know the school has limited funding.

CML: Did anything change when your kids started learning from home due to COVID 19?

AC: The same problems remained, but I think they got worse. In face-to-face classes, even if a child's grades aren't the best, they actually earn those grades because the teachers evaluate their work. Once the kids started learning via Zoom, the teachers only focused on the completion of tasks. Instead of grading assignments, they just wrote "the following assignment has been completed." I don't think that ensured that children learned anything.

Also, my two kids handled the situation differently, mostly because of their ages. Arlynn was worried because she's used to spending time with a group of her close friends. They normally got together to do homework, and she was concerned about losing that support, both socially and academically. It was completely different for Cesar. His first reaction to the school shutdown was, "Yay, I'm on vacation!" We had to explain that, even though there were no in-person classes, he was still responsible for schoolwork. It was stressful for both of them, just in different ways.

CML: How did your kids adapt to using Zoom?

AC: They never had Zoom before this crisis. In my daughter's case, the teachers were available, but online meetings were not mandatory. My son is younger, and he had a bit more contact with teachers on Zoom. The school did provide a website and email addresses for students to communicate with teachers. And, after they got past the confusion of the first two weeks of the shutdown, the teachers kept up well with email communication from their students.

CML: David, how did you perceive the situation with online learning?

David Castillo (DC): I work a lot of the time, so my wife sees more than I do. But, it appeared that the kids were spending far less time doing schoolwork and homework compared to when they were physically in school. Also, Aracely and I had to take on more responsibility for our children's education. With less student-teacher contact, we were the ones who had to keep track of assignments and ensure that our children spent enough time studying. Fortunately, Aracely is home studying, as well. So, she was able to provide supervision and help with the kids with their schoolwork during the day.

CML: I understand your school faced challenges this year. Is there anything that the school did very well, in spite of all the difficulties created by COVID 19?

AC: Yes. We are a family of four, and three of us are students. We only own two computers. When all three of us had to take classes from home, that became a problem. We were one computer short. The kids' school distributed devices to all students who needed them so they could stay in contact with teachers and to do homework. That made a positive difference at a time when we were very uncertain about what would happen with our children's education. The school also kept up with distributing free breakfasts and lunches for low-income students. Families were able to pick up food during a scheduled appointment once a week. The school followed very safe protocols – the workers and the families always used face coverings and kept their hands clean. I know that food distribution has been crucial for families that are experiencing even greater economic hardships during the pandemic.

CML: If online school continues in the fall, is there anything the school can do to improve students' and families' experiences?

AC: The administration could organize trainings for teachers to learn how to best stay in contact with students while offering online education. Our teachers weren't trained to teach via Zoom. It's a different environment that requires different teaching skills. Also, I'd like teachers to be more accessible to students who have questions about their schoolwork. Kids need that support.

CML: During the last months of school, did you notice that your children would come to you more often when they had questions about their homework?

DC: Yes, because they had less contact with their teachers. We like to make sure our children think for themselves before we just offer answers. First, we suggest that they research their questions. If they can't find answers on their own, then we step in to help them.

AC: I highly recommend Khan Academy. They offer free online learning resources for students from pre-kindergarten through university level, including tutorial videos, exercises, etc. Khan covers nearly every subject – geography, math, reading, writing and more. It's an excellent resource for students.

CML: Aracely, you're a student, as well. What are you studying for, and how has your education changed since the COVID 19 shutdown in March?

AC: I go to a community college, and I'm studying to become a registered dietician nutritionist (RDN). When I attended classes in person, it was a better experience, because I had more interaction with my teachers. My contact with professors has decreased with online teaching, similar to how my children had less contact with their teachers.

Also, my major requires that I take some rather complex science classes. Those courses are just not the same online. For example, when the COVID crisis started, I was taking a physiology class that required me to spend time doing experiments in a lab. Because we could no longer meet in a lab, we switched to watching videos of experiments, instead of doing them ourselves. It's just a completely different way of learning that doesn't offer the same hands-on experience.

CML: Is there anything your school is doing very well during the shutdown?

AC: My community college is doing a very good job, considering the circumstances. Their communication is good, and I can always reach out to professors, tutors, counselors, the library staff, etc. via the school's website. I just have to log in. I took a writing class during the shutdown. My tutors were available online. Through the college's technology, I could share my screen with them, and they could help me with my assignments in real time.

