MediaLit KIT™

A Framework for Learning and Teaching in a Media Age

Teacher's / Leader's
Orientation Guide

CML

Center for Media Literacy

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MediaLit KIT™

Literacy for the 21ˢᵗ Century

*"We must prepare young people for living in a world
of powerful images, words and sounds."*

UNESCO, 1982

Since the beginning of recorded history, the concept of "literacy" meant having the skill to interpret "squiggles" on a piece of paper as letters which, when put together, formed words that conveyed meaning. Teaching the young to put the words together to understand (and, in turn, express) ever more complex ideas became the goal of education as it evolved over the centuries.

Today information about the world around us comes to us not only by words on a piece of paper but more and more through the powerful images and sounds of our multi-media culture. Although mediated messages appear to be self-evident, in truth, they use a complex audio/visual "language" which has its own rules (grammar) and which can be used to express many-layered concepts and ideas about the world. Not everything may be obvious at first; and images go by so fast! If our children are to be able to navigate their lives through this multi-media culture, they need to be fluent in "reading" and "writing" the language of images and sounds just as we have always taught them to "read" and "write" the language of printed communications.

In the last 40 years, the field of media literacy education has emerged to organize and promote the importance of teaching this expanded notion of "literacy." At its core are the basic higher-order *critical thinking skills* – e.g. knowing how to identify key concepts, how to make connections between multiple ideas, how to ask pertinent questions, formulate a response, identify fallacies – that form the very foundation of both intellectual freedom and the exercising of full citizenship in a democratic society.

Indeed in a time when candidates are elected by :30 second commercials and wars are fought real-time on television, a unique role of media literacy is to prepare citizens to engage in and contribute to the public debate.

It also expands the concept of "text" to include not just written texts but *any* message form -- verbal, aural or visual – (or all three together!) – that is used to create and then pass ideas back and forth between human beings.

New ways of learning

This explosion in information has presented a major challenge to the world of formal education. For centuries, schooling has been designed to make sure students learned facts about the world – which they proved they knew by correctly answering questions on tests. But such a system is no longer relevant when the most up-to-date facts are available at the touch of a button. What students need today is to learn how to find what they need to know when they need to know it – and to have the higher order thinking skills to analyze and evaluate whether the information they find is useful for what they want to know.

How will schools do this? First, schools and classrooms must be transformed from being storehouses of knowledge to being more like portable tents providing a shelter and a gathering place for students as they go out to explore, to question, to experiment, *to discover*!

Secondly, to use a phrase from the great Brazilian educator, Paolo Freire, teaching must be distinguished from "banking." No longer is it necessary for teachers to deposit information in students' heads. Retaking the principles of democratic pedagogy dating back to Socrates, wise teachers realize they do not have to be a "sage on the stage." Instead their role is to be a "guide on the side:" encouraging . . . guiding . . . mentoring . . . supporting the learning process. Creative classrooms today are ones where *everyone* is learning, including the teacher!

Thirdly, curriculum, classes and activities must be designed that will *engage* students in problem solving and discovery. And today's multi-media culture, which includes print but is not limited to it, provides a nearly limitless resource for real world learning -- from how to identify "point of view" by exploring how camera angles influence our perception of the subject being photographed to how to determine whether information on an Internet site is bogus or legitimate.

The transformation of our culture from an Industrial Age to an Information Age is why a new kind of literacy, coupled with a new way of learning, is critical in the 21st century. This new kind of literacy is outlined in the ***CML MediaLit Kit***™ */ A Framework for Learning and Teaching in a Media Age.*

*"Most of what we have called formal education
has been intended to imprint on the human mind
all of the information
that we might need for a lifetime.
Education is geared toward information storage.*

Today that is neither possible nor necessary.

*Rather, humankind needs to be taught
how to process information
that is stored through technology.*

Education needs to be geared toward the handling *of data
rather than the* accumulation *of data."*

David Berlo
Communication and Behavior
1975

Questioning the Media

"At the heart of media literacy is the principle of inquiry."

Elizabeth Thoman, CML Founder

To be a functioning adult in a mediated society, one needs to be able to distinguish between different media forms and know how to ask basic questions about everything we watch, read or hear. Although most adults learned through literature classes to distinguish a poem from an essay, it's amazing how many people do not understand the difference between a daily newspaper and a supermarket tabloid, what makes one website legitimate and another one a hoax, or how advertisers package products to entice us to buy.

Simple questions about the media can start even at the toddler stage, planting important seeds for cultivating a lifetime of interrogating the world around us. Parents, grandparents, even babysitters can make a game of "spot the commercial" to help children learn to distinguish between entertainment programs and the commercial messages that support them. Even children's picture books can help little ones grasp the storytelling power of images – *"And what do you think will happen next?"*

As children grow and are able to distinguish the world of fantasy from the real world they live in, they can explore how media are put together by turning the sound off during a cartoon and noting the difference it makes, or even create their own superhero story using a home video camera and easy to use editing software on the family computer. When students begin to use the internet to research school projects, they can compare different websites and contrast different versions of the same information in order to detect bias or political "spin."

Usually the questioning process is applied to a specific media "text" — that is, an identifiable production or publication, or a part of one: an episode of *Power Puff Girls*, an ad for Pepsi, an issue of *People* magazine, a billboard for Budweiser beer, photos and articles about a bank robbery on the front page of a newspaper, the SuperBowl telecast, a hot new videogame.

Sometimes a media "text" can involve multiple formats. A new animated Disney film, for example, involves not only a blockbuster movie released in thousands of theatres but also a whole campaign of advertising and merchandising — character dolls and toys, clothes, lunchboxes, etc. — as well as a website, storybooks, games and perhaps eventually, a ride at one of the Disney theme parks.

Uncovering the many levels of meaning in a media message and the multiple answers to even basic questions is what makes media education so engaging for kids and so enlightening for adults.

Essential Questions for Teachers

0. Am I trying to tell the students what the message is? Or am I giving students the skills to determine what they think the message(s) might be?

0. Have I let students know that I am open to accepting their interpretation, as long as it is well substantiated, or have I conveyed the message that my interpretation is the only correct view?

0. At the end of the lesson, are students likely to be more analytical? Or more cynical?

--with thanks to Faith Rogow, PhD

"From the clock radio
that wakes us up in the morning
until we fall asleep watching the late night talk show,
we are exposed to hundreds
-- even thousands --
of images and ideas
not only from television
but now also from newspaper headlines, magazine covers,
movies, websites, video games and billboards.

Media no longer just shape our culture. . .
they ARE our culture."

