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Research and Media Literacy: A Directed Path Through an Indirect Course

GUEST EDITOR: BELINHA DE ABREU

WITH: AMBROSH • ARCUS • CHEROW-O'LEARY • FRECHETTE • FRIESEM • GOBLE
LOPEZ • FARRINGTON • HOFFMANN • HUNT • JOLLS • KIST • LEE • MCDUGALL
MIHAILIDIS • NORKO • REISMAYER • ROWE • WILLIAMS • YILDIZ

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National Telemedia Council, Inc.

1922 University Avenue • Madison, WI 53726
(608) 218-1182 • NTelemedia@aol.com
www.NationalTelemediaCouncil.org

www.JournalofMediaLiteracy.org

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The Journal of Media Literacy (first published in 1953 as *Better Broadcasts News* and later as *Telemidium*, *The Journal of Media Literacy*) is published by the National Telemedia Council (NTC), the oldest ongoing media literacy education organization in the United States, having been founded in 1953. The editors invite special guest editors for particular issues of the *Journal*. *The Journal of Media Literacy* reflects the philosophy of NTC, which takes a positive, non-judgmental approach to media literacy education as an essential life skill for the 21st Century. The National Telemedia Council is an organization of diverse professionals interested in the field of media literacy education. NTC encourages free expression of views on all aspects of media literacy in order to encourage learning and increase growth of understanding of issues in Media Literacy. Any opinions expressed in *The Journal* or by individual members of NTC, therefore, do not necessarily represent policies or positions of the National Telemedia Council.

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Research and Media Literacy: A Directed Path Through an Indirect Course

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“Research Must be the Bedrock..”

Research must be the bedrock upon which rests a solid, long-range, valid, proven and continuing practice of teaching media literacy. If our goal for making a contribution to a media-wise, global society is through educating our children to be literate in the deepest sense, we need to be sure that what we are doing is working. This is a huge task. The research must have rigor, integrity, and also flexibility to grow with the evolving nature of the field. It must live within the culture, both locally and globally. It must recognize the changing ecology of childhood. It must draw upon all of the amazing research being done about the brain that has implications for learning and literacy. It must build a solid, replicable curriculum and lead to assessment that is meaningful.

- Can research prove what we want or need to know?
- How can we make it positive?
- How can we make it challenging?
- Are we locked in the endless circular thinking that gets stuck in the definitions?

The challenges of defining our field and finding the parameters that we can all live within are more complicated than other academic fields. Literacy includes the whole human experience with all of its dimensions, values, identities, and a range of ideas that can reach to infinity. Once we accept these complexities, we still can move forward with research that is fluid and flexible, yet rigorous. It is not enough to observe, we have to find ways to measure. And that is a challenge we have not yet reached.

Research is never finished, but it is also never

“new.” It is built upon the work and ideas of those who came before. There are time-tested basic elements of philosophy and practice that remain the same, no matter what “tool” is being used at the time. We need to have a deep understanding of our roots and maintain a steadfast adherence to the core principles and values. But research also cannot stand still. It must be flexible and ongoing, responding to the evolving world in which it lives.

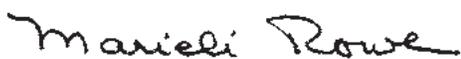
With that said, we are delighted to present in this issue the reflections of participants in the 2014 Media Literacy Research Symposium. The two day event was packed, yet still could only scratch the surface. It reflects the breadth, depth, and complexity of this field that has yet to be defined to the satisfaction of all, or to find its definitive niche. It was an occasion for a meeting of minds, for new connections, for encouraging a culture of research-oriented champions for the future of this field.

As editor of this issue, we want to thank Dr. Belinha De Abreu for her insightful coordination of this issue which focuses, not only on research as presented at the Symposium, but also on reflection of the process as well. In the *Perspectives* section, Julian McDougall offers his observations from a UK point of view and poses challenges to the international media literacy community. Carol Arcus responds and clarifies McDougall’s positions, expanding upon his questions through her own work in Canada. In the *Research* section, we have eight representatives of widely diverse backgrounds, all providing a specific glimpse into their philosophy, practice, and outcomes. The *In Practice* section presents solid field research. Jolls presents the longitudinal study of a tested curriculum. Hoffmann seeks to validate Journalism as a high school curriculum that fulfills both

media literacy and common core standards. In the *Reflections* section, two up and coming media literacy practitioners share their thoughts and takeaways from the symposium. In the *Moving Forward* section, Cherow O’Leary looks to the future world of intelligent machines, a world in which the essential question becomes what does it mean to be human. Mihailidis eloquently summarizes his conclusions and recommendations for building the future of the field of media education through reputable outlets for research, a collaborative environment for scholarship and applied work, and a unified focus on policy and reform. Lastly, we provide reviews of De Abreu and Mihailidis’ edited collection and keynote speaker, Douglas Rushkoff’s new book.

We are thrilled that this symposium was able to bring together such a diverse gathering with a common goal. This is a work in progress. There is a tremendous goal ahead.

Although our approaches and philosophies need to be varied to reflect our global society, we must continue to critically observe, measure, define, practice, and share our results. Congratulations and thank you to Belinha and Paul for convening this media literacy research symposium. Thank you to all of the authors and to all who attended.



Marieli Rowe
JML EDITOR



Marieli Rowe



Karen Ambrosh



Karen Ambrosh
NTC PRESIDENT

Research and Media Literacy—A Directed Path Through an Indirect Course

Belinha De Abreu, PhD.



Dr. Belinha De Abreu, is Assistant Professor of the Practice in Educational Technology at Fairfield University and author/editor of several papers and books on media literacy, among them: *Media Literacy in Action: Theoretical and Pedagogical Perspectives* (Routledge, 2014); *Media Literacy, Social Networking, and the Web 2.0 Environment for the K-12 Educator* (Peter Lang, 2011); *Teaching Media Literacy* (Neal Schuman, 2007). Her dissertation is entitled *The Implementation of a Media Literacy Curriculum in the Public Schools* (University of Connecticut, 2008). Dr. De Abreu also works with UNESCO's Communication and Information Literacy Section. Follow @belmedia

Why a symposium on media literacy research? It is a question that has been asked of me often before and after the conference was held at Fairfield University in Connecticut. My answer overall has been a standard one, “We need more of it.” Even as recently as the past two decades, the idea of media literacy education has come across as still a novelty item for many people who hear the term. While there is an agreement that this type of education is needed, there is limited research that gives particulars to this area of study. That is not to say that there aren't glimpses of it in media studies, communications, cultural studies, public health or even religious studies, but the focus is oftentimes intertwined with another field of study and not always emphasizing the media literacy component.

Frequently discussed in many collegiate circles is that in order for policymakers to address the need for media literacy education or for the field to be even taken seriously amongst other researchers a wide body of work must be present. The work must emphasize needs, successes, struggles, and adaptations. Research must open the doorways for future research and for a consideration of how multi-dimensional this approach is to learning in a society

which is predominately entertained, instructed, and influenced by media messages.

We need to build a body of research and continue to grow it. Recognizing a need is not enough. Generating opportunities for research to be conducted, reviewed, and revised is a goal for growing this field. The Media Literacy Research Symposium served as an opening format. Its outgrowth came from the recently edited book by Paul Mihailidis and myself, *Media Literacy in Action: Theoretical and Pedagogical Perspectives*, where we discussed that this book served as a gateway for future collaborations. It provided the contributors with a chance to discuss where they were experiencing the work of media literacy whether as a field or as a study, and also offered suggestions for where more work was needed. The book considered the possibilities of this field as an evolution—a growing one.

In our discussions, Paul and I talked about creating a place for future researchers and current researchers. The symposium provided this opportunity. It also allowed for us to see younger researchers' work and give them an avenue for displaying their work. In fact, it gave us a chance to see if research within the field was plausible and to ask whether there was enough evidence to prove our own idea

that we needed a platform for generating more work—a platform to grow future research.

As a date was set, a keynote selected—Douglas Rushkoff, a venue put in place, and the call for work presented, it became very obvious that we had started a global conversation. The inquiries that we were getting were from all over the world. The interest was genuine and the willingness to come to a pre-selected location to share work—overwhelmingly enthusiastic. The expectation was that we might get 50 people to attend, but we had double that amount. People who came from all over the United States—California, Wisconsin, Texas; beyond that we had a global presence with representatives from the UK, China, Germany, and Canada.

The discussions were rich and the opportunity to network was great. Besides sharing three meals, we shared our own interests in the field, and talked about bridging more opportunities—whether through writing or through presentations or through other collaborative ventures—some of which will be discussed in this issue. Before the date of the conference approached, the question was posed to current media literacy researchers, educators, activists, and those interested in the field,

“Why is Media Literacy Research important to you?” The question was sent out via listservs, emails, and asked at a variety of places such as the Digital Media & Learning conference in Boston. People were invited to send their responses either in a video, audio or written form. Their responses were compiled in a video which was then presented at the conference. The link to the compilation of comments can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zu-v4CpjlQYo&feature=youtu.be>.

In my own statement for the video,

“Media literacy education has always been to me the answer for helping students achieve deeper thinking and creating real-world connections in schools. Research

in this area can provide enduring conversations on teaching and learning that delves further into some of the pre-conceived notions presented by the media.”

I firmly believe this assertion holds true. We need more conversations and ones that tie together what we are seeing in our mediated society. Those discussions need to be transferred to research that examines how media impact society, how society impacts media, how media messages are interpreted, constructed, and reconstructed. We need to bring together people who are different stakeholders in education, policy, academia, activists, public health, and producers in both commercial and non-commercial settings.

The path to research in media literacy will be varied and challenging, but for the ultimate purpose of encouraging knowledge along with critical thinking. Even as the work of the *Media Literacy in Action*

book was being compiled this statement rang through. Paul and I wrote in the opening:

“Media literacy is the field that will help us learn how to be critical, savvy, expressive, participatory, and engaged with media to help build a more vibrant, inclu-

sive, and tolerant digital media culture. While media literacy takes many different shapes and forms, it is up to parents, teachers, scholars, and leaders to implement this movement that can help shape the future of teaching and learning about media’s ever increasing role in the world” (De Abreu and Mihailidis, 2014).