CML: Is there anything you'd like your community college to add or change if online classes continue in the fall?

AC: I think all classes should have a virtual meeting at least once a week. Regular contact with professors is the only way students can be really sure they understand the material.

CML: Along with changes to the way we learn, COVID 19 has ushered in a new aspect to an already complicated information and communication environment. Now, we are seeing a deluge of misinformation and disinformation about the virus, potential treatments and safety protocols. Have you seen or heard much about that?

DC: Yes, especially about potential vaccines and homemade "treatments" for COVID-19. The fact is, there is no scientifically proven vaccine or treatment at this time.

CML: Are your children also exposed to questionable information about the virus?

DC: I know they are. We talk about "fake news" regarding COVID. I make sure they are aware that the only thing we can do to prevent the spread of the virus is be cautious, use face masks, social distance, wash hands, etc.

AC: We've told the kids that, sometimes, news and information they see on TV or on social networks is false, and that it is also often sensationalized and fear-inducing. However, we educate them to be cautious, instead of fearful. Media may be reporting about risk of illness and death, but that's not necessarily appropriate for kids. It just causes anxiety and fear. Instead, we focus on explaining to them how they can take care of themselves and stay safe. They understand that perfectly well.

CML: It's wonderful that you are providing that kind of healthy atmosphere in your home. How do you feel about schools teaching children how to analyze and think critically about the media messages they receive?

DC: I think it is a part of the school's responsibility to students. But, it's really not being taught much, now. So, parents are responsible for teaching critical thinking and media literacy in their homes.

CML: How do you feel about the possibility of students returning to school on-campus in the fall?

DC: Of course, it would be great to have the kids back in class with their teachers and friends. But, I am still very aware of the danger of this pandemic. At this point, I just don't feel like in-person classes are worth the risk.

Arlynn and César Castillo

CML: Arlynn and Cesar, you are siblings who go to the same charter school. School was very different for you last semester because learning was done online due to the COVID 19 shutdown. Arlynn, you just finished the ninth grade. Can you tell me about your high school experience prior to March 2020?

Arlynn Castillo (AC): My high school is a college prep, so they focus on students who want to continue on to colleges and universities after graduation. They prepare us for college by holding classes according to a schedule that would be typical on a college campus, they encourage us to work independently like college students, etc. The school teaches children from kindergarten through 12th grade, so my brother goes to the same school, even though he will just be going into the sixth grade in the fall.

CML: How did things change at school due to COVID 19?

AC: At first, not too much changed. When we were still taking in-person classes, the school took precautions, such as telling us to wash our hands frequently and supplying hand sanitizer in all the classrooms. Other than that, everything seemed normal.

But, when we stopped attending classes in mid-March, things became more complicated. The grading system changed, and they weren't very good about scheduling class meetings on Zoom. A lot of times a teacher would schedule a meeting when I was busy doing homework for another class. It got really confusing.

CML: How often did teachers schedule Zoom meetings?

AC: Zoom meetings were every week, but they were optional. It was mainly for teachers to answer our questions about our homework. I usually didn't participate on the calls, because I didn't need the help.

CML: Were you less accountable for turning in assignments than you were when you attended classes in-person?

AC: At first, there was very little accountability. But then, the schools and the students realized that we had to do our homework whether there was a pandemic or not. So, teachers started becoming stricter about students meeting deadlines for turning in assignments. But, they still gave us more time to complete our work than they did when we were learning in the classroom.

CML: Cesar, how often did you have to meet with your class on Zoom, and what was it like?

César Castillo (CC): My class met a couple times a week in the afternoon. For me, it felt just like regular school, only it was online.

CML: How long did the calls last?

CC: Sometimes about 20 minutes. Sometimes as long as 45 minutes. It depended upon how much the teacher needed to explain the homework and how many questions kids asked.

CML: What did you like or dislike about learning from home?

CC: I didn't like online school. I missed being with my friends. What I did like was that my friends and I at least got to see each other on the computer. We saw each other's faces and talked.

CML: How about you, Arlyn? What do you think were the best and worst part of taking classes from home?