Media&Values #57

Why Media Literacy is Important

1. The influence of media in our central democratic processes.

In a global media culture, people need two skills in order to be engaged citizens of a democracy: *critical thinking* and *self-expression*. Media literacy instills both of these core skills, enabling future citizens to sort through political packaging, understand and contribute to public discourse, and, ultimately, make informed decisions in the voting booth.

2. The high rate of media consumption and the saturation of society by media.

When one considers videogames, television, pop music, radio, newspapers, magazines, billboards, the internet – even T-shirts! – we are exposed to more mediated messages in one day than our great-grandparents were exposed to in a year. Media literacy teaches the skills we need to navigate safely through this sea of images and messages -- for all our lives.

3. The media's influence on shaping perceptions, beliefs and attitudes.

While research disagrees on the extent and type of influence, it is unquestionable that media experiences exert a significant impact on the way we understand, interpret and act on our world. By helping us understand those influences, media education can help us separate from our dependencies
on them.

4. The increasing importance of visual communication and information.

While schools continue to be dominated by print, our lives are increasingly influenced by visual images -- from corporate logos to building-sized billboards to Internet websites. Learning how to "read" the multiple layers of image-based communication is a necessary adjunct to traditional print literacy. We live in a *multi-media* world.

5. The importance of information in society and the need for lifelong learning.

Information processing and information services are at the core of our nation's productivity but the growth of global media industries is also challenging independent voices and diverse views. Media education can help both teachers and students understand where information comes from, whose interests may be being served and how to find alternative views.

--With thanks to Len Masterman, *Teaching the Media*

MediaLit KIT™

A Framework
for Learning and Teaching
in a Media Age

Like a map for a journey, the *CML MediaLit Kit*™ provides an overview and a vision for navigating today's global media culture.

The title is a metaphor. On a conceptual level the "kit" is a simply a collection of the core ideas that are fundamental to media literacy's inquiry-based pedagogy.

On a physical level the *MediaLit Kit*™ consists of a collection of free downloadable handouts from the Internet or a set of richly designed 4-color laminated posters which may be purchased for display in classrooms and libraries, on bulletin boards or for staff development workshops.

Resting on a foundation of CML's 25 years of experience in the field plus the thinking of leading practitioners around the world, the *MediaLit Kit*™ was created to help establish a common ground upon which to build curriculum programs, teaching materials and training services. We believe that the *CML MediaLit Kit*™ provides, for the first time, an accessible, integrated outline of the established foundational concepts needed to organize and structure teaching activities using a media literacy lens.

As articulated in this Orientation Guide, the *CML MediaLit Kit*™ will serve as the basis for *all* CML's future work, according to our philosophy of *Empowerment through Education*. We invite others, whether individual teachers, staff development trainers, researchers or publishers to adopt it as well.

The *CML MediaLit Kit*™ is available at no charge to individual teachers and practitioners. It is available for licensing to publishers, training organizations and service agencies needing an established, credible framework for incorporating inquiry-based media literacy in their work.

From time to time, CML will add to the *CML MediaLit Kit*™ or if appropriate, modify it. CML welcomes comments and suggestions as our common language and understanding continues to evolve. We encourage additional adaptations and specialized applications as well as research relating media literacy pedagogy to learning objectives across the curriculum.

MediaLit zzzKIT™
A Framework for Learning and Teaching in a Media Age

- **Now for the first time . . . in one comprehensive package . . . the core elements of media literacy's 'inquiry' process.**

- **A toolkit to help teachers identify and structure a media literacy approach in ANY curricular content area.**

A. Basic Framework
Concepts / Handouts / Posters
Concept 1.   The 'Inquiry' Process: "Free Your Mind" / "Express Your View"
Concept 2.   A Media Literacy Definition
Concept 3.   Five Core Concepts
Concept 4.   Five Key Questions
Concept 5.   Four Media Literacy Process Skills
Concept 6.   The Empowerment Spiral: How to Organize Media Literacy Learning

Two refinements on the *Five Key Questions*:
Concept 7.   Key Questions to Guide Young Children
Concept 8.   Expanded Questions / for more sophisticated inquiry

B. Orientation Guide
The first section of this Orientation Guide provided a rationale for media literacy *as literacy* for a 21st century media culture. In this next section, we will now explore in depth each of the core elements in the Basic Framework, providing rationale, context, and relevant background. A few ideas for exploring the concepts in the classroom are included although a comprehensive collection would take a book! Watch for additional teaching ideas, lesson plans and case studies – plus updates to this Guide – to be posted on the *MediaLit Kit*™ section of the CML website. At the same location you can also download full-page handout versions of the graphics:

http://www.medialit.org/bp_mlk.html

We acknowledge the generous contribution of leaders and colleagues in the field who have graciously allowed us to incorporate their reflections, experience and wisdom in order to share them with you.
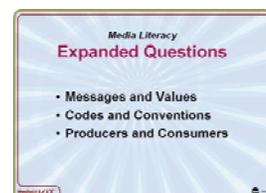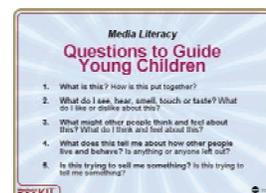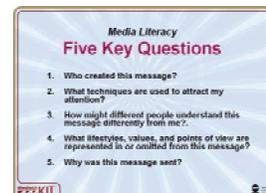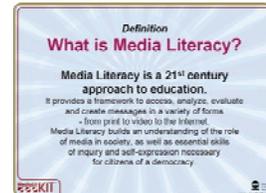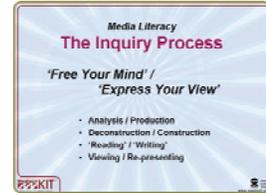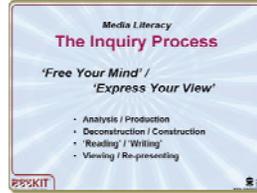
1. The 'Inquiry' Process

The teaching approach that best suits the media literacy classroom is called the "inquiry process" and includes both analytical (deconstruction) skills as well as creative communications (construction / production) skills. When analysis is combined with creative production, theory unites with application, thereby allowing students to discover and express their learning in an interconnected and natural process. Each enriches the other.