Indeed. Now, bring on the research, bring on the scholarship, and the global collaborations. This symposium and this journal is just the beginning... ❖

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Curating Media Literacy: A Porous Expertise

Julian McDougall



Dr. Julian McDougall is Associate Professor in the Centre for Excellence in Media Practice at Bournemouth University. He is co-editor of the Media Education Research Journal and author of *After the Media: Culture and Identity in the 21st Century*, *The Media Teacher's Book*, *Barthes Mythologies Today: Readings of Contemporary Culture*, *Studying Videogames*, and *Media Studies: The Basics*. He has published a range of research into media literacies, textual practices, and pedagogy. At CEMP, he is Programme Leader for the Educational Doctorate in Creative & Media Education and is currently supervising doctoral research into digital ethnography as a pedagogic approach.

This article summarises and reflects upon my contribution to the Media Literacy Research Symposium at Fairfield University in March.

First, I need to thank the hosts for the invitation and for making me and my daughter, with whom I was travelling, so welcome. Making the trip has reaped rich benefits, with a number of the researchers I met there planning to present at our own Media Education Summit in Prague, this November. So far confirmed are Paul Milhailidis convening a plenary panel on collaborative international research with Belinha De Abreu and Rob Williams participating; Renee Hobbs giving a keynote, and a number of other practitioners from Fairfield giving papers. We'll be following up Paul's panel by inviting people over to an event in London to launch a new special interest group with the United Kingdom Literacy Association. Also, we hope we can work on a combined issue of our Media Education Research Journal and the Journal of Media Literacy Education in the next year. Most of this is happening because of connections made in Fairfield and if it all joins up, we'll be working together in the near future as an international research con-

sortium. I think these are what we call 'disproportionate outcomes; and they show how, despite my general affinity with online solutions to geographical boundaries, sometimes getting on a plane is the best way to make connections.

So—what did I contribute in return for all of those rewards?

I started out with an input to an opening panel discussion on the need for media literacy education. Having written the opening chapter for Belinha and Paul's collection (De Abreu and Milhailidis, 2014), I knew this was a community of practice with a shared objective. However, I wanted to make the point from the (perhaps jaded) UK perspective that experience shows a very broad and far reaching remit for media literacy as a panacea for the ills of global capitalism. This ideal is pretty untenable for educators to achieve. So we have to work on accepting we have a broad shared vision but then narrowing in on an achievable set of first steps—rather like we'd advise a thesis student to 'focus in' rather than trying to cover everything.

I followed this up in my presentation where I proposed an 'untangling' of three threads to media literacy—critical reading, creative production

and civic action. In Belinha and Paul's collection, I mapped the following connected and overlapping discourses of media literacy:

- Social *Hagoood, Kist, Lee.*
- Post-Protectionist *Andersen, Reilly, Lundgren, Bindig & Castonguay, Shwarz.*
- Citizenship *Jolls et al, Mihailidis, Melki, Leaning, Agosto & Magee, Bogel, Fry, Pernisco, Gordon & Schirra, Gallagher, Livingstone & Wang.*
- Creative *Dezuanni & Woods, Jensen.*
- Subject Media *McDougall, Duanic, De Abreu, Considine & Considine, Silverblatt et al.*

It should be that way, in such a rich collection. But for the 'project'? Playing devil's advocate, couldn't a student produce highly creative but profoundly uncritical, neoliberally hegemonic, media material? Might another student learn to read the media so critically that they want nothing to do with it and feel no compulsion to create? Would we expect a History student to take civic action? I observed this problem more recently at the UNESCO summit, where I worked on their draft MIL declaration (2014) which spans safe use of the internet, coding and (no exaggeration) world peace.

De Abreu & Mihailidis cite Rheingold (2011) for the immense responsibility for media literacy education to foster:

- Criticality
 - Participation
 - Engagement
 - Vibrancy
 - Inclusion
 - Tolerance
- and even mindfulness*

Again, no bad thing, but let's compare this to other disciplines that operate in 'in the centre' and then consider how we do this from the (extreme) margins?

So, the danger is that we re-render the project always incomplete (to paraphrase Habermas). Whilst I

agree with David Buckingham's response to my chapter of the book, where he celebrates this permanent flux and the 'thousand flowers blooming', it's harder to convince policy makers about that. I'm seeing, with my most cynical lens attached, a Habermasian nonsense experiment, generating our own aporias, at an impasse of our own making, even a Rushkoffian *Big Blank*? The way out has to be a pedagogic shift

The other intervention I wanted to make in my paper was to do with pedagogy, the 'void' in too much media literacy work. I think the international community has privileged the pedagogic nouns (what should students learn) with the pedagogic verbs (how should learning work). Put simply, we've failed to match up the blurring of media / audience boundaries with those of teacher expert / student apprentice. So I was proposing a more 'porous' conception of expertise for media literacy, with the metaphor of curation offered for thinking about how this might work. So, drawing on the work I have done recently with John Potter, (2014), Ben Andrews (2013) and Susan Orr (2014), I offered some examples, from research, to explore the po-

"I think the international community has privileged the pedagogic nouns (what students learn) with the pedagogic verbs (how should learning work)."

tential for curation to offer a productive metaphor for the convergence of digital media learning across and between home / lifeworld and formal educational / systemworld spaces—or between the public and private spheres. I drew conclusions from a few of my projects to argue that the acceptance of trans-media literacy practices as a site for rich educational work—in media education and related areas—can only succeed if matched by a convergence of a more *porous* educator-student expertise. See this statement from David Buckingham back in 1990:

Questions about subjectivity, about students' sense of their own identity, are inextricable from the ways in which they read and use media... We need to provide opportunities for students to explore their emotional investments in the media in their own terms, rather than attempting to replace these by rigorous 'rational' analysis (1990: 224).

Nearly a quarter of a century on, and firmly into the 'digital age', these questions remain—and the need for appropriate pedagogic strategies is—I suggested, largely unresolved. Indeed, the proliferation of media learning and exchange outside of the classroom, enabled at least partly by the internet and social media, obliges us to return to the same (unanswered) questions about reflexive, critical articulations of mediated 'pleasure' in media education that Buckingham posed for the analogue age, long before MIL.

I ran through several examples during the session but I'll offer two here.

“Put simply, curation allows for mediation to be moving, as events—exhibited always artificially, contained only for the duration of the display

For the first project, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, (Berger and McDougall, 2013), students worked collaboratively with teachers to learn gameplay, analyse the game as a text and co-create study materials. Echoing Ranciere (2009), whose ideas about 'indisciplined' pedagogy resonate with both our 'porous' understanding of expertise and the curation metaphor, the 'ignorant schoolmaster' was here working with the gamer-student on an academic deconstruction of a (digitally transformed)'book' they—the 'expert' teacher are unlikely to read (or even be able to). Cu-

rating, the emphasis was on resisting any notion that this game is untypical but rather to understand it as presenting the (always-already) 'in between' nature of textual reception and exchange. Put simply, curation allows for mediation to be moving, as events—exhibited always artificially, contained only for the duration of the display. By undermining—through parody—the idea that a game is either 'like a novel' or not, working with text-events in a 'flattened hierarchy' the critical educational questions posed by curation shift from 'what does the text mean?' to *what is reading, what is play, what are the rules for the game of reading and how can we add to the flow of the event?*

The second project of interest here involved 13-14 year old Citizenship students making documentary films to explore ideas about local, national and European identity. This was more about 'making' but the pedagogic shift was to require the films to be ethnographic so the students could reflect on the power of the edit, with a clear brief to provide 'thick description' of community viewpoints about Europe. In working ethnographically, students making the documentary films were at the same time the 'subjects' (agents) and 'objects' (the data) of the learning and the research.

Data was captured in three forms: the documentary films produced by students, (uploaded to the project's website and screened at two international film festivals); individual interviews with teachers and group interviews with participating students. The research questions related to the potential of this pedagogic intervention for reflexive learning in Citizenship (the UK curricular manifestation of 'civics') to successfully work in the *“interplay between contexts for action, relationships within and across contexts, and the dispositions that young people bring to such contexts and relationships”* (Biesta, Lawy and Kelly, 2009: 5). The extent to which students would be comfortable with this approach—compared to their 'instinctive' familiarity with both conventional media and its profoundly non-ethnographic modes of representation and conventional learning with equally profound hierarchies of expertise and transmission—was the focus of interviews with students

and teachers during and after the intervention. In their responses, teachers shared positive experiences in terms of ‘engagement’ and beyond this, two further levels of practice were identified. First, students thinking (for themselves) about identity issues in ways that seemed to have arisen experientially—or dialogically, in terms of ‘going out’ to find their own contexts for learning—out of the school into the community, another ‘membrane’ to permeate. Second, the teachers instinctively translated their observations into a discourse of ‘skills’—of participation and action. The potential for using ‘easy’ media to more formally ‘map’ this kind of work an ethnographic mode of curation would, we suggest, move teachers in all subject contexts, embracing their ‘inexpertise’, to the more genuinely constructivist pedagogy most practitioners would endorse. Embracing this challenge, I argued, can move us away from the unwitting hegemony represented by Zizek’s ‘postmodern father’ (2013), which I offered as a metaphor for our intrusion into students’ mediated lifeworlds on our own terms.