AC: Sometimes, I enjoyed working in my own environment. It was nice to be attending school right from my room. But, learning that way can be a little depressing, too. I was not socializing with anyone. I felt, pretty much, all on my own.

CML: Do you think your school is going to go back to in-person classes in the fall?

AC: I'm not sure. The school surveyed the students at our high school and asked us if we were comfortable going back to the classroom. They were suggesting we go to school in groups twice a week and study online the rest of the time, in order to keep the number of students in classes down. Also, instead of changing classrooms for each subject, we would just stay in one room all day to minimize risk.

CML: How do you feel about that?

AC: Honestly, I think there's no point. If students are going to be stuck in one place at school, we might as well just stay at home. Also, staying home is less risky. We don't know where other students have been, or if they were exposed to COVID. Online school is not the best option. But, with the virus still out there, I think it's best to stick with it for now.

CML: Cesar, what do you think about going back to the classroom?

CC: I agree with my sister. Even though I want to be in school, I'd rather wait until it's more secure and learn from home for now.

CML: Arlyn, when you were attending online school, did you feel like you had the same access to your teachers as you did when you were learning in person?

AC: Actually, more. With everything online, the teachers knew that they had to be responsive when we contact them through email. They knew there was no other way for us to reach them. So, they were very available.

CML: Cesar, did you feel like you had the same access to your teachers online as you did when you attended face-to-face classes?

CC: I had more access when I was in face-to-face classes. I hardly saw my teacher when we went online, and I missed seeing her.

CML: When you had questions about your homework or needed help, who did you turn to while your school was online?

CC: I mostly asked my mom or my sister for help. Or, I would search for information on the Kahn Academy website.

CML: How about you Arllyn?

AC: I asked my friends for help. I got in touch with them by text message or on Facetime. I also asked my teachers questions on email. They were always telling us that we could ask them questions anytime, and they were really there for us.

CML: There are a lot of challenges to teaching online. But, it makes a big difference when teachers commit to being available for students when their help is needed. Did your teachers ever talk to you about how to think critically about information you see and hear in the media – information about COVID 19 or about other subjects?

AC: My teachers talked more about the safety aspects of COVID 19, not so much about information. In the beginning, they talked to us about ways to stay safe like hand washing, using hand sanitizer and wiping down surfaces that people had touched. Then, they started talking about masks.

CML: Cesar, did you learn about evaluation and analyzing media messages, or media literacy?

CC: No, not really.

AC: I would like to learn more about that. If it helps people, I want to know, too.

CML: Is there anything else either of you would like to tell me about attending school online?

CC: I would like all my teachers to know that I miss them very much, and I won't ever forget them – not ever.



Private School Parents and Children

Mike and Kim Anton Payton and Mirabella Anton

Mike and Kim Anton

Center for Media Literacy (CML): Your daughters are 10 years apart in age. With one in college and the other just finishing primary school, your family has had to adapt to more than one school's new protocols during the COVID 19 pandemic.

Kim Anton (KA): We have. Our oldest daughter, Peyton, is 20 years old. She just completed her sophomore year at a private university that has about 12,000 students. Our daughter Mirabelle is 10 years old, and she just finished the fifth grade at a private K-12 school that has about 1,200 students. So, we have both perspectives.

CML: How would you describe the culture of school staff and parents at Mirabelle's school prior to COVID 19?

KA: Some parents are more actively involved with their kids' education than others. But overall, there are not a lot of opportunities for parents to be in the classroom helping teachers with their programs. The school's philosophy is that THEY are responsible for providing qualified teachers that cover all aspects of a child's education. If a parent has some sort of expertise, like art or technology, a teacher might bring that parent in to enhance the curriculum with a special presentation. Other than that, parents just occasionally volunteer at book fairs, or they serve lunch.

CML: Many public schools have either eliminated or greatly reduced classes like art and sports, and instead only focus on academics. Are those types of classes offered at Mirabelle's private school?

KA: One of the reasons this school is worth our investment is that they truly offer a bit of everything. Mirabelle has taken art classes and extracurricular ballet. They offer sports both during school and after school hours, and every child plays on a team. Choices include swimming, soccer, basketball, softball, volleyball, football and more. The school also has an innovation room where students learn how to build things with and without computers. We feel very lucky to have Mirabelle in this school. They really are exceptional.