Since media messages are transmitted through so many different mental processes, the combination of analysis with production also incorporates multiple intelligences in the learning process (linguistic/verbal, logical/mathematical, musical/rhythmic, visual/spatial, body/kinesthetic, intrapersonal and interpersonal). While both activities can happen independently there is much to gain by meshing the two into one cohesive activity of analysis and production – that is: *Free Your Mind!* and *Express Your View!*

Free Your Mind!
Analysis / Deconstruction / Decoding
"Reading"

To free one's mind, students need the skills and abilities to "read" their multi-media world and understand its many layers of messages. The process of taking apart messages, whether print or electronic, is referred to in many ways: analysis, deconstruction, decoding or "reading" in the traditional terminology of reading/writing literacy. Media analysis develops *critical thinking skills* and involves all the competencies of Bloom's Taxonomy (*knowledge, analysis, comprehension, application, synthesis and evaluation*) and is an important part of media literacy education because:

- It strengthens observation and interpretation.
- It deepens understanding and appreciation.
- It challenges stereotyping – both misrepresentations and/or under-representations.
- It illuminates bias and point of view.
- It uncovers motivations.
- It exposes implicit messages that are less obvious.
- It gives perspective and meaning to the media creators.
- It enlightens society about the effects and implications of a message.

Express Your View!
Production / Construction / Creating
"Writing"

In today's multi-media culture "writing" is far more complex than putting pen to paper. Today students may "write" a PowerPoint report for science class, "create" a persuasive poster about teen smoking for their health project or, in American History, express the Native American's point of view about Christopher Columbus by drawing an original political cartoon. All of these projects require the same core abilities as writing words on paper: *organize* your thoughts, *draft* and *redraft* your ideas, *edit*, *polish* and *present* the final product. Student production is an important component of media literacy education for many reasons:

- It involves the application of multiple intelligences.
- It requires active hands-on learning.
- It increases motivation and the enjoyment of learning.
- It generates new avenues for alternative representations.
- It creates outlets to communicate beyond the classroom.
- It reinforces self-esteem and self-expression.
- It offers "real world" practical application of theoretical concepts.
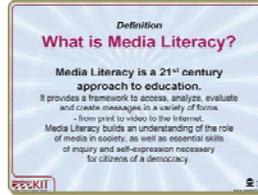
2. Media Literacy: A Definition

The definition most often cited in the US is a succinct sentence hammered out by participants at the 1992 Aspen Media Literacy Leadership Institute:

> *… the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and create media in a variety of forms.*

Definitions, however, evolve over time and a more robust definition is now needed to situate media literacy in the context of its importance for the education of students in a 21st century media culture. CML's *MediaLit Kit*™ uses this expanded definition:

> *Media Literacy is a 21st century approach to education. It provides a framework to access, analyze, evaluate and create messages in a variety of forms – from print to video to the Internet. Media literacy builds an understanding of the role of media in society as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy.*

What is important to understand is that media literacy is not about "protecting" kids from unwanted messages. Although some groups urge families to just turn the TV off, the fact is, media are so ingrained in our cultural milieu that even if you turn off the set, you still cannot escape today's media culture. Media no longer just influence our culture. They *are* our culture.

Media literacy, therefore, is about helping students become competent, critical and *literate* in all media forms so that they control the interpretation of what they see or hear rather than letting the interpretation control them. To become media literate is not to memorize facts or statistics about the media, but rather *to learn to raise the right questions* about what you are watching, reading or listening to. Len Masterman, the acclaimed author of *Teaching the Media*, calls it "critical autonomy" or the ability *to think for oneself*.

Without this fundamental ability, an individual cannot have full dignity as a human person or exercise citizenship in a democratic society where to be a citizen is to both *understand* and *contribute* to the debates of the time.

What Media Literacy Is NOT

- Media 'bashing' is NOT media literacy,
      however media literacy sometimes involves criticizing the media.
- Merely producing media is NOT media literacy,
      although media literacy should include media production.
- Just teaching with videos or CDRoms or other mediated content is NOT media literacy;
      one must also teach about media.
- Simply looking for political agendas, stereotypes or misrepresentations is NOT media literacy;
      there should also be an exploration of the systems making them appear "normal."
- Looking at a media message or experience from just one perspective is NOT media literacy
      because media should be examined from multiple positions.
- Media literacy does NOT mean "don't watch;"
      it means "watch carefully, think critically."

>   – With thanks to Renee Hobbs, Chris Worsnop,
>   Neil Andersen, Jeff Share and Scott Sullivan.
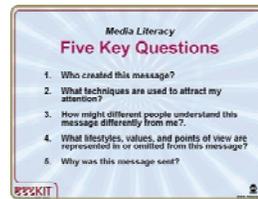
3. Five Core Concepts

4. Five Key Questions

When starting on a mission, it's important to have the end goal in mind. So we must ask ourselves: what do we see as 'success' for the media literacy field?

At CML, we believe that success will have been achieved when *all students* graduate with the ability and proficiency to apply Media Literacy's *Five Key Questions* routinely and regularly to their media experiences – whether they are watching live news coverage of a world event, flipping through ads in a magazine, surfing the Internet or sharing a movie with a friend.

In the **CML MediaLit Kit**™, the *Five Key Questions* flow directly from *Five Core Concepts* that media literacy practitioners around the world have evolved to explore five fundamental aspects of a media message:

0. *Creator / author / producer*
0. *Format and techniques*
    of production

0. *Audience*
0. *Content or message*
0. *Motive or purpose*

On the following pages, you will see how each *Key Question* flows from its related *Core Concept*. A further set of *Guiding Questions* begins to define the path that builds mastery of each Question and understanding of each Concept. On later pages, you'll find *Alternate Questions* for very young students – and *Enhanced Questions* for older or more advanced students.

Teaching Future Citizens
In the classroom, however, the goal is not to so much to teach the *Core Concepts*, especially with younger students, but, rather, to focus on the *Five Key Questions* in order to help students *build the habit* of routinely subjecting media messages to a battery of questions appropriate to their age and ability. Teachers, however, need to be thoroughly acquainted with the *Five Core Concepts* in order to develop classroom activities and curriculum connections that provide students with opportunities to learn and practice the asking of questions about media in their lives.

Together the *Core Concepts* and *Key Questions* serve as "Big Ideas" or the "enduring understanding" that students will need in order to navigate their way through life as citizens in a global media culture. Together, they are a unique contribution to 21st Century education and a powerful set of tools for preparing future citizens to understand, share in and contribute to the public debate.

"It is the learning, practicing and mastering
of the Five Key Questions – over time –
that leads to an adult understanding
of how media are created and what their purposes are
along with an informed ability to accept or reject
both explicit and implicit messages.
If democracy is to flourish in a global media culture,
future citizens must have these fundamental skills."

– Tessa Jolls, CML President

Core Concept #1:

All media messages are 'constructed.'

We should not think of media texts (newspaper articles, TV shows, comic books to name just a few) as "natural" things. Media texts are built just as surely as buildings and highways are built. The building materials involved vary from one kind of text to another. In a magazine, for example, there are words in different sizes and typefonts, photographs, colors, layout and page location. TV and movies have hundreds of building blocks – from camera angles and lighting to music and sound effects.