I concluded by suggesting that these findings provide compelling evidence that lived experience, media and the act of curation can be brought together by new pedagogical models that move away from ‘fixed’ boundaries between home and education, learning and play, types of text, media and people, and most importantly, expert and learner. The difference is that these new ways of seeing media literacy are harder to develop in the more constraining institutional framing of UK Media Studies than in the potentially more ‘free range’ contexts international media literacy researchers operate. This is stunningly ironic, but that’s another story. ❄

Julian’s presentation from the Fairfield symposium is available at: <http://www.slideshare.net/silvertwin/fairfield-pres-j-mc-d>

The Media Education Summit, Prague, November 2014: <http://www.cemp.ac.uk/summit/2014/>

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Our Incomplete Project: A Response to Julian McDougall at The Media Literacy Research Symposium

Carol Arcus



Carol Arcus is the Vice President of The Association For Media Literacy. Carol taught English and Media Studies at Unionville High School in York Region District School Board, Ontario, for 18 years. She was on the writing team for the OSS English 9 – 12 curriculum in Toronto and wrote the Media Studies strand expectation statements.

I am thankful to the Symposium organizers for inviting Julian McDougall to the conversation that day, as I have believed for some time that his work represents a significant and positive paradigm shift in Media Literacy Education. In the following response, I will also be including references from three of McDougall’s publications that explore and illustrate reasons why we should be rethinking media literacy curriculum: *Critical media literacy after the media*; *Reading Games as (Authorless) Literature*, and *L.A. NOIRE STUDY GUIDE*.

Amusing and provocative, he presented the following arguments: not only is media literacy curriculum an *Incomplete Project*, it is a tangle of confusion; Media is not a subject any more than Literature is; and in order to attain the Holy Grail (my words) of *critical media literacy*, we must shift away from textual deconstruction toward theorizing culture (“people, not texts”).

First, media curriculum “as project”, as ongoing process, seems to me wholly apt: when compared to other curriculum with “fixed” content, ours seems amorphous, and elusive. Tweets and Wikis shift and

mutate, and are not concrete texts, but living processes. As these processes become more integral to our everyday existence, we *want* to examine their dynamic role in our world. We *want* to examine our changing relationships to the media, as authors, producers, and user/consumers. The problem as McDougall sees it (and I agree) is that we think that curriculum needs to be as broad as the environment it interrogates. As the scope of media expands, we keep trying to stuff it into our subject slot, and as a result, it has become onerous and unmanageable. McDougall asked the group: What other subject area would aim to include social; post protectionist; citizenship; creative; and subject media discourses? We expect to cover criticality, participation, engagement, vibrancy, inclusion, and tolerance. And even mindfulness? Whenever we try to pin down this ‘subject’, it expands like a hot air balloon.

So we have to choose how much we want to accomplish.

Second, complicating this dilemma is his notion that subject media does not exist. “Literature” and “media” are terms that represent cultural experiences, not bins of content. Subject division is wholly artificial, a holdover from linear classification models in education. How can such a pervasive environment be contained in any subject bin, anyway? It resists compartmentalization like no other. To the person who understands the nature of our mashed-up media environment, this is a common sense notion. Nevertheless, it is a notion that will die hard in educational institutions.

McDougall’s third and principal argument was for a shift away from textual deconstruction

toward personal response. He suggested that progressive media education must be rooted in the idea of learner as curator of his/her personal cultural material, and that this pedagogy of curation might be the way out of the current morass. It means not “doing media,” but “doing people”. It means focusing on personal, ethnographic enquiry, rather than cynical and superficial deconstruction of Big Media. He used Charlie Brooker’s famous clip, “How to Report the News” to illustrate the latter, suggesting that it is the worst thing you could bring into a classroom. It reinforces conventions in an unproductive way and does not get at thoughtful learning.

In my view, textual deconstruction, in the right context, can indeed play a valuable role in reinforcing codes and conventions. Effective curriculum will always balance it with learner-centred inquiry that inverts the traditional hierarchy of text and user.

McDougall presented a list of rigorous key questions we should be asking students now. It invites a reconsideration of the essential understandings of reading, writing, and ‘playing with’ media, while developing a discourse about the linguistic and social impacts of media. “It gets at how we attribute meaning to cultural material.” (*Critical Media Literacy After the Media*). He suggests that these questions, when effectively embedded into project work, will strengthen the learner’s critical media literacy skills:

- what does your textual experience look and feel like?
- what different spaces and places are there for producing and consuming textual meaning?
- what does it mean to be a producer and consumer in these spaces and places?
- what different kinds of textual associations and affiliations do you make, with whom, and for what?
- what is an author and what is being creative?
- how do you represent yourself in different spaces and places?
- what is reading, what is writing, what is speaking, and what is listening and what is learning?

Note: there is no textual deconstruction here. This is curriculum that flattens the hierarchy inherent in traditional text/student relationships, and teacher/student relationships as well. Because much of this work depends upon thoughtful personal response and theorizing culture, the teacher’s role necessarily shifts from delivering content to “facilitating and scaffolding ethnographic enquiry.” (*Critical Media Literacy After the Media*)

If we can, for a moment, consider this list of questions as a sort of conceptual curriculum framework, we see that it contrasts sharply with traditional concepts underlying much of the media curriculum. It privileges the learner rather than the text. Unconstrained by imposed concepts, the student is free to explore possibilities, but is nevertheless challenged to think deeply and critically.

McDougall presented two projects, The Identity Box, and the L.A. Noire project, as core examples of how these questions might be embedded in rich project work.

The BU ID Box is a video-recorded project in which the student explains his/her Identity Box to the viewer. Each object in the box is chosen for its deeply personal, symbolic meaning. Through this project, people make personal connections with textual artifacts, and develop understandings of how we attribute meaning to cultural material. (A collaborative extension of this project, i.e., the shar-

Media is not a subject anymore than Literature is.

ing of Identity Boxes, and subsequent conversations about how we all curate media, might be a valuable group experience as well.)

McDougall’s excerpt from the film *High Fidelity* further illustrated the concept of the culture of curation. The protagonist (John Cusack) groups his record albums autobiographically, according to the personal experiences connected to them. Each record becomes a nostalgic touchstone of memory - sacred and powerful. This would make a vibrant

class project - even if it were virtual: students could record and view each other explaining their music and connections, reflect on how people make meaning from popular culture, and then brainstorm the role of popular culture in society today.

The *L.A. Noire* videogame project and study guide, presented briefly, offered an example of what he calls “inexpert pedagogy”, a way to undermine

Progressive media education must be rooted in the idea of learner as curator of his/her personal cultural material.

the traditional “author-obsessed” study of literary texts. The study’s research report suggests that the “adoption of adaptation and appropriation as critical frameworks can serve to *move the curriculum* on from its media-specific and hierarchical silos.” (*Reading Games As Authorless Literature*) We might be tempted to also read this quote as, “*move the curriculum* toward authentic critical media literacy.”

Below are the research questions this project aimed to answer. They illustrate “adoption of adaptation and appropriation”, pushing the focus toward textual engagement rather than subject-based content knowledge.

1. What is the videogame *L.A. Noire*’s potential as a learning tool and how does it function as a (digitally transformed) book (in the form of a novel)?
2. In what ways could *L.A. Noire* function AS a book (novel) to facilitate traditional literary analysis within an adapted version of the English Literature curriculum? In what ways would the English Literature curriculum, assessment and pedagogy need to ‘remediate’ for *L.A. Noire* to be taught and studied.
3. Can young people be re-engaged with other literary texts through gaming, and what potential does this provide for a digital

transformation of the English Literature curriculum?

4. Can a game text be ‘taught’ without being ‘read’ (played)?

These questions illustrate the spirit of his core questions to ask students, particularly in their interrogation of definitions of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and learning.

The Study Guide is rich in creative tasks, designed to blur traditional boundaries between literature and popular culture. They mobilize the student’s innate impulse for play, in the interests of critical thinking. For example: a tube (subway) map graphic representing intersecting genres; short fiction projects using genres based on the videogame; and producing individual *L.A. Noire* Machinima.

In summation, as McDougall reminded us, we have to choose the best path out of the hot mess of curriculum offerings today. He believes this framework provides the most powerful means to authentic critical media literacy. I think McDougall’s work is intelligent, evolved curriculum. Implemented effectively, it answers an urgent need for curriculum to address the nature of our personal relationship with the changing media environment. It generates deep thinking about culture. (We should note that it is not new or radical, but planted firmly in the cultural studies concept of audience as maker of meaning.) I also believe that when the learner can engage this deeply in his/her meaning-making process, surely there is potential for powerful activism.

Given the reactionary nature of the UK Education ministry, anyone with a modicum of influence over media curriculum should be motivated to resist as much of the conservative agenda as possible. It is laudable that McDougall and his colleagues have pushed for such a major shift in curriculum. This approach directly opposes the government’s notions about what constitutes a valuable classroom pursuit. It is risky, slyly subversive, and bound to spark a response. If implemented, this pedagogy might result in a surge of demonstrable critical media literacy skills—not a bad outcome when you are fighting for your very existence. Survivalist curriculum.

So in light of this rich and engaging approach, how to teach projects like it, here and now, when we must operate within an old paradigm? In other words, the present makes the new, difficult. Won't this be an awkward, unwieldy, clumsy process?

To what degree can such work be truly authentic, when the power dynamics of the educational institution mitigate against authenticity of learning and meaningful assessment? The hegemony of the teacher, combined with student baggage from years of institutional schooling, can significantly undercut the potential for authentic work and assessment. How might potentially rich work mutate in such a power-charged space? How might the student learn to shift his/her reflections to meet perceived expectations of the teacher? In *Critical Media Literacy after the Media*, McDougall suggests that "traditional pedagogy imposes alienating practice". I concur, and so am particularly afraid of the repercussions of combining unskilled assessment (employed as an accountability piece by a teacher unused to this pedagogy) with personal response work.

This bright shiny curriculum requires a new definition of 'teaching', of 'classroom', and of 'subject', as well as a renewed consideration of what constitutes effective assessment. The teacher must be able to provide carefully designed reflective work, and then assess it as a meaningful metacognitive process, guiding the student toward critical cultural discourse. McDougall admitted to us that teachers are woefully undertrained to effectively teach and assess media curriculum as it is. (Our Faculties of Education in Ontario rarely address it, even though it is a discrete strand in the curriculum from Kindergarten to Grade 12.) We will need to do a lot of lobbying for teacher education before such rich pedagogy can be effectively applied in the classroom.