Mike Anton (MA): I actually have seen a lot of parent participation in a different way. The school puts a lot of emphasis on performances, public speaking, sports and other activities that enhance student confidence and learning. Parent attendance is very high at these events. I think there is more opportunity for that type of parent participation than you normally see in public schools.

CML: How did the school manage to keep all those activities going during the COVID 19 shut down?

KA: It was very challenging. For instance, the sports Mirabelle participated in basically went away. And, prior to COVID 19, her art projects were very hands-on. The school provided an array of materials. Of course, that became impossible. So definitely, there was a shift in her education as far as activities are concerned. However, once our school went online, they continued to do an excellent job on the academic side.

CML: What made their work “excellent?”

KA: It was the teachers. They were committed, dynamic, all-in. Her writing teacher – it was almost like she “doubled down” on her efforts. She gave the kids fun extracurricular and extra credit assignments. Mirabelle really took to it. Also, my daughter was required to attend classes on Zoom five days a week for about two-and-a-half hours each day. So, she stayed engaged.

MA: I think the school went through two distinct phases during this year’s shut down. For the first two weeks that classes were online, it was complicated. First of all, the teachers had to “turn on a dime” and very quickly transition to online school. They only had two or three days to prepare. Initially, they were using another system instead of Zoom. It wasn’t so great. But, after two weeks, they switched to Zoom and became noticeably better at teaching online. Every week, the teachers became more adapted and better at doing their jobs remotely. Overall, the same teachers who struggled at the beginning of the transition really excelled at online teaching by the end of the year.

CML: It’s clear that you are very happy with the school’s performance under difficult circumstances. Is there anything about online school that you wish was different?

KA: We are very conscientious about limiting screentime. Online school has kids online for too many hours each day. Also, Mirabelle’s time with friends is all online now. I refuse to deny her that during these crazy times, but I believe there is a huge price to pay, and that’s screen addiction. Even adults are experiencing that. I am. Mike is. Mirabelle is 10 years old. With no in-person interaction with other kids, she is much more susceptible spending too much time online.

CML: Parents already face challenges with limiting children's screen time. With COVID 19, it becomes even tougher. Many parent are also taking on more teaching responsibilities, since learning takes place at home. Have you been taking on more responsibilities as your child's educator?

MA: We had it very easy, and I think there are a variety of factors that contribute to that. Mirabelle is old enough to take responsibility for her learning. She got up in the morning and showed up on screen right on time. If we had a five-year-old, I'm sure we would have had to play a larger role. Her personality also makes things easier for us as parents. She is naturally diligent and focused, and I know that isn't the case for every child. Of course, the school also did a great job. They had everything very organized and structured. So, Mirabelle only came to us for help if, for example, she was having trouble with a difficult math problem. Then, she would come to me, Kim or her older sister for help. Also, we helped with technical issues in the beginning. She had questions like, "How do I get the printer to work when I'm on wifi?" We stepped in to help with that, too.

KA: The personality of the child makes a big difference. I have a friend whose daughter goes to another good school that is very organized. But, her child has never been super focused about academics. My friend was pulling her hair out because everyday she was telling her child, "You've got to get this schoolwork done." I didn't have to do that. I had every intention of stepping in to take a larger role in educating my daughter. But in the end, it wasn't necessary.

MA: Also, the teachers held online office hours.

KA: Yes. Teachers held math office hours three times a week and writing office hours twice a week. So, if a student had a question, they could ask the teacher directly. The teacher also used office hours to simple talk to and connect with students.

MA: One positive side of students learning at home is that, as parents, we could see for ourselves how the school is teaching. When kids are away in a classroom, parents generally have no idea what is actually going on.

CML: You are clearly very happy with the way the school handled a difficult situation. Is there anything you think the school could have done to make online learning even better for students and families?

KA: Yes. The at-home physical education program can be improved. I understand that the school had practically no time to prepare for at-home learning. But basically, they went from a very robust P.E. program to one where there was no plan or accountability. Getting Mirabelle away from the screen and out into fresh air was a big priority for us. At times, it was very frustrating.