What this means is that whether we are watching the nightly news or passing a billboard on the street, the media message we experience was written by someone (or probably several people), pictures were taken and a creative designer put it all together. But this is more than a physical process. What happens is that whatever is "constructed" by just a few people then becomes "normalized" for the rest of us; like the air we breathe, it gets taken for granted and usually goes unquestioned. But as the audience, we don't get to see or hear the words, pictures or arrangements that were rejected. We only see, hear or read what was accepted!

 Helping people understand how media are put together — and what was left out — as well as how the media shape what we know and understand about the world we live in is a critical first step in helping them navigate their lives through a global and technological society.

Key Question #1:

Who created this message?

Guiding Questions:

- Who is the author?

- How many people did it take to create this message?
  What are their various jobs?

- What kind of "text" is it?

- How similar or different is it to others of the same genre?

- Which technologies are used in its creation?

- What are the various elements (building blocks) that make up the whole?

- Is anything missing?

Core Concept #2:

Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules.

Each form of communication — whether newspapers, TV game shows or horror movies — has its own creative language: scary music heightens fear, camera close-ups convey intimacy, big headlines signal significance. Understanding the grammar, syntax and metaphor system of media language, especially the language of sounds and visuals which can reach beyond the rational to our deepest emotional core, increases our appreciation and enjoyment of media experiences as well as helps us to be less susceptible to manipulation.

One of the best ways to understand how media are put together is to do just that — make a video, create a website, develop an ad campaign about a community issue. The four major arts disciplines – music, dance, theatre and the visual arts – can also provide a context through which one gains skills of analysis, interpretation and appreciation along with opportunities for self-expression and creative production.

Key Question #2:

What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?

Guiding Questions:

- What do you notice about the way the message is constructed?
    - Colors and shapes?
    - Sounds and silence?
    - Props, sets, clothing?
    - Movement?
    - Symbols?

- Where is the camera? What is the viewpoint?

- What are the sounds?   Music? Words? Narration? Dialogue? Silence?   Sound effects?

- How is the story told? Symbols? Metaphors?

- What's the emotional appeal? Persuasive devices?

- What makes it seem "real"?

Core Concept #3:

Different people experience the same media message differently.

Audiences play a role in interpreting media texts because each audience member brings to the media text a unique set of life experiences (age, gender, education, cultural upbringing, etc.) which, when applied to the text – or combined *with* the text – create unique interpretations. A World War II veteran, for example, brings a different set of experiences to a movie like *Saving Private Ryan* than any other audience member – resulting in a different reaction to the film as well as, perhaps, greater insight. Even parents and children watching TV together do not "see" the same program.

This concept turns the tables on the idea of TV viewers as just passive "couch potatoes." We may not be conscious of it but each of us, even toddlers, are constantly trying to "make sense" of what we see, hear or read. The more questions we can ask about what we are experiencing around us, the more alert we can be about accepting or rejecting messages. Research indicates that, over time, children of all ages can learn age-appropriate skills that give them a new set of glasses with which they can "read" and interpret their media culture.

Key Question #3:

How might different people understand this message differently from me?

Guiding Questions:

- How well does this text fit with your experience of the world?

- What did you learn from the media text? What did you learn *about yourself* from experiencing the media text?

- What did you learn from other people's response – and experience?

- How many other interpretations could there be? How could we hear about them?

- Are other viewpoints just as valid as mine?

- How can you explain the different responses?

Core Concept #4:

Media have embedded values and points of view.

Media, because they are constructed, carry a subtext of who and what is important — at least to the person or persons creating the construction. Media are also storytellers (even commercials tell a quick and simple story) and stories require characters and settings and a plot that has a beginning, a middle and an end. The choice of a character's age, gender or race mixed in with the lifestyles, attitudes and behaviors that are portrayed, the selection of a setting (urban? rural? affluent? poor?), and the actions and re-actions in the plot are just some of the ways that values become "embedded" in a TV show, a movie or an ad.

It is important to learn how to "read" all kinds of media messages in order to discover the points of view that are embedded in them and how to assess them as part of the text rather than merely accepting them as "natural." Only then can we judge whether to accept or reject these messages as we negotiate our way each day through our mediated environment.

Key Questions #4:

What lifestyles, values and points of view are represented in, or omitted from, this message?

Guiding Questions:

- What questions come to mind as you watch / read / listen?

- What political or economic values are communicated in the message?

- What judgments or statements are made about personal or social relationships?

- What is the cultural context or worldview?

- What Ideas or values are being "sold" in this message?

- How is the human person characterized?

- What type of person is the reader / watcher / listener invited to identify with?

- What kinds of behaviors / consequences are depicted?

- Who or what is left out?

Core Concept #5:

Most media messages are constructed to gain profit and/or power.

Media messages are made for many reasons. One of them is to make money. Newspapers and magazines lay out their pages with ads first; the space remaining is devoted to news. Likewise, commercials are part and parcel of most TV watching. What many people do not know is that what's really being sold through commercial media is not only the advertised products to the audience — but also the audience to the advertisers! The *real* purpose of the programs on television, or the articles in a magazine, is to create an audience (and put them in a receptive mood) so that the network or publisher can sell *time* or *space* to sponsors to advertise products – usually in a way that entices us to want what we really don't need! Sponsors pay for the time based on the number of people the station predicts will be watching. And they get a refund if the number of actual viewers turns out to be lower than promised.

But the issue of message motivation has changed dramatically since the Internet became an international platform through which groups and organizations – even individuals – can attempt to persuade others to a particular point of view. As an exercise in power unprecedented in human history, the Internet provides numerous reasons for users of all ages to be able to interpret rhetorical devices, verify sources and distinguish legitimate online sources from bogus, hate or 'hoax' websites.

Key Question #5:

Why is this message being sent?

Guiding Questions:

- Who's in control of the creation and transmission of this message?

- What's being sold? What's being told?

- Who profits? Who pays?

- Who wins? Who loses? Who decides?

- Who is served by or benefits from the message? – The public? Private interests? Individuals? Institutions?

- What economic decisions may have influenced the construction or transmission of this message?

- Money / sex / power – How are each presented?
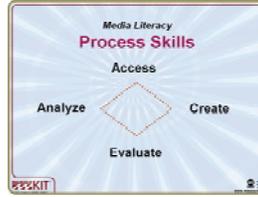
5. Process Skills

Media literacy is an educational process that teaches and strengthens many different skills but which can be summarized under four specific kinds of abilities:

Access . . .