McDougall has acknowledged that we are too ambitious, and must make choices. But what is our collective goal? Do we, can we, as a community, agree on a definition of *critical media literacy*, considering that curriculum, as cultural artifact, is shaped by cultural values and local political concerns? What media understandings are most important? For

whom? And where? How do we address issues of privacy, cyber-crime, and social media bullying? Can this knowledge be effectively embedded in a pedagogy of curation?

The "adoption of adaptation and appropriation as critical frameworks can serve to move the curriculum on from its media-specific and hierarchical silos."

Julian McDougall reminded us that it is all right to narrow media curriculum in the interest of best practice. I think he also provoked some of us to think about revising our ideas about key curriculum frameworks, and just how well they are serving us these days. We in the AML are certainly in the process of doing this: might triangles become circles? Might concepts become questions?

Someone is always going to be asking us media ed. people to prove that our curriculum "sticks", that it makes people smarter about the media. The question is, will McDougall's be the foolproof path to authentic critical media literacy? ❖

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Berger, R and McDougall, J L.A. NOIRE STUDY GUIDE

Top Ten Guiding Questions for Critical Digital Literacy

Julie Frechette, Ph.D.



Julie Frechette is Professor of Communication at Worcester State University, MA, where she teaches courses on media studies, critical cultural studies, media education, and gender representations. Her book, *Developing Media Literacy in Cyberspace: Pedagogy and Critical Learning for the Twenty-First-Century Classroom* (Praeger Press, 2002), was among the first to explore the multiple literacies approach for the digital age. She is the author of numerous articles and book chapters on media literacy, critical cultural studies, and gender and media. She serves as a board member of the Action Coalition of Media Educators. Dr. Frechette earned her Ph.D. at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Undoubtedly, the speed and immediacy of technological advancements and mediated information are radically changing the nature of 21st century media and communication. As mobile technology, social media, and converged web content drive the new information economy, media education for a digital generation has become paramount. As media educators committed to fostering critical thinking and informed engagement at all levels of humanity, this article explores how a critical pedagogy of digital education leads us forward into the 21st century as a means to provide meaning and purpose in our classrooms and communities for citizens and individuals to engage in transformative communication.

As part of a longstanding globalized movement, media education for a digital citizenship is predicated upon the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and produce media content and communication in a variety of forms. Rather than teach one-dimensional approaches for using media platforms, media education offers us a way to become digitally literate by providing us with the tools through which to examine the political, cultural, historical, economic and social ramifications of all media in a holistic

way (Frechette, 2002). While many digital literacy approaches overemphasize the end-goal of accessing digital media content through the acquisition of various software, apps and analytics, I argue that the goal for comprehensive digital literacy requires grasping the means through which communication is created, deployed, used, and shared, regardless of which platforms or tools are used for meaning making and social interaction.

Drawing upon the intersecting matrices of digital literacy and media literacy, I provide a framework for developing multi-literacies by exploring the necessary skills and competencies for engaging as citizens of the digital world. Specifically, I have formulated a “Top-Ten” list of questions that effectively propel our pedagogical efforts for critical digital literacy forward.

1. What does it mean to be digitally literate in the media age?

Perhaps one of the foremost questions that guides this inquiry pertains to the criteria we use to assess digital literacy in the media age. Despite an unprecedented amount of new digital media content and technology that pervade our lives, few curricular

models are poised to comprehensively address the question “What does it mean to be digitally literate in the media age?”

For some, the answer to this question means accessing and using the latest technology and apps to keep up with an ever-changing global market economy. Many who adopt this model find themselves reading Tech Crunch, Gizmodo, or BuzzFeed, or cueing up at the Apple store to get the latest release of a product. Yet I argue that the motivations for such measures uphold a bandwagon effect designed primarily to use technology for its own sake without analyzing the purpose and communication goals associated with using digital tools and platforms. As several scholars have forewarned, the technology industry manufactures a pedagogy of commercialization that prioritizes the acquisition and use of digital technologies for their own sake rather than for transformational possibilities that could emerge from the creative interplay of these forms outside of capital (Fuchs, 2014; Frechette, 2002; Rushkoff, 2013).

Unlike technological or capitalist determinists, others would answer the question about digital literacy’s essence by advancing technology’s inherent social possibilities to stimulate the creative production and distribution of content to create self-expression and social connections (Grossman, 2006; Parks, 2011; Rheingold, 1993). I argue for a dialectical approach that carefully questions and examines the benefits of innovative, decentralized digital media that enable self, social and civic participation within a paradigm that values digital media for its transformative potential.

2. What do we mean by social with(in) social media?

If we want to answer the question, “What is social about social media?” we must examine human agency. As critical cultural studies theorist Christian Fuchs (2014) explains, if we use the classical paradigms of social theory from Emile Durkheim, we would argue that all digital media are social because humans in social relations produce them. Max Weber would stress that in order to be social,

behavior requires meaningful symbolic interaction between human agents. A third paradigm of social comes from Karl Marx and Ferdinand Tonnies who maintain that collaboration and cooperation must be articulated within a community where values and goods are owned collectively. The challenge for us is to assess the presence or absence of these types of sociality within each digital medium. For Fuchs, social media are constituted by “Web platforms that enable social networking of people, bring people together to mediate feelings of virtual togetherness and enable collaborative production of digital knowledge” (p. 45).

Although the rise of Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, and Wikipedia offer collaborative information production, critical digital literacy means asking if virtual social media reduce interpersonal face-to-face sociality, and if so, to what extent and at what cost. An advertisement for Domtar print paper self-servingly conjures up this question in its business slogan by claiming “Paper...because all this social media might be making us less social” (*New York Times*, March 11, 2014, Business p. 1). I contend that it is not the properties of any medium that determine the social outcomes of communication technologies. Rather, digital literacy requires an assessment of the language of social media that interpolates us through signifiers, such as “fans,” “friends” “social networks,” “likes” and “status updates,” so that we may determine whether networked social interactivity promote the engagement of meaningful human agency, or attest to our need to feel accepted in a digital culture.

3. In what ways have we moved from a homogenous society to a fragmented one?

In the 1970s pre-Internet culture, sociologist Herbert Gans made a case for the democratic value of cultural pluralism. Specifically, he called for media content that was less homogenized—less dominated by the television networks, large movie and record companies. His work resonated with those who thought media content was too mass oriented and that subcultural programming should accommodate different taste publics regardless of their

size and economic standing. Without question, Web 2.0+ now offers cultural niches of all types for various audiences and fans. Yet followers of the Frankfurt School theorists Theodore Adorno and Max Horkheimer (1972) would argue that capital-

“...digital literacy must grapple with the varied ways in which fragmentation enhances targeted marketing and fandom groups while reinscribing formulaic trends in homogenous ways to appeal to commercial trends and algorithmic imperatives”

ism is using the same digital technology to market niche economies as part of a new Web 2.0+ business model, thereby fragmenting us beyond the ideals of connected society, or as Benedict Anderson would argue, an imagined community. In determining whether shifts in our technological orientations have radically altered our ability to engage in diverse taste publics, or reproduced new forms of homogeneity through more diverse platforms, we need to examine what underlying trends and content prevail within digital landscapes.

As New York Times writer Mike Hale contends, commercial uses of new media often coopt their social and creative potential:

...entire categories of these new YouTube channels—on pop culture and gossip, music, sports, women’s topics—mostly feel like imitations of what cable outlets like MTV, Spike and Bravo already do: play music videos, assemble talking heads, riff on the news, sell merchandise. There’s a strong infomercial vibe to channels like BeFit, which is produced by Lionsgate and features things like the exercise routines of the stars of “The Hunger Games,” a Lionsgate film (2012).

Despite the hope for more alternative niche markets that break free from the homogeneity resulting from marketing and advertising imperatives, Hale argues that there remains a sameness to digital channels.

“As you click from Red Bull (sports) to Young Hollywood Network (pop culture) to Noisey (music) to American Hipster (just what it sounds like), what’s striking is how they start to blend into one another. They all seem pitched toward the same mythical viewer, presumably the one prized by Internet advertisers, whose mind appears to be occupied with a sticky mix of celebrity gossip, blockbuster movies, video games, zombies, action sports and news of the weird” (2012).

Accordingly, digital literacy must grapple with the varied ways in which fragmentation enhances targeted marketing and fandom groups while reinscribing formulaic trends in homogenous ways to appeal to commercial trends and algorithmic imperatives (Campbell, Jensen, Gomery, Fabos & Frechette, 2014, pp. 214-215). A reasoned approach to critical digital literacy would require us to dialectically examine and assess present-day benefits and drawbacks that distinctly alter our connections to publics that creatively deviate from, or adhere to, algorithmic trends through online and mobile technology.

4. How creative and engaged are users of digital media content?

In their book *Groundswell*, Charlene Li & Josh Bernoff (2011) establish important data sets that provide a benchmark survey of online activity among adults age 18+ in the United States and in Europe. Despite all of the euphoric headlines claiming hyper-interactivity in a digitally literate society (Shiffman, 2008; Shirky, 2008; Jenkins and Ford, 2013), Li and Bernoff present us with a startling reality that documents that less than one-quarter of online U.S. and European consumers are “creators.” Creators are defined as those who publish a blog or their own web pages, upload videos or audio that they create, or post articles / stories that they write. Unlike creators, the majority of online consumers are specta-

tors who do not produce their own original content through digital means, but rather, access online content in order to read other people's blogs, tweets, online forums, customer ratings and reviews. Those in this category also listen to podcasts or watch other users' videos rather than curate their own content. Given these findings, a critical pedagogy of digital literacy must inquire about the range and level of creative engagement of online users and content curators before presuming a particular utopian or dystopian view on educational technology. A dialectical approach reduces the likelihood that digital media users will be pinioned between two polar opposites of dualistic thinking that favor either technological determinism or social determinism (O'Sullivan, 2001).