MA: If school is still online in the fall, I think they will do a better job with P.E. simply because they have had more time to figure things out. It would be simple to schedule exercise at least a few times a week during the school day. Just ask the kids to spend a specific amount of time hitting a volleyball, running in their yards, or doing a certain number of pushups, jumping jacks, etc. Anything that gets them moving is beneficial both physically and mentally.

CML: Let's talk about your older daughter Peyton's experience. She's a young adult living away from home and attending a university. What changed for her?

MA: Peyton was living with roommates in an apartment near the university prior to COVID 19. When classes went online, she moved back home with us. So, that in and of itself was a big change. From my perspective, she lost some of the benefits that come from attending a small, private university, such as small class size, greater attention to students and more direct interaction with professors. She had six classes last semester. Three of them were taught by grad students. That was fine while she was attending in-person classes. But, the grad students barely connected with her and her classmates online. Probably because they are students, too. They had their own challenges adapting to online education. The professors did a better job of keeping their classes up-to-speed via Zoom.

We were disappointed for Peyton, because she wasn't getting the same caliber of education. Prior to COVID 19, she was just finding herself in college. She had joined a sorority, she was doing well in classes and really enjoying college life. We were disappointed for ourselves, because we were paying for what was supposed to be a premium college experience. For example, she's took a public speaking class. It's not easy to speak publically over the internet, but it is possible. The students could have given a speeches in front of the class via Zoom. In the current situation, educators need to think creatively and leverage technology as best they can. But that didn't happen in this class. So, she took a public speaking class and didn't speak in public.

KA: Peyton told us, if the university is only going to offer classes online in the fall, she will either take a gap year, or enroll in a much less expensive college. It doesn't make sense to pay private university tuition and not receive the whole experience.

CML: I understand why you mentioned disappointment in both the academic and social aspects of university life. Often, college is where we form both the personal and professional contacts the last a lifetime, including those that lead to future career opportunities. Do you believe the tuition price was worth it when Peyton attended in-person classes?

KA: Definitely. Peyton was challenged much more when she was on campus. She said that online classes were almost too easy. The students had open-book tests. (How could they not?) Online, the experience was simply not the same. That said, it wasn't really the college's fault. They had no idea what to expect, or how to prepare for this emergency. And, if families don't continue paying tuition due to changes in protocols due to COVID 19, the university simply will not be able to survive.

CML: That's very challenging for everyone – administration, faculty, parents and students.

KA: Yes. What is also concerning is that the university is considering returning to in-person classes in the fall. Is that decision being made because it is safe to do so, or is it because it's a financial necessity? It's very hard to know for sure.

CML: It sounds like the private K-12 school that Mirabelle attends did a better job adapting to online learning than Peyton's university. Would you say that is true?

KA: Yes. However, the university did do an excellent job communicating with students and parents.

MA: That's true. There is a regular stream of communications from university administration about the status of things. The department where Peyton takes classes within her major is also very good at communicating. Overall, it's just a very challenging situation for everyone.

CML: Have either of your girls had any media literacy education, either while attending school in-person, or online during the COVID 19 shut down?

KA: Peyton had a speaker from CML come in one time and present about media literacy when she was in high school. Mirabelle's school partnered with Common Sense Media. However, that training was on media safety, not media literacy. Media literacy education is seriously lacking.

CML: During the past few months, there have been so many confusing media messages, especially about the pandemic. Are your daughters exposed to much of that?

KA: default to believing that they are exposed to everything, because media messaging comes from everywhere these days. Even Mirabelle, she's not yet on social media, but some of the kids she interacts with are. So, I am sure she hears things.

I've changed my behavior since the shut down began. In the beginning, I had the news on 24/7. That was a mistake. Mirabelle heard more than she should have during a very upsetting time. At least kids who have had some kind of media literacy education have the opportunity to gain a better sense of control over how they interpret media messages. They learn to think for themselves and that not everything they hear on the

news or see on the internet is necessarily completely true, nor as dangerous and scary as it might sound. Those kinds of critical thinking skills would be very helpful now.

CML: Media literacy is important at any time, but during a crisis, it becomes crucial. Ideally, we would not wait until a crisis occurs to give students the benefit of media literacy education.