When people *access* messages, they are able to collect relevant and useful information and comprehend its meaning effectively. They can:
- Read print as well as multimedia messages with high levels of comprehension.
- Recognize and understand a rich vocabulary of words, symbols and techniques of communication.
- Develop strategies for locating information from a wide variety of sources.
- Select an assortment of types of information relevant to the purpose of a task.

Analyze . . .

When people *analyze* messages, they are able to examine the design of the message's form, structure and sequence. They can make use of artistic, literary, social, political and economic concepts to understand the context in which the message occurs. For example,
- Use prior knowledge and experiences to predict outcomes.
- Interpret a message using concepts such as purpose, audience, point of view, format, genre, character, plot, theme, mood, seeing, context.
- Use strategies including compare/contrast, fact/opinion, cause/effect, listing and sequencing.
- Use knowledge about the historical, political, economic and social contexts in which messages are created and interpreted.

For a sample exercise in analyzing a media message, see the following pages
on "How to Conduct a 'Close Analysis' of a Media Text."

Evaluate . . .

When people *evaluate* messages, they are able to relate messages to their own experience and make judgments about the veracity, quality and relevance of messages. This includes being able to:
- Appreciate and take pleasure in interpreting messages in different genres and forms.
- Respond in print and orally to messages of varying complexity and content.
- Evaluate the quality of a message based on its content and form.
- Judge the value of a message based on one's ethical, religious or democratic principles.

Create . . .

When people *create* (or communicate) messages, they are able to "write" their ideas, using words, sounds and/or images effectively for a variety of purposes, and they are able to make use of various technologies of communication to create, edit and disseminate their message.
- Make use of brainstorming, planning, composing and revising processes.
- Use writing and oral language effectively with mastery of rules of language usage.
- Create and select images effectively to achieve various goals.
- Use technologies of communication in the construction of messages.

– With thanks to Renee Hobbs, Ed.D.

How to Conduct a 'Close Analysis' of a Media 'Text'

While getting "caught up" in a storytelling experience has been the essence of entertainment since our ancestors told tales around the fire, the relentless pace of entertainment media today requires that at least once in awhile, we should stop and look, really look, at how a media message is put together and the many interpretations that can derive from it. The method for this is called "close analysis." To learn to conduct this basic media literacy exercise, try it first yourself; then introduce it to a group or class using tips at the end of this article.

 Any media message can be used for a close analysis but commercials are often good choices because they are short and tightly packed with powerful words and images, music and sounds. Find a commercial to analyze by recording, not the programs but *just the commercials,* during an hour or two of TV watching. Play the tape and look for a commercial that seems to have a lot of layers – interesting visuals and sound track, memorable words or taglines, multiple messages that call out for exploration. Replay your selection several times as you go through the following steps:

1. Visuals.
After the first viewing, write down everything you can remember about the visuals — lighting, camera angles, how the pictures are edited together. Describe any people – what do they look like? what are they doing? wearing? What scenes or images do you remember clearly? Focus only on what is actually on the screen, not your interpretation of what you saw on the screen. (See the following sample exercise, *What Do You Notice?*) If necessary, play it again but with the sound off. Keep adding to your list of visuals.

2. Sounds.
Replay again with the picture off. Listen to the sound track.   Write down all the words that are spoken. Who says them? What kind of music is used? Does it change in the course of the commercial? How? Are there other sounds? What is their purpose? Who is being spoken to – directly – or indirectly? (That is, *who* is the audience addressed by the commercial?)

3. Apply Key Questions.
With the third viewing, begin to apply the *Five Key Questions* and the *Guiding Questions* that lead to them. Identify the author(s) and how the specific "construction" techniques you identified in steps 1 and 2 influence what the commercial is "saying" – values expressed and unexpressed; lifestyles endorsed or rejected; points of view proposed or assumed. Explore what's left out of the message and how different people might react differently to it. What is the message "selling"? Is it the same as the product being advertised? Continue to show the text over and over; it's like peeling back the layers of an onion.

4. Review Your Insights.
Summarize how the text is constructed and how various elements of the construction trigger our own unique response – which may be very different than how others interpret the text.   Try this exercise with other kinds of messages – a story from a newscast, a key scene from a movie, a print advertisement, a website. Are different questions important for different kinds of messages?

Doing a close analysis with a class or group can be exhilirating, with insights coming fast and furiously. After the first showing, start the group exercise with the simple question: *"What did you notice?"* Different people will remember different things so accept all answers and keep asking, *"What else did you notice*?"

If the group is having a hard time, show the clip again and invite them to look for something that stands out for them. Continue the brainstorming until you have at least 15 or 20 answers to the question: "*What did you notice*?" Challenge any attempt to assign interpretation too early. Keep the group focused on identifying only what was actually on screen or heard on the soundtrack. The key to success with this exercise is for the teacher/leader to *keep asking questions*. Refrain from contributing too many answers yourself.

While no one has the time to subject every media message to this kind of analysis, it takes only two or three experiences with close analysis to give us the insight to "see" through other media messages as we encounter them. It's like having a new set of glasses that brings the whole media world into focus.

Teaching Tip:
When you find a text that is useful for a close analysis, put it on a videotape six or eight times with 5 seconds of black between. This makes it easier to show it several times without having to stop and rewind.

What did you notice?
A sample inquiry into visual language.

Media Text: A :60 commercial showing an attractive middle-aged woman driving on a dark, lonely road when her car breaks down. She tries in vain to restart the car. . .a truck passes going the other way but does not stop. (Turns out to be a commercial for a cell phone.)

> **Teacher/Leader:** What did you notice about this text? First, what did you actually see on the screen?

> **Group Responses:**   driving on a lonely road. . . it's night / dark . . . woman alone . . . car breaks down . . . she's afraid. . .

> **T/L:** Oh?, you saw fear?! How did you see fear? Fear is an abstract concept . . . what did you *actually* see (that led you *to conclude* : fear)?

> (You might want to chart the following typical responses in two columns which can later clarify: denotation / connotation)

> **GR:** Closeup of woman turning key in ignition with sound of car grinding but not starting . . . close-up of foot on gas pedal. . . close-up of engine light. . . close-up of her fingers drumming on the steering wheel. . . closeup of her looking out the window to see if anyone around. . . no . . . on the sound track, the music is in a minor key, kind of eerie.

> **T/L:** Okay! After the establishing shot which put her on a dark country road, there were four quick cuts showing her trying to start the car. Put those together with the eerie music and we viewers *jump to the conclusion* that she's afraid – or that she *should* be afraid. . .

