What is Media Literacy?

Media literacy is the ability to access, analyze, and evaluate the many complex messages presented through the mass media. It focuses on helping young people, in particular, to not only become more careful and critical consumers of media messages so they can make more informed choices about their health, purchases, and values, but to also become creative producers of media to more effectively communicate their thinking, ideas, and priorities. Media literacy programs in school, health, and community groups help young people to examine media messages about tobacco, alcohol and other drugs, nutrition, physical activity, relationships, sexuality, and violence. Many schools, agencies, and community organizations are integrating media literacy content and strategies into their curricula and prevention programs to help counteract the pervasive and often negative influence of the mass media and to provide opportunities for young people to express themselves and communicate through their own production of media in a positive manner. Both the IRA and NCTE in 1996 expanded the guidelines for developing a literate person to include viewing and visually representing as two additional key literacy skills in the traditional basics of reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

Topics Include:

- What is Media Literacy? A Primer for Teachers, Parents, and the Public
- The Mass Media and Young Children---A Pediatrician's View
- Powerful Media Images of Females and Males: Implications for Our Youth
- Media Literacy Research---What it Shows, What it Doesn't, and What is Needed!
- Media-Related Issues in Health and Community Services
- Media Production---The Attractive Challenge for Technologically-Savvy Youth
- What We Can Learn from Local and Regional Media Literacy Programs
- Popular Culture as Reflected in Music, Art and Theater
- Helping Students Understand Their Pop Culture Choices through the Mass Media
- The Depiction of Bullying and the Mass Media
- Teachers Discover the Power of Media Education in Their Curriculum
- Media Representations of Alcoholism and Tobacco Use
- Using Media Literacy to Meet State Teaching Standards
- Media Literacy and Minorities, the Underrepresented, and Special Interest Groups
- Violence and Sex in Television, Video Games, and Films: Images that Sell --- What?
- Let's Get Specific: Media Literacy Classroom Activities that Work!
- Media Literacy and Developing Critical Thinking Skills --- A Natural for Today's School Curriculum
- Integrating Media Literacy in Teacher Education Programs

Comments from Past Participants

“A terrific, thought-provoking overview of media literacy for beginners as well as extension ideas for those experienced in the field.”

“Really great conference and I was glad to see such a diverse group of people from various professions.

“Excellent workshops, wonderful spirit from beginning to end.”

A Conference Promoting Media Literacy in Young People Today

Friday, March 31, 2006

University of Connecticut
Bishop Center
Storrs, Connecticut

Empowering Children and Youth to Grow from Being Critical Consumers of Media to Being Effective Communicators through the Media.
Rethinking Media Literacy in a Changing Youth Culture

A Conference Promoting Media Literacy in Young People Today
Friday, March 31, 2006

A one-day conference for teachers, health care professionals, counselors and prevention specialists, media leaders, parents, and others interested in exploring the great impact of today’s mass media upon young children and youth.

Visit us online at http://medialiteracy.education.uconn.edu

What’s Media Literacy Important Today?
Young people are bombarded continuously with mass media messages including over 1,500 advertisements every day, from television, radio, movies, video/computer games, Internet, music CDs, billboards, newspapers, magazines, clothing, packaging and marketing materials. Many of these messages include much violent and sexual content that is usually attractive to young people as they are largely the intended target audience! Such daily exposure to the messages of the mass media has a tremendous impact upon thinking, values, purchases, and actions. Growing concern among parents, teachers, pediatricians, counselors, religious leaders, and health care and juvenile justice workers has led to a need for open discussion, the sharing of experiences and concerns, and the planning of strategies to cope with the huge and often negative impact of mass media upon our young people. Although much media content is negative, there are many important positive points that need to be explored, not the least of which is the potential for today’s technologically focused young people to effectively and creatively communicate through the many media forms that are so attractive to them. This conference addresses many key issues and their implications for today and the future.

National and Regional Conference Leaders
Headlining this timely conference are two dynamic keynote speakers:

Dr. William Kist is author of New Literacies in Action: Teaching and Learning in Multiple Media, chosen as a National Council of Teachers of English Select Book and nominated for the Edward Fry Book Award by the National Reading Conference. He is an avid researcher, video/film writer/producer, and expert on alternative literacies and using multimedia techniques with students of all abilities and backgrounds.

Dr. Diane Levin is author of Teaching Young Children in Violent Times: Building a Peaceable Classroom and Remote Control Childhood: Battling the Hazards of Media Culture. She is an internationally recognized expert in helping professionals and parents deal with the effects of violence, media and commercial culture on children.

Workshop leaders include:

Frank Baker - well-known national media literacy educator, workshop director, and prolific provider of the often internet media literacy resources. His 1999 national study helped educators nationwide justify media literacy education.

Lynda Bergna - President, for a Media Literate America, a leading health educator at the University of Arizona, re-creates the impact of mass media culture on public health issues and prevention strategies related to tobacco and alcohol use and abuse.

Antonio Lopez - journalist, media producer, leader in youth and culturally specific media literacy for people of color, content provider for groundbreaking Spanish language media and health CD-ROMs produced by the New Mexico Media Literacy Project, Malo y Remedios.

Dr. Kathleen Clarke-Pearson - pediatrician, expert on health and media of children and teens to the mass media, on parents’ views of media’s effects on their kids, and on practical media literacy tips that work for families.

Dr. Gil Fuld - pediatrician, writer, radio host, long interested in studying the influence of media on children’s health, currently Chair of the American Academy of Pediatrics’ Section on Media.

Peta Hesse - a human development leader at Wheelock College specializing in children’s media for teachers and other human service professionals, curriculum development, and improving media understanding in K-12 state frameworks in New England.

Lisa Goldman - teacher and coordinator of high school gifted programs, sponsor of innovative service learning media literacy and activism programs. The Voice, featured on Nick News with Linda Lerner.

Kendra Olson Hodgson - media literacy workshop leader, former teacher, co-producer of “Captive Audience,” Advertisements Invade the Classroom, and marketing specialist at Media Education Foundation.

For more complete and updated information and schedule, visit our conference website at http://medialiteracy.education.uconn.edu or contact:

Dr. Thomas B. Goodkind, Conference Coordinator
Professor of Curriculum & Instruction
University of Connecticut
Neag School of Education Unit 2033
Storrs, CT 06269-2033
thomas.goodkind@uconn.edu
860-486-0200

For further information about logistics, contact Professional Studies at 800-622-9905 or 860-486-3231.

The media have transformed the very nature of our lives. Television doesn’t just represent to us, it increasingly defines the world in which we live.

Jean Baillard

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MAIL: Please call the Inn directly to make reservations. The complete conference schedule, location, and materials into school, health, and community programs.

View powerful films and tapes on health issues, such as alcohol, smoking, drug abuse, teenage values, etc. through conference screenings.

Explore publications and other media literacy-related materials with key publishers.

View creative, frontier media projects by today’s technologically-savvy youth.

Join top national and regional spouses and workshop leaders to discuss the importance of media literacy today.

Learn practical ways to incorporate media literacy concepts, methods, and materials into school, health, and community programs.

Rethinking Media Literacy in a Changing Youth Culture