MA: For now, Kim and I are Mirabelle's primary media literacy teachers. We talk to her about media messages. She's already very savvy. She mocks the drug commercials on TV when they disclose all the risks – when they first show the benefits of the medication and then drop in “can cause death.” She recognizes that it's important to be careful about taking medications, because the effects are not all positive.

KA: Unfortunately, schools were probably less likely to include media literacy education during the past several months. With so little time for teaching, they were just trying to fit in the basic academics.

CML: How important do you think it is for schools to include media literacy as a basic of academics?

KA: Media literacy should be a part of the curriculum from the beginning of a child's education, although it needs to be taught in age-appropriate ways.

MA: Especially with the way media has changed for this generation. There is a 24/7 news cycle, Facebook, Twitter. Mirabelle consumes media differently than Kim and I did at her age, and even differently than her older sister did when she was younger. We try to expose her to differing points of view. We encourage her to be empathetic, but also discerning about information. Ultimately, it's up to us as parents to teach her to think critically.

Payton and Mirabella Anton

CML: Peyton and Mirabelle, you are sisters who are about 10 years apart in age. So, you are at different stages of your educational experiences during unprecedented times. Peyton, would you please tell me about the university you attend?

Payton Anton (PA): I go to a private university that has about 12,000 students, and 7,000 of them are undergrads, like me. Class sizes are pretty small – usually between eight and 40 students. The small class size is really great, because the professors are really there for us.

CML: A lot of times, undergrad classes are taught by graduate students. Is that the case at your university?

PA: For some of my classes, yes. I actually had my first experience with a grad student-led classes his past semester. Before the shutdown, when classes were taught In-person, they did an amazing job. They were very passionate about teaching, and it was clear that they were excited to beginning working in their chosen profession. But, once classes went online, I really noticed a difference. The grad students were just starting out as educators, and the adjustment was hard for them. The more experienced professors did a better job online.

CML: Mirabelle, would you please tell me about your school?

Mirabelle Anton (MA): I go to a private school, and I just finished fifth grade. There were about 70 fifth graders at our school last semester. We were divided into classes of about 20 kids each. We learned math, English, social studies, and also P.E. and innovation. In innovation class we do creative projects. Two years ago we did art projects with an “under the sea” theme. Another year it was a space theme. We also have tech class, where we learn how to use technology. Sometimes we make mini movies.

CML: That’s fun! Who teaches the innovation and tech classes?

MA: They are taught by our teachers and sports coaches.

CML: How did your schools change with the shutdown due to COVID-19?

PA: Well, everything went online. I had some really great professors. For instance, my Spanish professor did the best job! He held Zoom classes at normal class times, so everything felt consistent. He used the Zoom technology to break us into small groups so we could collaborate and on activities, which was amazing. I felt like nothing change. But other professors didn’t do as well. Some just shared their screens on Zoom and lectured. The grad student teachers often pre-recorded videos, had us watch them on our own time, and then do an activity or have a discussion. That wasn’t super engaging. I felt like I was taking an online course instead of being enrolled at a university. In one class, I got a high grade without having to try very hard. To me, there’s really no point in taking a class when you don’t have to try hard, because you don’t learn anything. As an example, I had a public speaking class. Instead of making a final presentation in front of the class, I just recorded a video of my speech and posted it to YouTube. I took that class because it was part of my major, but also because I wanted to get over my fear of public speaking. I wasn’t able to do that.

CML: In college, students often make life-long friendships and business connections. How did that change when classes went online?

PA: My school is small, and that makes it easier to get to know people. I can't walk more than 10 steps on campus without running into someone I know. I had at least one friend in every class. Not necessarily someone I'd go have lunch with, but a person to call for a study session or to collaborate on a project. However, once we went online, there wasn't much interaction. That's a problem for me. I could easily have taken college courses online, worked a job and moved on with my life. But, I chose to attend a university. A huge reason for that decision was the opportunity to make new friends and develop connections that could lead to a job when I'm older.

CML: Mirabelle, how did things change for you when your school went online?

MA: We had Zoom calls with each of our classes once a week. We had a schedule-math in the morning one day, then English, then reading, then history, then our extracurriculars. Teachers also had online office hours at the end of each school day.

CML: How did you feel about learning from home?