Further exploration reveals that each shot of the commercial, plus the editing which goes faster and faster like a racing heartbeat, is carefully constructed to build the case that the woman is in danger and afraid. If we, as viewers, buy into it and begin to identify with a feeling of fear, we've been "hooked" by the commercial's premise, whether we ever buy a cell phone or not. This is the power of visual language and why we need to help our students learn to "read" it.

6. The Empowerment Spiral
How to Organize Media Literacy Learning

"Successful media education results not so much from what *is taught as* how *it is taught."*

Chris Worsnop
Screening Images: Ideas for Media Education

The final aspect of the basic ***MediaLit Kit™*** framework is the *Empowerment Spiral* which outlines a way to organize media literacy learning, especially in a class or group setting. Also called "Action Learning" the model has proven to be an excellent process for uncorking a spiral of inquiry that leads to increased comprehension, greater critical thinking and ability to make informed judgments.

Often when dealing with media issues or topics, we can sometimes be intimidated by the complex technological and institutional structures that dominate our media culture. We can feel powerless against the psychological sophistication of advertising messages and pop culture icons.

The *Empowerment Spiral*, based on the work of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, outlines how to break complex topics or concepts into four short term learning steps that stimulate different aspects of the brain and enhance our ability to evolve new knowledge from past experience. Teachers or leaders who use these four steps to design lesson plans or organize group activities will find the *Empowerment Spiral* is a powerful matrix that transforms both learning *and* teaching.

Awareness

In the *Awareness* step, students participate in an activity that leads to observations and personal connections for potential insight: "Oh! I never thought of that before." For example youngsters might compare whether their action toys perform like the ones in commercials; teens might time the length of stories on the nightly news to uncover how much is really news; a class might keep a media journal just one day (from waking up to falling asleep) to become aware of how many different media they experience in their lives. Awareness activities provide the "ah-ha" moments that unlock a spiral of critical inquiry and exploration that is the foundation of media literacy pedagogy.

Analysis

The next step, *Analysis*, provides time for students to figure out "how" an issue came to be. Applying the *Five Key Questions* and conducting a close analysis (page 16) are two techniques that can be used to better understand the complexity of the selected issue. Creative production experiences could also help the group understand "how" and "what" happens in the exchange between a media producer and the audience.

It's important that analysis go deeper than just trying to identify some "meaning" in an ad, a song or an episode of a sitcom. Indeed, try to avoid "why" questions; they too often lead to speculation, personal interpretation and circular debate which can stop the critical process of inquiry, exploration and discovery. Instead ask "what" and preferably "how": *How* does the camera angle make us feel about the product being advertised? *What* difference would it make if the car in the ad were blue instead of red? *What* do we know about a character from her dress, make-up and jewelry? *How* does the music contribute to the mood of the story being told?

The power of media literacy lies in figuring out how the *construction* of any media product influences and contributes to the meaning we make of it.

Reflection

In the *Reflection* step, the group looks deeper to ask "So what?" or "What *ought* we to do or think?" Depending on the group, they may want to also consider philosophical or religious traditions, ethical values, social justice or democratic principles that are accepted as guides for individual and collective decision-making.

- Is it right for news programs to only interview government experts?
- Does the First Amendment protect advertising?
- How about the advertising of dangerous products, like cigarettes?
- What are other ways an action hero could have solved the problem?

Action

Finally the *Action* step gives participants an opportunity to formulate constructive action ideas, to "learn by doing." It's important to remember that, in this context, action doesn't necessarily imply *activism* nor does it have to be life-changing or earth-shattering. Indeed the most long-lasting actions are often simple activities that symbolize or ritualize increased internal awareness.

- After discovering and reflecting on the amount of violence they saw in one week of children's cartoons, one second grade class wrote a "Declaration of Independence" from violence on TV. Each child signed his/her name just like the Founding Fathers and they posted their declaration on the bulletin board in the school lobby for all to read.
- A group of teens in a church youth group created their own website to share their exploration, insights and reflection on popular music and movies.
- While studying the health effects of tobacco, a fifth grade class wrote and performed a play for other students about the techniques of persuasion that tobacco companies use to sell their products.
- High school students concerned about school board budget cuts interviewed their parents and neighbors on video tape and produced short video about various perspectives on what the cuts might mean. It was shown every night for a week on the district's closed circuit cable channel.

Organizing Media Literacy Learning

Teachers interested in media literacy need primarily to be skilled in organizing and facilitating student-centered learning. They do not necessarily require extensive knowledge of media theories or even professional competency in journalism, video production or film-making.

More than anything else, media education is a "quest for meaning," says Chris Worsnop, one of Canada's media literacy leaders. It is an exploration for both students and teachers. The best preparation is simply an inquiring mind and a willingness to answer a student's question with "I don't know. How could we find out?"

"Uncovering the many levels of meaning in a media message
and the multiple answers to even basic questions
is what makes media education
so engaging for kids
and so enlightening for adults."

– Questioning the Media

Media Literacy
and Cognitive Development

Introducing Alternate Questions for Different Ages and Abilities

The *Five Core Concepts* are the foundation of the *MediaLit Kit*™ and the *Five Key Questions* are the inquiry tools for exploring these theoretical concepts. But in actuality they are only starting points. The questions must be simplified for younger children as well as for those with limited vocabulary or language ability. And they can be expanded for more sophisticated inquiry by teens, college students and adults.

To adapt media literacy to various age groups, it is helpful to know how children of different ages process the world, including the media world in which they are growing up. The developmental psychologist Jean Piaget identified four "stages" of cognitive development that can help us with this task.

Age 0-2:   Sensorimotor Stage

Symbolic thought begins during the first two years of life and parents need to provide a safe and stimulating environment for healthy development. These children need lots of experiential activities to interact with their physical environment through touching, smelling, tasting, listening and observing. Although occasional media experiences (simple video stories or listening to recorded music) do not harm an infant child, extensive media exposure is not recommended. Children under two gain more – developmentally – by interacting with a caring human being – by being sung to, talked to or danced with.

Age 2-7: Pre-operational Stage

Once children's language skills start developing they are fertile ground for planting the seeds of critical inquiry. Plus their growing curiosity about the physical world makes them receptive to learning how things work – and why!

Although some might question the appropriateness of introducing media literacy to preschoolers, this is precisely the age in which it ought to begin. Just like we recognize that learning the alphabet at age four is an important building block to being able to analyze a novel at 16, media literacy has building blocks that provide a foundation on which more complex skills are built. It is important, for example, to encourage the habit of asking questions about media, to learn media vocabulary and to practice talking about what they see and hear and how it makes them feel.