5. What are the benefits and costs of “fun” and “play” in the digital world?

In his trailblazing critique of social media, Christian Fuchs (2014) describes the process of exploitation that defines the relational conditions between contemporary online media producers and distributors. By addressing the ways in which we use today's digital landscape to produce and consume our own products, Fuchs contends that we are engaging in a form of “play labour” or “playbour” that is unprecedented. In this new virtual playground, Fuchs explains how the “fun” and “play” that we partake in unwittingly enslaves us into producing surplus value labor and profits for large global corporations like Google, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Unlike the technological determinists who sing the praises of participatory culture (Jenkins, 2006), Fuchs argues that play labour is a form of capitalist exploitation that feels like fun while colonizing our “free” time. Accordingly, given the amount of time and play that define the landscape for “digital natives” (Prensky, 2001), critical digital literacy must include an assessment of the social, physical, psychological and economic costs and benefits of engaging in the digital world. In addition to the vast literature that documents the benefits of social media, a discussion of the labor practices, working conditions, safety violations, and rash of suicides within the Chinese



factories that supply Apple's products would be a necessary part of this conversation. It would allow technology users to assess the benefactors and the subjugated within the digital age (Duhigg & Barboza, 2012; Enloe, 2014; Guglielmo, 2013).

6. What impact will commercialization and consolidation of digital content have on information?

Given the consistent ways in which new media technologies have historically been colonized by capitalist forces over educational ones, critical digital literacy requires an assessment of the fundamental ways in which social uses of media are impacted by the capitalistic goals of profit and productivity. As with the previous framing question, Fuchs (2014) explains how:

corporate social media use capital accumulation models that are based on the exploitation of the unpaid labour of Internet

users and on the commodification of user-generated data and data about user behaviour that is sold as commodity to advertisers. Targeted advertising and economic surveillance are important aspects of this accumulation model (p. 122).

A quick search of social media uses on the Internet generates a host of marketing strategies—from pay-per-click to SEO—that are designed to increase social media profits through trending algorithms and analytics designed to track and capitalize off of content producers and distributors. Accordingly, a critical pedagogy of digital literacy mandates a fair and clairvoyant assessment of how digital content is affected by commercial and conglomerate providers of online and mobile networks. Addressing the opening of net neutrality rules that were meant to guarantee an open Internet would be instrumental in helping users of digital media understand the immense lobbying pressure of the corporate telecommunications sector as it seeks to alter the free-flow and equanimity of online data (Free Press).



Tahrir Square December 2011

7. In what ways can Creative Commons promote and enhance collective knowledge publicly and affordably?

One of the most important means to maintain the global diversity, creativity and innovation that comes from the sharing of knowledge through digital technology is through the distribution of content for others to access, share, and contribute to. Mashups, memes, cultural jams and remix culture require collaborative file sharing, yet copyright rules often delimit the potential for affordable collective knowledge to be publicly distributed. Over the last decade, efforts have been underway to make use of distributive networks that allow others to freely or affordably copy, display, perform and remix digital works, provided that original sources are attributed. Founded by Lawrence Lessig eleven years ago, Creative Commons (CC) is the predominant public licensing initiative that provides a way for millions of global content producers to choose a license that meets their goals and allows them to release their work under the terms of that license without registration needed (Lessig, 2014). One of the most prominent social media users to include Creative Commons licensing for their users to share photographs from around the world is Flickr, which contains over 200 million CC-licensed images. As such, critical digital literacy curricula should be based on a praxis of media production, and access that honors fair use, public domains, and creative commons as instrumental means to maintain collective knowledge and cultural participation by members of online publics.

8. What about privacy issues?

There are growing concerns about online and mobile privacy issues from two main vantage points: one is from parents, educators and policy makers concerned about young users unassumingly revealing too much about themselves on a host of various platforms; the other is from technology users concerned about surveillance measures designed to hack and exploit their data. A critical pedagogy of digital literacy requires the scrutiny and application of best practices to ensure privacy. While the empha-

sis of most community-based privacy initiatives is aimed at teaching school aged children to be wary of revealing their identities or expressing their sexuality through new technologies (i.e. Microsoft, iKeep-Safe, and GetPrivacyWise), a more comprehensive analysis of privacy concerns is needed. In addition to learning age-appropriate strategies for protecting online privacy, digital citizenship requires critically analyzing the ways in which governments and commercial online providers like Google and Facebook use surveillance of users and privacy violations to track user likes, purchases, behaviors, trends, and habits for social control or profit.

9. Within a globalized, pluralized, digital-enabled world, are we taking full advantage of our unprecedented access to varieties of taste cultures, political opinions, and world views?

The growth of collaborative participation through crowd-sourcing, peer-to-peer file sharing, and content curation has received much fanfare in the media over the past decade. But equally important to a critical pedagogy of digital literacy is assessing how much progress we have made as individuals and members of social publics in embracing new forms of knowledge and global perspectives on a wide-range of important issues. A critical digital literacy approach means asking the difficult question of whether or not we are using each medium for its revolutionary potential (McLuhan's global village), or whether we are retreating to a homophilic, narcissistic enclave of like-minded friends from our inner circles who like us for what we buy or where we take exotic trips (Christakis and Fowler, 2009; Rushkoff, 2014).

10. How can digital media serve education, democracy and human rights?

While the colonization of digital media by capitalistic forces is predominant, digital media have paved the way for democratic groups and educational movements to thrive, and has amplified the goals of human rights advocates from around the world. Contemporary social and democratic movements—from the Arab Spring, to Occupy Wall Street, to

WikiLeaks—have used file sharing, commons, non-profit fundraising, alternative media, crowd-sourcing and protests to alter dominant political and economic structures of power. Digital apps like Kickstarter draw from crowdsourcing to fund creative cultural content and educational initiatives. In a recent campaign to reintroduce the popular children's program *Reading Rainbow*, the show's former host LeVar Burton has used crowdsourced pledges from over 70,000 Kickstarter backers to date, gener-

“...critical digital literacy curricula should be based on a praxis of media production and access that honors fair use, public domains, and creative commons as instrumental means to maintain collective knowledge and cultural participation by members of online publics”

ating \$3,315,639 so far to fund the project, a sum far greater than its initial 1 million dollar goal (Burton, 2014).

Another example of democratically oriented digital media convergence is a free iPhone app named Metadata+ that brings to the forefront the remote and underreported consequences of drone killings by the United States military. Originally designed by Josh Begley, the app mirrors iOS's Messages interface by “displaying the date, location, and victims of each killing; it also shows a map of U.S. drone strikes across the Middle East and Somalia” (Meyer, 2014). By sending users a notification every time there is a new drone strike, the app aims to bring complex and abstract geopolitical issues into users' consciousness, and draws upon other projects like the @dronestream Twitter account and Instagram feed to remind users about the daily violence and anxiety of people who live under the wrath of drones.

The #BringBackOurGirls campaign offers another illustrative example of how viral pressures have led to a global outcry regarding the abduction of 276 Nigerian school girls by the extremist group Boko Haram in May (Kristof, 2014). Using social media tools and sites from Change.org, Twitter, Facebook, and the White House website, groups have launched their own counter-strategy to call global attention to the crime and to pressure the Nigerian authorities to intervene.

Social media movements such as these have radically altered the digital landscape by using on-line networking tools to challenge the influence of traditional socio-political and economic structures. While most mainstream media references focus on individualized and commercial uses of social media in apolitical ways, a critical pedagogy for digital literacy would be well served by addressing the profound ways in which people can use technologies to advance the ideals of democracy and human rights in the 21st century.

In conclusion, while the questions herein represent only some modes of inquiry for addressing digital literacy, they offer us important strategies for approaching a critical pedagogy that addresses questions about the political, institutional, economic, and socio-cultural practices and ramifications of digital media. As Clay Shirky reminds us, “revolution doesn’t happen when society adopts new technology, it happens when society adopts new behaviors” (2008). Accordingly, digital citizenship requires a comprehensive multi-literacies education that is founded upon a dialogical and reflective critical inquiry. By questioning the power and influence of social media and technology in the new millennium, we can become connected and engaged personally, socially and globally in rich and meaningful ways. ❁

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The Holistic Future of Media Literacy Education

Yonty Friesem



Yonty Friesem is a PhD student in the joint doctoral program in Education at the University of Rhode Island and Rhode Island College. As the assistant director of the Media Education Lab at the Harrington School of Communication and Media his work and research in media literacy focus on the opportunities to improve cognitive and socio-emotional skills of teenagers in formal and informal settings. Yonty is an award winning filmmaker who founded two media departments in high school in Israel while being a board member of the national media production curriculum. After moving to the USA for his doctoral studies, Yonty worked with students and teachers on the different media literacy curriculum he designed. His current research evaluates the process of cognitive and emotional self-regulation of teenagers groups who produce videos in the classroom.

The future of media literacy depends on our understanding of current and past challenges. I believe media literacy should be more inclusive and go back to its roots to find and foster the human nature in mediated communication. It reminds me of when I asked Douglas Rushkoff (2013) to describe the current and future concepts of media literacy, he responded by saying, “What we’re doing is using the competencies of the print era to describe fluency of the digital era.” If so, what should be the pedagogical approach to developing media literacy in the digital era? In this article, I will try to answer the question of the future of media literacy by connecting it to holistic education. Miller (1990) defined holistic education as the “integration of the inner qualities of human life with the outer physical, social world” (p. 59).

While media literacy pedagogy started to emerge from Marshall McLuhan’s media theory and Father John Culkin’s situated school practice, holistic education was shaped on the basis of Abraham Maslow’s humanistic psychology. It was created by educational practitioners who advanced new approaches to schooling, such as the Waldorf and Montessori schools.

