Media Literacy

What Is Media Literacy?

“Media literacy is the ability to access the media, to understand and to critically evaluate different aspects of the media and media contents an[d] to create communications in a variety of contexts. Media literacy relates to all media, including television and film, radio and recorded music, print media, the Internet and all other new digital communication technologies. It is a fundamental competence not only for the young generation but also for adults and elderly people, for parents, teachers and media professionals.”

The EU Commission on Media Literacy [1]

“Media literacy is the ability to sift through and analyze the messages that inform, entertain and sell to us every day. It’s the ability to bring critical thinking skills to bear on all media— from music videos and Web environments to product placement in films and virtual displays on NHL hockey boards. It’s about asking pertinent questions about what’s there, and noticing what's not there. And it's the instinct to question what lies behind media productions— the motives, the money, the values and the ownership— and to be aware of how these factors influence content.”

Jane Tallim, Education Specialist, The Provincial Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario.

http://mediasmarts.ca [2]

How Do You Teach Media Literacy?

Sources of online media literacy teaching materials:

Project Look Sharp (Ithaca College).
A media literacy initiative to provide materials, training and support for integrating media literacy into classrooms at all levels. This site includes curriculum kits, lessons, handouts, and other resources for teaching and assessing media literacy. Requires browsing to find higher education materials, but it’s worth it.

http://www.projectlooksharp.org/ [3]

Center for Media Literacy.
This non-profit organization promotes media literacy competency for the 21st century. Offers a downloadable CML MediaLit Kit for preK to college. The Five Core Concepts and Five Key Questions of Media Literacy are valuable for responding to media at all educational levels. Other materials are K-12 but may provide some useful ideas for college faculty.
Teaching Resources (ACME, Action Coalition for Media Education).
Free materials for media education at many levels. Visual images, themes, study guides, teaching ideas offered as downloadable PDFs and Word documents.

Media Literacy Associations and Journals:

National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE).
Promotes media literacy as “an essential life skill for the 21st century.”
Offers publications, conferences, and other resources for educators.
http://namle.net/ [6]
NAMLE’s Core Principles of Media Literacy Education can be downloaded at http://namle.net/publications/core-principles/ [7]

Action Coalition for Media Education (ACME).
This coalition has three goals: teaching media education skills and content, supporting media reform, and democratizing our media system through education and activism.
http://acmecoalition.org/home/ [8]

EuroMediaLiteracy.
A consortium promoting media literacy across Europe. This media literacy Charter provides a database of people and organizations that support media literacy and links to a wide variety of European organizations and projects related to media literacy.

Journal of Media Literacy Education (sponsored by NAMLE).
An open access online refereed journal supporting all aspects of media literacy education.

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