The *MediaLit Kit*™ 's *Questions for Guiding Young Children* were developed specifically for children at this stage. As is clear from the chart on page 22, each *Core Concept/Key Question* is broken into two simpler questions to provide more developmentally appropriate tools for processing media messages and experiences.

In addition, the more young children can be exposed to different interpretations of reality, the more open they will become to accepting different ways of thinking, exploring different solutions and valuing cultural differences. Excellent tools can be picture books, videos or audio programs that tell similar stories from different perspectives thereby creating opportunities to ask questions such as #3: "What do I think and feel about this?" or #4: "Is anything left out?"

Age 7-11: Concrete Operational Stage

By elementary school, most children can think logically but are not yet able to think abstractly or hypothetically. It is still important for students to manipulate concrete objects and media production activities can address this need well. Children at this stage are less egocentric and activities like role-playing and taking pictures can be good ways to experience other people's point of view.

Children can also classify objects according to attributes, create surveys and process the information visually in Venn Diagrams and graphs. Some children at this stage could benefit from the *Questions to Guide Young Children* while others are ready for the *Five Key Questions*. The choice of questions can also depend on the student's vocabulary development since even older students learning English as a second language might benefit more from a simpler vocabulary.

Age 11+: Formal Operational Stage

As young people begin to be able to think abstractly, solve problems of probability, and generalize, media literacy offers great depth for both analysis and production. The *Five Key Questions* as well as the *Expanded Questions* can stimulate sophisticated inquiry. One's level of awareness should be to uncover both explicit and implicit messages in the content of a message as well as the medium that carries it. Analysis can move beyond quantitative research to examine the qualitative influences of a particular medium on a specific audience.

Students should also be encouraged to reflect on their own moral, ethical and spiritual concerns related to media representations and to perfect their communications skills in order to take their place as citizens of a democracy and empowered members of a global media culture.

Each Child Unique

As everyone who has worked with children knows, each child is unique and grows at his or her own developmental schedule. Children of the same chronological age can be dramatically different – emotionally, intellectually, even physically. These differences, in turn, affect the young person's ability to learn and master the skills of media literacy inquiry.

What is important is that parents, teachers and caregivers be flexible and adapt the process to the child. Although the *CML MediaLit Kit*™ provides a variety of tools for questioning the media, we welcome and encourage additional adaptations and specialized applications as well as research relating child development to the teaching of media literacy.

The Media Literate Person

- Uses media wisely and effectively.
- Engages in critical thinking when evaluating media messages.
- Evaluates the credibility of information from different sources..
- Understands the power of visual images and knows how to "read" them.
- Is aware of a diverse cultural universe and appreciates multiple perspectives.
- Expresses him/herself clearly and creatively using different forms of media.
- Recognizes media's influence on beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviors and the democratic process.

With thanks to Project Look Sharp / Ithaca, NY
and Pauline Center for Media Studies / Los Angeles
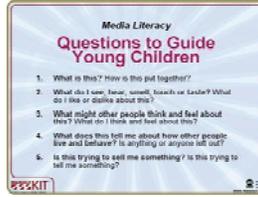
7.   Questions to Guide Young Children

The following chart best outlines how the Questions to Guide Young Children flow from each of the *Core Concepts/Key Questions*. Each is broken into two simpler questions to provide more developmentally appropriate tools for children to process their media messages and experiences.

	Core Concepts	Key Questions	Questions to Guide Young Children
1	All media messages are "constructed."	Who created this message?	**What is this?** How is this put together?
2	Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules.	What techniques are used to attract my attention?	**What do I see, hear, smell, touch or taste?** What do I like or dislike about this?
3	Different people experience the same media message differently.	How might different people understand this message differently from me?	What do I think and feel about this? **What might other people think and feel about this?**
4	Media have embedded values and points of view.	What lifestyles, values and points of view are represented or omitted in this message?	**What does this tell me about how other people live and believe?** Is anything or anyone left out?
5	Media are organized to gain profit and/or power.	Why was this message sent?	**Is this trying to *tell* me something?** Is this trying to *sell* me something?

"Children ought to have access to information
about how television is made
and to the TV-making equipment itself…
As they learn to make television,
they will also learn most of the other
lessons, values and basic skills
we want them to."

John Merrow

8. Expanded Questions
for more sophisticated inquiry

As students become more skilled in media literacy, more complex analysis is possible. The following outline is only a sample of the kinds of *Expanded Questions* that can be asked in order to fully grasp the overall *content, form, purpose* and *effects* of any media message. The numbers at the end of each question indicate which *Key Question* it expands.

1. Messages and Values – exploring the *content* of a media message.
These questions help us understand how the symbol system of a message influences its interpretation by different people; how the symbols that are selected for a message tap into our existing attitudes, knowledge and understanding of the world.
- What makes this message seem realistic or unrealistic? (#2)
- How does this message fit with your lived experience of the world? (#3)
- How are various social groups represented? (#4)
- What social or ideological messages are a part of the message's subtext? (#4)
- What kinds of behaviors and what kinds of consequences are depicted? (#4)
- What type of person is the reader invited to identify with? (#4)
- What is omitted from the message? (#4)
- Whose point of view is presented? (#4)

2. Codes and Conventions – exploring the *form* of the message.
The following kinds of questions help us appreciate the "constructedness" of messages, how ideas and concepts are created, expressed and "packaged" for specific audiences.
- What is the message genre? (#1)
- What techniques are used to attract my attention? (#2)
- What conventions of storytelling are used in this message? (#2)
- What types of visual and/or verbal symbolism are used to construct the message? (#2)
- What kinds of persuasive or emotional appeals are used in this message? (#2)
- What technologies were used to construct this message? (#1)
- How is this message similar and different from others with similar content? (#1)

3. Producers and Consumers – exploring the *purpose* and *effects*.
These type of questions help us see the multiple decisions that are made from beginning to end as the message is created and distributed plus the multiple interpretations that are created in the audience as they watch, see or listen:
- Who created this message? (#1)
- What is the producer's purpose? (#5)
- Who is the target audience? (#5)
- How have economic decisions influenced the construction of this message? (#5)
- What reasons might an individual have for being interested in this message? (#3)
- How do different individuals respond emotionally to this message? (#3)
- How might different individuals interpret this message differently? (#3)

– With thanks to Cary Bazalgette and Renee Hobbs.

A Word about Copyright. . .

Issues of copyright enter the media literacy classroom in a variety of ways. Materials produced specifically for educational use and/or purchased from legitimate educational sources are not usually an issue. But what about showing clips from movies rented at the video store? Or students using music from their favorite CD artist as the sound track of a video production? Or copying pictures from the Internet to put into a class PowerPoint presentation? Or on their own website?

