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 to the traditional basics of reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

Topics Include:

- What is Media Literacy?
- 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 30, 2007

University of Connecticut

Bishop Center

Storrs, Connecticut

The Mass Media, Children, and Values

Empowering Children and Youth to Grow from Being Critical Consumers of Media to Being Effective Communicators through the Media.

The Neag School of Education, in conjunction with the national Action Coalition for Media Education and the Alliance for a Media Literate America present:

The Fifth Annual Northeast Media Literacy Conference

Spring 2007
Why is 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 a concentration among parents, teachers, pediatricians, counselors, religious leaders, and health 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 needs 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 Headlining this timely conference are two dynamic keynote speakers:

Dr. Sharon Lamb is author of The Secret of Girls and co-author of Packaging Girlhood. Sharon is a well-known clinical psychologist, an expert on girls and education, aggression, and the media, and a researcher in the area of abuse and victimization.

Jackson Katz is author of The Macho Paradox and is well-known for his timely films, including Tough Guise: Violence, Media, and the Crisis in Masculinity, and Wrestling with Manhood. Jackson is a leading anti-sexist male activist, gender violence prevention educator, author, and filmmaker.

Program Schedule – Friday, March 30, 2007
8:00 – 8:45 Registration, Continental Breakfast
8:45 – 9:00 Welcome, Introductory Remarks, Conference Details
9:00 – 10:00 Openening Keynote: Dr. Sharon Lamb Packaging Girlhood: The Media Effects on Women and Girls’ Identity
10:00 – 10:15 Coffee Break
10:15 – 11:15 Session I Workshops (note to be let to “From research to practice”)
11:25 – 12:25 Session II Workshops
12:25 – 1:10 Buffet Lunch and Exhibits
1:10 – 1:20 Keynote Note: “Media Messages About Masculinity: The Impact of Today’s Media Culture on Boys and Their Values”
3:15 – 3:35 Session III Workshops
3:35 – 3:52 Break, Refreshments
3:52 – 4:25 Session IV Workshops
5:10 – 6:00 Social Hour

Workshop presenters include key leaders in education, communication and media studies, health organizations, media production, youth and human services, social work, justice, marketing, film production, journalism, the arts and technology. Presenters include:

Dr. Kathleen Clarke-Pearson – pediatrician, on the extensive exposure of children and teens to the mass media, on how children view the effects of their peers on them, and on practi- cal steps that can be taken to deal with this problem.


Renee Hobbs – one of the nation’s leading authorities on media literacy, with numerous award-winning curriculum materials, videos, and multimedia modules, classes, and research on the impact of media literacy education on citizenship skills, critical thinking, and media analysis skills.

Lynda Roguska – President, for All Media Literacy America, an expert on the impact of media culture on public health issues and prevention strategies related to tobacco and alcohol use and abuse.

Kendra Olson Hodgson – versatile media literacy workshop leader, former teacher, co-producer of several films, including Cageine Advertising: Ad visualizes the Cageire and in the Cageire Directed by Linda and Liso Dawn Founda- tion Education.

Start Fresh – what is in the news media and its conditioning potential of content where issues related to human health and global warming are mixed with entertainment rather than in dialogue in which the audience can participate.

Bill Farr – teacher, professor, former state reading consultant, and expert on critical reading skills that help young readers to critically judge visual texts; means but also to move beyond mass media messages to real understand- ing.

Mike Gang – award-winning Canadian high school English and social studies teacher, and broadcaster, recognized as a top educa- tor by the Prime Ministers Award for Teaching Excellence.

Carolyn Lin, David Atkins, Diana Rios – researchers specializing in how media cover- age and portrayals of gender and racial issues/themes contribute to the cultural socialization process, values, and behavior of young people today.

Tim McGee – a leader in digital and instruc- tional design promoting the multicultural/ critical skills of students to better prepare them for the new world of work. Researches the intersections of Artificial Intelligence and Language Arts curricula.

The conference website will be the site for all registered attendees.

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

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 Baudrillard

Registration is Easy
Registrations will be confirmed in writing. Please photocopy this form for multiple registrations.

Full Name ______________________________
Email Address _____________________________
Phone _________________________________
Fax _________________________________
Address _________________________________
City __________________________ State, Zip __________

Registration Fee $95.00 (includes continental breakfast, buffet lunch, and parking).
$85.00 Students (with I.D.)
For enclosed $ ________________
Method of Payment
[ ] Check enclosed
[ ] Money Order payable to UCONN
[ ] Visa, Mastercard, American Express, Discover

I am enclosing $ ________________ to cover processing fee of $35.00 which is refundable for those that cancel their registration 3 business days prior to the confer- ence. After that time, no refund is available.

Accommodations: Overnight accommodations are available at participants’ expense for $100 plus taxes, on campus at the Nathan Hale Inn and Conference Center. Please call the inn directly to make reserva- tions at 800-627-7484. Be sure to specify that you are attending the Northeast Media Literacy Conference.

Meals: In order to promote greater communication among conference leaders and participants, contin- ual breakfast and buffet lunch will be provided on site for all registered attendees.

Refunds and Cancellations: The registration fee, less a $95 processing fee, is refundable for those that cancel their registration 3 business days prior to the confer- ence. After that time, no refund is available.

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