MA: I missed being in class. I'm sure all my friends did, too. We had so many fun things planned for the rest of the year. We were supposed to have had an assembly hosted by the fifth graders – kind of like a graduation. We ended up doing a virtual version of that, but it just wasn't the same. We were supposed to sing a bunch of songs, and we couldn't do that. We were supposed to go to Astro camp. It's the field trip of the year, and we would have gone for three days. I was going to learn about astronomy and science.

CML: Were you able to do some fun things online?

MA: Yes. There were fun things that we wouldn't normally have done. We played games in math and language arts classes. In class, we would have just worked on an essay or something.

CML: It sounds like the teachers did a good job of finding creative ways to keep things interesting for you.

PA: From what I saw, the teachers at Mirabelle's school did an amazing job. She always had stuff to do, just like she did on normal school days.

MA: Yes, we had a scheduled lunch break between Zoom calls in the morning and afternoon. So, we weren't just sitting around all day.

CML: Were you able to socialize with your friends on Zoom?

MA: A classmate would send out an email, and then about ten kids would get on a social Zoom call.

CML: Peyton, it sounds like Mirabelle's school really ensured that students stayed engaged. But, it was different for you?

PA: It's college, so it varied. In my Spanish class, we were forced to engage with each other. Students were required have their cameras on at all times and do projects together. In my accounting class, no one had their camera on. We were just supposed to listen. And, that brings up another point. There was no accountability. Students could just walk away from their computers.

MA: We had to have our cameras on all the time. It was one of the rules.

CML: During the past several months, there have been a lot of confusing and questionably accurate media messages about the pandemic and how to stay safe. Have either of your schools provided any media literacy education to help you think more critically about those messages?

MA: One day every year, we learn about how to stay safe when we use the internet. My Girl Scout troop learns about that every year, too.

CML: You learn how to stay safe, but do you learn how to analyze information and messages?

MA: No. Peyton, knows more about that.

PA: CML presented about media literacy during my senior year in high school. Afterwards, my history teacher covered more about it. I haven't had any media literacy training since then. But, I think it's very important that people learn more about it. Especially now, with so much bias and politicizing of information. For example, COVID 19 is a health issue. People are turning it into a political issue and spewing false information on both sides. Do they know how to verify information and track its source? Do they know to look at why messages are being sent? Because now, anyone can post anything, and it can go viral on Twitter and people start believing it. Even with video, people can chose what to include in a shot, or edit parts out. It very important that people understand that.

Now, even deciding whether or not to return to in-person classes has become politicized. People need to think critically about why people with power make decisions for or against that.

CML: What do you think that decision should be based upon?

PA: The top priority should be the safety of children. I know that learning is going to change and that kids might miss out on the social aspect. But we need to figure out how to keep education safe. I know that will be hard, but it's what we have to do.

Right now, my university is planning for a hybrid program in the fall. Meaning, some classes will be held in-person and some online in order to keep down the number of students on campus and comply with social distancing. But honestly, illnesses spread very easily on college campuses. As soon as one student gets sick, we all get sick. Also,

not everyone is careful about wearing masks, kids want to party, etc. I just don't have that much confidence in the hybrid plan. I mean, I'm 20 years old and healthy. I would probably recover from COVID 19 fairly easily. But I don't want to risk getting other people in my family sick.

This is a challenging time for everyone. We really to keep our priorities aligned with the greater good.

Tis the Season for Webinars:

CML's Tessa Jolls was a featured panelist for the following webinars, which were recorded and can be found on the pages cited below:

The Challenges and Benefits of Being a Media Literacy Entrepreneur," a new series with Renee Hobbs from the Media Education Lab, University of Rhode Island:
<https://www.mediaeducationlab.com/challenges-benefits-being-media-literacy-entrepreneur>

June 24: Part I featuring Ava Montgomery, Conscious Media Consulting; Josue Emmanuel Munoz, OTWay.Media; W. Ian O'Byrne, College of Charleston:

July 29: Part II featuring Michele Johnsen, Ignite Global Good, Yonty Friesen, Central Connecticut State University, Jayne Cabbage, Bowie State University.

August 28, 12-1 EST: Part III featuring Lauren McClanahan, Western Washington University. Jami Rhue, R&M Publications, LLC, Sr. Nancy Usselman, Pauline Center for Media Studies. Sign up! You can register from the link above.