Relevant media "texts," both print and electronic, are necessary for teaching critical analysis in a 21st century media culture. And the ability to analyze and think critically is the very foundation of both intellectual freedom and the exercising of full citizenship in a democracy. Production projects are integral to learning by experience how media are constructed as well as demonstrating mastery of various media formats and gaining competency in creative self-expression.

The "Fair Use" provision of the 1976 Copyright Law, as amended, states precisely that the use of copyrighted materials is allowed for "*criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching (including multiple copies for classroom use), scholarship or research.*"

However, applying the "Fair Use" standard in specific situations is seldom crystal clear. And as recent headlines about music piracy indicates, new technologies keep shifting the ground for both public discourse and legal interpretation. The following are some organizations/websites to check for the latest guidelines on issues of copyright in educational settings:

>   Library of Congress Copyright Office
>   American School Library Association
>   Free Expression Policy Project

A Word about Teacher Training. . .

Because media literacy education is an emerging discipline academically, there are no established criteria (yet!) for how to prepare teachers – either at the undergraduate level or in advanced studies. The following links, however, may be helpful in organizing teacher training opportunities for yourself or others.

- Keep in mind that media literacy is not so much a new subject to teach as it is a 21st century approach to teaching ALL subjects. Therefore, undergraduate – or graduate -- work should be a balanced combination of both subject area *content* and practical educational *methods*. In other words, it doesn't help a teacher to be able to cite theory and research if they can't organize engaging classroom activities to explore media experiences suitable to the age and ability of their students.

- The **Professional Development** section of CML's website looks in depth at many issues of teacher training. Find it from the left side navigation bar throughout the site: **www.medialit.org**

- Be sure to note the dozens of practical ideas in "*Getting Started: Strategies for Introducing Media Literacy in your School or District*" at **www.medialit.org/pd_getting_started.html**

- CML is a leader in organizing and conducting workshops for teachers. Now with the *MediaLit Kit*™ CML can provide contracted staff development for schools, school districts or in conjunction with curriculum for topics such as smoking cessation, nutrition education or violence prevention.

- Many excellent books, videos and teaching manuals are available for your own study – or to build a professional reference shelf in your faculty room or library. For a continually updated bibliography on teaching media literacy go to the CML website. On the home page, pull down the **Focus Page** menu at the top of the page and select "*How to Teach Media Literacy*." Then select "Recommended Educational Resources" for a comprehensive list of CML endorsed materials which you can review individually and order instantly online. The "*Research and Theory*" Focus Page may also be useful.

How this Guide Came to Be

"To translate media literacy research and theory into practical information, training and educational tools..."

Mission Statement / Center for Media Literacy

For over 25 years the Center for Media Literacy has built a reputation for clear and concise interpretation and articulation of the theory and issues in media education – first through *Media&Values* magazine (1977 – 1993) and later in a series of *Media Literacy Workshop Kits*, the first generation of teaching tools for US-based media literacy.

In 1994, CML founder Elizabeth Thoman made her foundational article "Skills and Strategies for Media Education" copyright free. Since then, it has been widely reprinted and thousands of copies have been reproduced and used for workshops and training. It helped establish a common language and understanding for media literacy nationally.

The time has come for a new articulation that reflects evolutionary developments in both education and society, including the impact of the Internet and new multi-media technology on learning – and on life. This new articulation is now the *CML MediaLit Kit*™. As the teaching of media literacy evolves in the US and new tools are added to the *MediaLit Kit*™, developments will be reflected in the on-line version of this Orientation Guide. We also invite you to bookmark the CML site and use it regularly to support your involvement in media literacy education. The following are some areas of the site that may be useful:

Home Page: **www.medialit.org**

Reading Room: Background articles on teaching media literacy, including a collection of chronological documents tracing the evolution and development of media literacy in the USA

Resource Catalog: Your one-stop on-line shop for *the best* media literacy teaching materials for the classroom as well as videos for in-service events and core resources for your professional reference shelf.

Newsletter: Check out the latest issue of CML's online newsletter and sign up to receive future issues and announcements of NEW teaching materials.

Media&Values: An archive of over 400 articles from the magazine that helped fan the flame of media literacy in the USA. Articles are amazingly evergreen.

Focus Page menus: Pull down the Focus Page menu and select a topic – from advertising to analyzing news to violence in media. Hit "go" and instantly receive a list of relevant articles, recommended teaching resources and links.

Best Practices: Find practical approaches for introducing and teaching media literacy, along with free handouts and downloads for the *CML MediaLit Kit*™.

This Guide was a collaborative effort of the CML staff over many months. We invite your feedback and discussion of the ideas it presents: **cml@medialit.org**

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Center for Media Literacy

The Center for Media Literacy (CML) is a nonprofit educational organization established to provide leadership, public education, professional development and educational resources nationally, A pioneer in its field, CML works to help citizens, especially the young, develop critical thinking and media production skills needed to live fully in the 21st century media culture. Incorporated in 1989, CML is an independent, nonpartisan 501(c)3 organization.

Educational Philosophy:
Empowerment through Education

The Center for Media Literacy advocates a philosophy of "empowerment through education."
This philosophy incorporates three intertwining concepts:

1. Media literacy is education for life in a global media world.

For 500 years, since the invention of moveable type,
we have valued the ability to read and write as the primary means
of communicating and understanding history, cultural traditions,
political and social philosophy and news of the day.
In more recent times, traditional literacy skills ensured that individuals
could participate fully as engaged citizens and functioning adults in society.
Today families, schools and all community institutions
share the responsibility for preparing young people for living and learning
in a global culture that is increasingly connected through multi-media
and influenced by powerful images, words and sounds.

2. The heart of media literacy is informed inquiry.

Through a four-step "inquiry" process of
Awareness . . . Analysis . . . Reflection . . .Action,
media literacy helps young people acquire an empowering set of "navigational" skills
which include the ability to:
- *Access* information from a variety of sources;
- *Analyze and explore* how messages are "constructed"
   whether print, verbal, visual or multi-media;
- *Evaluate* media's explicit and implicit messages
   against one's own ethical, moral and/or democratic principles;
- *Express or create* their own messages using a variety of media tools.

3. Media literacy is an alternative to censoring, boycotting or blaming "the media."

Deeply committed to freedom of expression,
media literacy does not promote partisan agendas or political points of view.
The power of media literacy is its ability to inspire independent thinking and foster critical analysis.
The ultimate goal of media education is to make wise choices possible.

Embracing this philosophy,
the Center for Media Literacy is committed to media education
as an essential and empowering life-skill for the 21st Century.