Today, digital technologies create opportunities to look at the relationship between holistic education and media literacy. Holistic education cannot ignore the cultural, cognitive, and socio-emotional changes resulting from the digital era. For holistic education to be responsive to the whole human being, the role of the media must be considered. By the same token, media literacy has to go back to its spiritual, socio-emotional, cognitive, and moral roots. Democratic citizens who are free from media oppression will not be civically engaged just from cognitive and moral component of media literacy.

To understand the future of media literacy, we must return to our roots to rediscover the core dimensions of the field. Interestingly enough, in 1964, McLuhan described the tension between technology and humanity that could be addressed through acquiring literacy skills:

In the electric age, when our central nervous system is technologically extended to involve us in the whole of mankind and to incorporate the whole of mankind in us, we necessarily participate, in depth, in the consequences of our every action. It is no lon-

ger possible to adopt the aloof and dissociated role of the literate Westerner. (p. 10)

Elizabeth Thoman (1986) advocated for the use of McLuhan's humanistic approach through media literacy, connecting it to liberation theology. In other words, she advocated for analyzing the role of media economically, politically, and as related to social justice by using cognitive, socio-emotional, and spiritual lens. Thoman transformed Freire's (1993[1970]) steps of critical literacy into the pedagogy of media literacy using the empowerment spiral (RobbGrieco, in press). However, in the 80's, a more cognitive approach to media literacy emerged. Masterman (2003[1984]) defined media education as pedagogy focused on decoding and demystifying media messages in order to reveal their constructedness. Both Buckingham (1992[1990]) and Williamson (1981/2) questioned the value of practicing critical literacy pedagogy in the classroom and emphasized the need to analyze content that would be more connected to students' experiences. Buckingham (1992[1987]) highlighted that "the evolution of media education is likely to be less a matter of theoretical debate and more to do with questions of strategy" (p. 107).

Since the 1990's we have seen a tension between critical and cognitive approaches of media literacy (Kubey, 1998). In the special issue of the *Journal of Communication* (1998) on media literacy, Lewis and Jhally used the framework of critical media literacy to argue that the goal of media literacy is to "help people become sophisticated citizens rather than sophisticated consumers" (p. 109). On the other hand, Christ and Potter (1998) expressed their more cognitive approach when they claimed that "in the process of defining what it means to be a media literate person, certain core areas of knowledge or thinking are identified as central" (p. 8). They concluded that while all of the media literacy definitions included an analysis component, it is difficult to evaluate the degree of media literacy.

Since *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), we can see the rise of media literacy research and practice that vary widely from cognitive approach such as standardized tests

measurement and STEM education, to a more critical approach, such as civic engagement and social justice. Jenkins' (2006) participatory/convergence culture emphasized the importance of social interaction for both cognitive and critical approaches and has led many researchers in the field to include the social component. For example, Halverson (2013) shifted from studying personal identity in media production toward exploring makers' movement and group engineering. Kafai (2014) also moved from computational thinking to computational participation. This focus on participatory culture has led to an examination of social relationships online (boyd, 2014; Hargittai, 2014) and to connected learning (Ito et al., 2013) that acknowledges the merging of peer production, interests, shared purpose, peer culture, open networks, and academic performances. On the critical end of the scale, activist-scholars such as Vasudevan (2013) explored critical media literacy of teenagers who produce media and enhance their sense of belonging. This attention to social interaction in critical and cognitive approaches raised the question about the relationship between media literacy and civic engagement (Mihailidis, 2014). When different educational standards (ISTE nets, NETP, AASL) are introduced, it is hard to merge them into coherent media literacy standards similar to how Reynolds and Wolf (2014) suggested in their integrated model. Either way, there is an omission of either the cognitive, socio-emotional, or the activist part.

In her white paper, Renee Hobbs (2010) expanded the canonical definition of media literacy created by the 1992 Aspen Media Literacy Leadership Institute: "the ability of a citizen to access, analyze, and produce information for specific outcomes" (Aufderheide, 1993 P.V.), to include cognitive, emotional, and social competencies. In order to make the definition more relevant for the digital age and the participatory culture, Hobbs indicated that digital and media literacy should include five key competencies: access, analyze, create, reflect, and act.

The first element that Hobbs added—reflection—is a combination of cognitive and socio-emotional abilities, which she defined as "applying social responsibility and ethical principles to one's own iden-

tity and lived experience, communication behavior and conduct” (p. 19). To explain how the second addition—civic action—is connected to media literacy and all the other competencies, Hobbs wrote that “to fulfill the promise of digital citizenship, Americans must acquire multimedia communication skills that include the ability to compose messages using language, graphic design, images, and sound, and know how to use these skills to engage in the civic life of their communities” (p. vii). Similarly to Thoman’s (1986) call to use the Freirean pedagogy, this spiral model of media literacy includes not only cognitive and social application but also emotional and spiritual. This model reminds me of another educational approach: holistic education.

As I was growing up in Israel, I was exposed to humanistic education and its holistic practices in

“Holistic education is not a content area, but rather a pedagogy that merges psychological, moral, and spiritual elements.”

different formal and informal settings around the country. Graduating from the Israeli educational system, I became a media literacy educator in an underprivileged high school. At the same time, I was teaching Arab and Jewish teenagers in a community center in Jaffa to see each other as human beings through collaborative video production. The students would analyze different stereotypes of Arabs and Jews in the media. They reflected on their understanding and emotions, and they decided how to produce a video as part of a civic action to reduce the differences and increase empathy between these social groups. In order to include every student from both sides, even the most resistant ones, I looked for emotional, physical, and spiritual ways of engagement. I used different kinds of music, as well as dancing activities. The students would share personal stories that showcased the similarities and differences between ethnic groups. During one of

the most serious conflicts in Israel in 2001, students were able to produce a video about the cultural stereotypes in the media and deconstruct it using humor and mutual acceptance. Working with different populations—typical students, new immigrants, intellectually challenged students, and gifted students—allowed me to explore these different approaches of media literacy as I was learning about holistic education.

Holistic education is not a content area, but rather a pedagogy that merges psychological, moral, and spiritual elements. Rudge (2008) explained how holistic education combines experiential learning with imagination and meditation to bring students to an understanding of humanity as a whole in relation with the cosmos. Students are encouraged to inquire about and research subjects that interest them while exploring different representations and aspects of the topic. Students experience different activities of varying levels of difficulty according to their developmental stage. This allows the students to practice mindfulness and make connections to their social, cultural, and environmental surroundings. In a recent publication, Mayes and Williams (2013) described five practical dimensions (organic, psychodynamic, affiliative, procedural, and existential) in which students and teachers are honored and nurtured in educational settings. Pedagogy should be a balanced approach addressing the cognitive, emotional, physical, cultural, and spiritual nature for the students and teachers.

Media literacy and holistic education have both grown out of the work of educational philosophers such as Dewey and Freire. For example, Dewey wrote, “the ideal aim of education is creation of power of self-control” (Dewey, 1997[1938], p. 64). As a democratic society, we want our social institutions “to set free and to develop the capacities of human individuals without respect to race, sex, class, or economic status” (Dewey, 1920, p. 186). In order to accomplish that, we need to rethink theories and practices of education according to the needs of the digital era.

Media literacy needs a holistic education approach to reconnect to its original goal to nurture



humanity in media communication. Our digital world has new ways of oppression that include not only economical, cultural, and political oppression, but also cognitive, emotional, social, moral, and spiritual. The growing tension between the human virtues and the digital practices call for us to go back in history to Dewey and Freire's definitions of education and merge them into a coherent pedagogical and educational theory for our future.

Serazio (2013) called the consumer culture of online marketing a regime of engagement that unconsciously forces us to constantly consume and produce information. This situation calls for re-reading Freire (1993[1970]) in a digital context: "To surmount the situation of oppression, people must first critically recognize its causes, so that through transforming action they can create a new situation, one which makes possible the pursuit of a fuller humanity" (p. 47).

A holistic approach to media literacy invites us to include different pedagogical practices that foster the cognitive, emotional, physical, cultural, and spiritual nature of our daily social and digital engagement. At the media literacy research symposium at

Fairfield University this past spring, Neil Andersen (2014) stated that technology, as the extension of man should serve humanity; people should not be subservient to technology. Media literacy will not be able to fulfill its humanistic and educational goals to raise conscious, moral people, and grow engaged democratic citizens without addressing the digital culture through a holistic approach. ❖

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Reviving Rhetoric Through Media Literacy

Elena M. Lopez, MEd.

Elena M. Lopez is currently pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum and Teaching with an emphasis in literacy at Baylor University. She is a former classroom teacher and child-care center director. Elena currently teaches and works with pre-service teachers. Her primary interests include media literacy, early childhood education, and literacy in the 21st century.



Impassioned English teacher John Keating quotes Walt Whitman's poem "O Me! O Life!" in the film *Dead Poets Society*. He recites, "What good amid these, O me, O life? Answer. That you are here...That the powerful play goes on, and you will contribute a verse" (Whitman, 2007). The poem suggests our purpose in life is to contribute to society. Keating ends with his own thought provoking question, "What will your verse be?" (Haft, Witt, & Thomas, 1989).

Keating's quote is preserved within popular culture. That speech and medium in which it was conveyed denote the power of mediated popular culture texts. Rhetoric is often subsumed as the art of persuasion and considered an olden tradition. However, rhetoric is very much employed in our modern era. Popular culture greatly influences our society, primarily because of the rhetoric inherent within mediated texts.

In this article, there will be a revisiting of the historical tradition of rhetoric, which continues to evolve in the Digital Age. Further, the rhetorical abilities and skills inherent within media literacy will be demonstrated and finally an argument will be proposed that contends that media literate persons, having attained rhetorical skills, become more effective communicators.

A historical perspective

Rhetoric has been studied in many cultures for

centuries (Brummett, 2010). The idea of rhetoric has fluctuated throughout history and continues to evolve with the advent of new communication technologies that enable the production of an array of mediated texts. Our Western tradition stems from Ancient Greece, though other historical thinkers and contemporary scholars continue to contribute to our understanding.

Our rhetorical tradition stems from Ancient Greece.