September 30: Part IV featuring Amy Jussel, Shaping Youth.org., Jaimie Schmitz, Digital Literacy Initiative, Michael Danielson, Association for Media Education.

July 3: CO:RE Theories Webinar in collaboration with the EU H2020 project yskills, "A multi-disciplinary webinar on the theoretical foundations of digital skills, literacies and citizenship." Speakers included Sandra Cortesi, Alton Grizzle, Ellen Helsper; the session was chaired by Sonia Livingstone with the Discussant Willem Joris.
<https://www.facebook.com/CORE.H2020/videos/1788365987969489/>

July 9: GAPMIL Response to COVID-19: "MIL and Public Policies." Irene Andriopoulou, Maja Zeric, Ramon Tuazon. Video to be posted here:
<https://en.unesco.org/themes/media-and-information-literacy/gapmil/covid19>

July 16: "FOSI Briefs the Hill on Misinformation and the Importance of Media Literacy," with Matthew Johnson, Sonia Livingstone, Dewayne McClary and Lindsey Kerr.
<https://www.fosi.org/events/fosi-briefs-hill-misinformation-and-importance-media-literacy/#:~:text=FOSI%20Briefs%3A%20Misinformation%20and%20the%20Importance%20of%20Media,approaches%20and%20roles%20of%20parents%2C%20governments%20and%20non-profits.>

Media Literacy Resources

Media Literacy in the COVID Era: California Parents Speak

The unique quantitative survey, sponsored by the Center for Media Literacy and the Consortium for Media Literacy, provide insights into COVID 19 and media literacy from the point of view of California parents.

Watch for Special Report coming to your e-mailbox soon!

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 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 communications that demonstrate scientifically that media literacy is an effective intervention strategy in addressing critical issues for democracy: <http://www.consortiumformedia literacy.org>

CONSORTIUM
for **MEDIA LITERACY**

Uniting for Development

Med!aLit Moments

Nexis NewsDesk Live Tracker: What Does Media Monitoring Tells Us About the Coronavirus?

What if you were able to track the impact that the Coronavirus is having by looking at charts that capture thousands – even millions – of news articles that cover COVID-19 globally? With the Global Media and News Tracker from Nexis NewsDesk, you are able to do just that, with updates being provided every 15 minutes. The power of machine learning is becoming exponential, and it is fascinating to get a glimpse, on a mass scale, of measures of news coverage on COVID-19. Through the Nexis NewsDesk (at <https://bis.lexisnexis.com/COVID-19>) detailed charts provide data – for free – on:

- The number of COVID-19 cases, the news coverage and the relationship of such coverage to the S&P 500
- The main topics that people are talking about through the news
- The amount of coverage given to COVID-19 over time
- The country or State locations where the most coverage is coming from
- How COVID-19 is impacting behavior such as panic buying or quarantine
- Top COVID-19 news stories
- The number of articles, by global region, covering COVID-19

AHA! When we combine coverage results from many different sources, we may get a different “picture” of the news than if we just rely on one source.

Ages: 14-18+

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.

Key Question #4: What values, lifestyles and points of view are represented in – or omitted from – this message?

Core Concept #2: Media have embedded values and points of view.

Materials: Web access and smartboard, if available
Nexis News Desk Media Monitor:
<https://bis.lexisnexis.com/COVID-19>

ACTIVITY:

Divide class into groups, and assign each group one of the 7 charts provided on the Nexis COVID-19 Tracker page:

<https://bis.lexisnexis.com/COVID-19>

Ask each group to review and discuss the chart they are assigned. What does the chart track? What does the chart tell them, what “story” does the chart convey? Why do they think so? What data is cited? What does this say? Give the groups about 5 minutes to discuss together.

Have each group share their chart and their findings. Have each group take questions and cite the evidence for their findings – why do they think so?

Then, have the same groups discuss the two media literacy questions, #2 and #4. What mathematical “techniques” might be used? What computer science “techniques” might be used? Why do they think so? What impact on lifestyles, values and points of view does this data have? What does it mean to individuals? To society?

Again, have each group share their chart and their discussion/findings. Depending upon the time a teacher wants to devote to this activity, it could take 20 minutes or it could take a week!