Formal study of rhetoric began in the 5th or 6th century BC, Greek city-states (Brummett, 2010). Rhetoric evolved due to the democratic nature of Grecian government. As Greeks self-governed, citizens needed to speak eloquently on important issues, engage in debate, and persuade others to support their cause.

The need for effective oratory led to the rise of Sophists. The Sophists were traveling teachers who defined rhetoric as the art of persuasion through speech. They taught a universal style of oratory that could be utilized for a variety of topics (Brummett, 2010). The philosopher Plato staunchly opposed the Sophists. Plato was chiefly concerned with truth and beauty (Littlejohn & Evans, 2006). He feared the Greek's powerful citizenry could be easily swayed by an artful, eloquent speaker who spoke with little regard for truth (Brummett, 2010). Today, Plato might point to the reign of dictators such as Julius Cae-

sar and Adolf Hitler, who assumed power in part through their eloquent yet dangerously persuasive rhetoric.

Ironically, Plato's most famous student, Aristotle, continues to influence our contemporary notion of rhetoric. Aristotle defined rhetoric as the faculty for discovering all available means of persuasion (Schwarz, 2014). He focused primarily on rhetoric as a tool for discovering and expressing argument (Brummett, 2010). Unlike Plato, Aristotle viewed rhetoric as neutral—a tool neither bent towards truth nor deception (Rapp, 2010). Aristotle was instrumental in developing a means of rhetorical analysis discussed later in this article.

Other historical thinkers contributed to our rhetorical tradition.

Undoubtedly, the Greek tradition continues to influence our current notions of rhetoric. However, this tradition has been expounded upon by various scholars throughout history.

“Popular culture greatly influences our society primarily because of the rhetoric inherent within mediated texts.”

Rhetorical ideas spread to other powerful empires influential in Western tradition. In the 1st century AD, Quintilian established the first public school in Rome and authored *Institutio Oratoria* on the theory and practice of rhetoric (Schwarz & Alberts, 1998). St. Augustine of Hippo, a skilled rhetorician, suggested Christians utilize rhetoric as a means of evangelizing. He engaged rhetoric to defend his faith through apologetics and present a logical argument for encouraging belief in Christ.

Seventeenth century educator John Amos Comenius portrayed rhetoricians as either divulging truth or lies (1998). His depiction seems to align with the Aristotelian view of rhetoric as neutral yet

powerfully influential. In the 18th century, rhetoric departed from the paradigm of neutrality when Richard Whatley initiated the concept of presumption (Brummett, 2010). Plato's fears were seemingly realized as presumption allows communicators to imply accuracy rather than establish the truth of their message.

Other 18th century rhetorical conceptions continue to have a contemporary influence. Giambattista Vico postulated that truth cannot be fully known since it is influenced by our perceptions of reality (Brummett, 2010). These perceptions are informed by the signs and artifacts that comprise culture and inundate our world. Thus, rhetoric aims to shape our perception and ultimately our decision-making. Eighteenth century philosopher George Campbell suggested persuasion also lies beyond traditional texts (Brummett, 2010). Campbell's suggestion undoubtedly has implications for rhetoric in our modern society.

Rhetorical theories continue to develop today.

Historically, rhetoric was limited to the art of effective communication through oratory and written text. Contemporary conceptions, however, extend beyond traditional rhetorical texts.

Kenneth Burke (1969) provided perhaps the most famous contemporary definition of rhetoric, “the use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols” (p. 43). Burke's conception implies the persuasive power of rhetorical language. Scholars I.A. Richards and Stephen Toulmin studied the rhetoric of daily communication for real-world applications (Brummett, 2010). Undoubtedly, daily communication need not conform to the expositional, discrete, and hierarchical characteristics of traditional rhetorical texts. Thus, James L. Kinneavy asserted non-traditional texts also necessitate rhetorical analysis (Brummett, 2010).

The aforementioned scholars contributed to our contemporary understanding of rhetoric. The art of rhetoric is present in everyday communication. Rhetoric is no longer chiefly concerned with exposition or truth, although Plato would assert the two never coincided. Rhetoric often subtly in-

updates culture and has morphed primarily into the art of persuasion vis-à-vis the Sophists and Aristotle. This persuasive power is prevalent in popular culture, especially in mass media.

Neo-Aristotelian criticism is applicable to various mediums.

Rhetoric is employed in our contemporary society, though no longer solely in traditional texts. The selected medium changes what a message conveys simply by mediating it (Eisner, 1998). Rhetorical analysis is thus warranted and Neo-Aristotelian criticism bridges a variety of texts (Brummett, 2010).

Traditional Aristotelian analysis involves examining five classical canons of rhetoric: invention, arrangement, style, delivery, and memory (Sellnow, 2010). Neo-Aristotelian criticism adds to these and is applicable to a wider array of texts. The Neo-Aristotelian critic considers the exigency, context, and demographic of the intended audience (Brummett, 2010). The communicator's credibility, purpose, and overall effectiveness of the message are examined (Brummett, 2010). Neo-Aristotelian rhetorical analysis is better suited for contemporary society in which non-traditional texts abound.

Rhetoric remains influential as new mediums of communication allow for even greater accessibility of messages. While the Neo-Aristotelian approach is useful for analyzing a variety of texts, a limitation exists since it assumes people base their decisions on logic, evidence, and reasoning (Sellnow, 2010). Media-makers do not always rely upon these tenets in persuading individuals to consume their products. Similarly, rhetoric is not always employed through text alone. Thus, new approaches to rhetorical analysis are necessary.

Visual images communicate rhetorically.

Literacy in society is becoming increasingly visual (Low, 2012). Visual communication is prevalent in part due to an explosion of modern information technologies (Brummett, 2010). Visual literacy is necessary not only for comprehending images but also for comprehending the now ubiquitous multimodal text. Multimodal texts require processing of

written text, visual images, and elements of design to construct meaning (Serafini, 2011). Multimodal texts are routinely accessed by reading graphic novels, interacting via social media, sending text messages, and exploring websites (Moeller, 2013). Visual literacy is thereby a foundational skill of 21st century communication (Ripley, 2012). Nevertheless rhetoric is utilized even in visual messages.

As visual communication grows, the rhetoric of popular culture manifests itself more nonverbally (Brummett, 2010). Images use metonymy to communicate via a single image or symbol aimed at swaying the viewer's thinking and behavior (Sellnow, 2010). Visual systems appeal to our emotions (Eisner, 1998). Laura Mulvey suggested that images influence our subconscious beliefs through visual pleasure theory (Sellnow, 2010). Thus, the goal of visual rhetorical analysis is to uncover the thoughts and actions formulated as we respond to a pictorial message (Sellnow, 2010). Many visual rhetorical theories are founded upon I.A. Richards and C.K. Ogden's semantic triangle, which requires examination of the symbol, referent, and thought evoked by the image (Ogden & Richards, 1989).

Media literacy is founded upon rhetorical analysis.

Popular culture consists of a variety of artifacts, including mediated texts such as advertisements, films, music, print, television, etc. (Sellnow, 2010). However, as Eisner (1998) states, "Method and medium are not passive instruments in making a message" (p. 28). Thus rhetorical analysis of mediated popular culture texts is needed. Media literacy is a prime avenue for rhetorically analyzing those agendas disseminated through entertainment media.

One is influenced by the signs and artifacts encountered in one's daily life (Brummett, 2010). The signs and artifacts within a particular society comprise popular culture. Popular culture primarily reinforces the ingrained ideologies of the society and therefore offers a certain rhetorical argument (Sellnow, 2010). Social messages are thereby inherent in media (Schwarz, 2006). Media literacy enables individuals to rhetorically analyze them.

Renee Hobbs (2006) describes media literacy as the analysis and interpretation of media messages. Several key questions are considered when rhetorically analyzing these messages. Analysis involves identifying the author (producer) of the message, the purpose for communicating, and message's construction (Hobbs, 2011). Additionally, inherent values, techniques utilized to garner attention, and the various ways in which diverse peoples might interpret the message are considered (Hobbs, Cabral, Ebrahimi, Yoon, & Al-Humaidan, 2011). What is not in the message is also important (Hobbs et al., 2011). Divergent ideologies and viewpoints may be minimized or excluded from the message whereas more conformist perspectives may be amplified in mass media (Sellnow, 2010). Other rhetorical fea-

“Through media literacy persons are equipped with the rhetorical skills necessary to uncover subtle yet persuasive elements inherent in mass media.”

tures such as figures of speech and ethical appeals are likewise within the key questions of media literacy (Schwarz, 2014).

Aside from the key questions of media literacy, other theories may be used to evaluate mediated texts. David Considine and colleagues (2009) offer the Canadian AML's *Media Literacy Triangle* (originated by Scottish Film Council with Eddie Dick) which consists of text, production, and audience, to analyze these texts rhetorically. This triangle resembles the semantic triangle for visual rhetorical analysis and is undoubtedly based upon the classic rhetorical triangle, which consists of speaker/author, audience, and subject/text.

Messages disseminated in mass media are embedded with social values (Woods, Jr., & Patton, 2010). Recognizing these social values is imperative. Rhetorical analysis of mediated popular culture texts may be achieved through Neo-Aristotelian criticism, the semantic triangle, and/or the media

triangle. This analysis is inherent within media literacy. As Gretchen Schwarz (2014) asserts, “media literacy is rhetoric in a new key” (p. 213). Studying rhetoric provides the faculty to see all the available means of persuasion in any situation (Littlejohn & Evans, 2006). Thus, the rhetorical capabilities media literacy offers enables persons to think more critically about texts while also enhancing their own communication.

Media literacy enhances critical thinking and effective communication

The medium selected for communication shapes, focuses, and directs the recipient's attention (Eisner, 1998). Marshall McLuhan famously asserted a medium is its message. Media-makers thereby communicate rhetorically through their selected medium. They are in essence rhetoricians who seek to shape the thoughts and behavior of the audience through a variety of rhetorical devices. Media literacy engages individuals in rhetorically evaluating mediated texts and builds awareness of the social values advocated by media-makers and thereby engages critical thinking about media messages.

Media literate persons are more cognizant of values inherent in media messages.

For many passive users of popular culture, media construct reality (Considine, Horton, & Moorman, 2009). Cultivation theory suggests our perception of daily life is formulated through prolonged media exposure (Sellnow, 2010). This notion is particularly dangerous as ideological assumptions hidden within a message are imposed upon the unwary recipient (Schwarz, 2006).

The potential danger of media as tools of enculturation is exacerbated as audiences consume popular culture uncritically. People frequently fail to recall the commercial purposes of media (Considine, Horton, & Moorman, 2009) as they escape into enjoyable entertainment. Our society is inundated with media and discerning commercial from noncommercial contexts is progressively more difficult (Jenkins, 2009). This is especially disturbing as audiences fail to realize the persuasive nature

of mediated popular culture texts (Sellnow, 2010). The theory of media logic speaks to this phenomenon and concentrates on the degree to which social values advocated within a medium affect the audience's behavior and ideologies (Sellnow, 2010). Media messages often maintain and propagate beliefs (Sellnow, 2010). Popular media primarily portray the dominant mindset of the audience (Woods, Jr. & Patton, 2010.) These mindsets are commonly referred to as social norms.

In becoming media literate, one rhetorically evaluates diverse mediums. By answering the key questions of media literacy, more conscious thinking about mass media develops. Neo-Aristotelian criticism, the semantic triangle, the key questions for media literacy, and the media triangle each require investigating authorship and purpose of media messages. In doing so with mediated popular culture texts, one is likely to discover that the author's purpose is primarily commercial. Producers of mass media view their audience as consumers (Schwarz, 2006). The media are self-serving (Woods, Jr. & Patton, 2010) and thus are neither neutral nor light-hearted entertainment.

Rhetoric enables individuals to impact society as effective communicators.

As media literacy proponents, we seek to equip others with skills to critically analyze mediated texts and our culture. Media literacy develops more cognizant persons while building rhetorical skills that enhance communication.

Rhetoric is universally applicable and relevant (Littlejohn & Evans, 2006). By studying rhetoric, one realizes the importance of a medium. The chosen medium significantly impacts the meaning of a message (Eisner, 1998). The rhetorical skills of setting a purpose for engaging, persuasive communication are beneficial in diverse contexts (Schwarz, 2014).

Rhetorical skills may also be used in composing a message. Setting a purpose for communicating and identifying one's audience are imperative. The best medium for conveying the message and accomplishing its intended purpose must be considered. One also needs to take into account how to substan-

tiate the message with inartistic and artistic proofs. What appeals to reasoning will be made (*logos*)? How will expertise and character (*ethos*) be established so the communicator is conveyed as credible and trustworthy? Which emotions will one appeal to (*pathos*) in swaying the audience? Style is especially important as a logically sound yet emotionally persuasive message must be conveyed while maintaining credibility. Proper delivery is crucial for mediated popular culture texts involving speech, such as film, music, television, etc. Considering each of the aforementioned elements enhances effective communication. Therefore, people can seek to impact society as conscientious media producers.

Media literate individuals can become conscientious media-makers.

The media literate develop into culture-makers as media literacy encompasses rhetorical skills. Rhetoric is an overarching art through which one may seek to purposefully shape the world (Littlejohn & Evans, 2006). Today's information technologies allow for a more co-equal relationship between media-producers and recipients (Brummett, 2010). Individuals must consider the modern world and seek to influence it through communication (Littlejohn & Evans, 2006). Rhetoric is the perfect avenue for effective communication. Media literacy leads people to not only better comprehend but also confront the media (Gordon & Eifler, 2011). In doing so, they become conscientious media-makers.

In our modern era, messages are easily dispersed and accessed through information technologies (Sellnow, 2010). Mediated popular culture texts created by ordinary individuals frequently "go viral," a vernacular term indicating that the text has been accessed millions of times. One may then use rhetorical skills gained in becoming media literate to create a message that can persuade millions from the comfort of one's home. Social media sites are prime mediums for one's message to have a potentially global influence.

The power to communicate through mediated popular culture texts rests no longer solely with commercial-driven corporations, but is shared with

the ordinary citizen. Communication via mediated popular culture is certainly powerful. Culture-altering ideas such as those of Plato, Martin Luther, Adolf Hitler, and President Franklin Delano Roosevelt were disseminated through media (Schwarz, 2006). Each of these men used media to change the world—for better or for worse.

Conclusion

As previously discussed, rhetoric continues to evolve in the Digital Age and media literacy contributes to this evolution. A media literate individual undoubtedly realizes the potential the media hold to influence others. Yet having studied this power and become familiar with the rhetorical devices used to create and sustain it, a media literate individual is more likely to produce more conscientious media. Revisiting John Keating's passionate speech, media literate individuals are in essence better equipped to contribute a lasting verse to our society. ❖

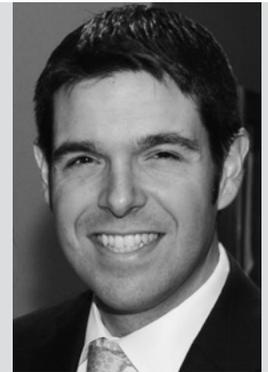
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Images of the Self: The Role of Photographic Communication in Digital Literacy Education

Daniel Hunt

Daniel Hunt is an Assistant Professor of Communication at Worcester State University. He teaches courses in new media and mass communication. His research on social media and interactive technology has been published in academic journals and presented at national and regional communication conferences. His passion for digital literacy began while working as a photojournalist. Dr. Hunt holds a Ph.D. in Communication Sciences from the University of Connecticut.



At the end of 2013, the Oxford Dictionary deemed “selfie” the word of the year (Killingsworth, 2013). Their definition of selfie is “a photograph that one has taken of oneself, typically one taken with a smartphone or webcam and uploaded to a social media website” (Oxford, 2014). While self-portraits have always been an important type of photographic representation, the term “selfie” is relatively new and is commonly used when referring to shared images of the self captured on a mobile device. Digital literacy educators need to consider pedagogy that embraces this new form of photographic representation.

The recent growth in personal photography is partly based on the widespread adoption of photo-based sharing sites in recent years (Duggan, 2013). In addition, the technical advances of digital cameras on mobile phones have allowed sending and sharing photographic images to be a fluid and common communication practice. Photographic communication, defined as the exchange of messages primarily consisting of photographs, allows people to communicate through a rich medium and to tell image-based stories to their peer groups (Hunt, Lin, & Atkin, 2014a). These images can be personal or a documentation of shared experiences.

Social networking platforms that embrace this type of communication practice are growing and new platforms designed to support photographic communication are becoming increasingly popular.

Scholars have studied motives for sending and sharing photographs. These motives can be grouped into five areas: relationship maintenance, relationship formation, memory, self-expression, and self-presentation (Van House & Davis, 2005). The last two motives, related to the self, are of particular concern to digital literacy educators. Self-presentation refers to images of the self, such as the selfie, but also includes images of personal belongings and objects with emotional meaning to the creator. Images of self-expression typically are more creative and more abstract representations of the self. When individuals share images of the self, they form impressions online and contribute to their perceived self-image. Motivations to express and represent oneself online increase the frequency in which users send and share images to their peers (Hunt, Lin, & Atkin, 2014b).

Digital literacy educators need to teach students about issues of privacy and image content for photo sharing. The transitory nature of image sharing and the permanence of the social web are also

of particular concern. There have been issues where images posted on social networking sites have been stolen and used to create a false identity (Reznik, 2013). There is evidence that employers have elected to not hire individuals after reviewing applicants' social media profiles and finding inappropriate photos (Weber, 2013). As educators, we can provide students with formative photo sharing experiences that will help them to foster a strong comprehension of their image sharing choices.

Certain images of the self should not be shared publicly. While this seems like an obvious statement, for young image producers creating boundaries can be problematic. Educators need to include course

“Digital literacy educators need to consider pedagogy that embraces this new form of photographic representation.”

modules that explain simple tools such as how to set up privacy filters on social media platforms. More importantly, teaching students the power of exercising patience before capturing and sharing images is of critical importance. The instant gratification of using social platforms has been one reason for their growth and enjoyment, but it does not come without consequences. When posting an image, often one does not stop and ask questions such as “who will see this image” and “how long will this image exist on the web.” The decision is made in a fleeting moment and too often is not thought about until after the fact. Hand (2012) explains that “after the fact ethics” is more common in the world of ubiquitous photography. Digital literacy can act as a preventive measure against such acts.

One of the most important and often overlooked areas of digital literacy is the importance of time. The shelf life of online content is much longer than what one expects. We have become so accustomed to constant contact and instant gratification that we often lose sight of the importance of practicing self-control and patience. It is difficult

to un-forget a powerful image. It is equally difficult to remove an unwanted image from the social web once it is in the hands of someone else. In today's mediated world, imagery is part of one's personal brand. Students need to find a balance between incessant, narcissistic posting and developing their personal brand online. Many of these issues can be controlled if students learn the principles of photographic composition and image analysis before sharing photos online.

Image Creation

Online media outlets, ranging from personal blogs to *The Huffington Post*, provide tips on how to take a good selfie. While some digital literacy educators might not want to teach students to “create” media, many would agree this would help students develop stronger digital literacy skills. Basic rules of photographic composition include avoiding mergers, the rule of thirds, simplicity, lines, balance, and framing. By developing a sense of photographic composition, the process will be slowed down and the creator's aesthetic schema should caution them before posting images online.

When teaching photography, one of the most important areas that should be covered is the subject of the image. Often in the interest of time, the photographer will forget about secondary elements that are in the background of a photograph. By teaching compositional elements, students will learn to consider the layers within their images of the self and will also be more cognizant of distracting background elements. These background elements, especially when documenting personal events, often reveal unwanted information to audiences.

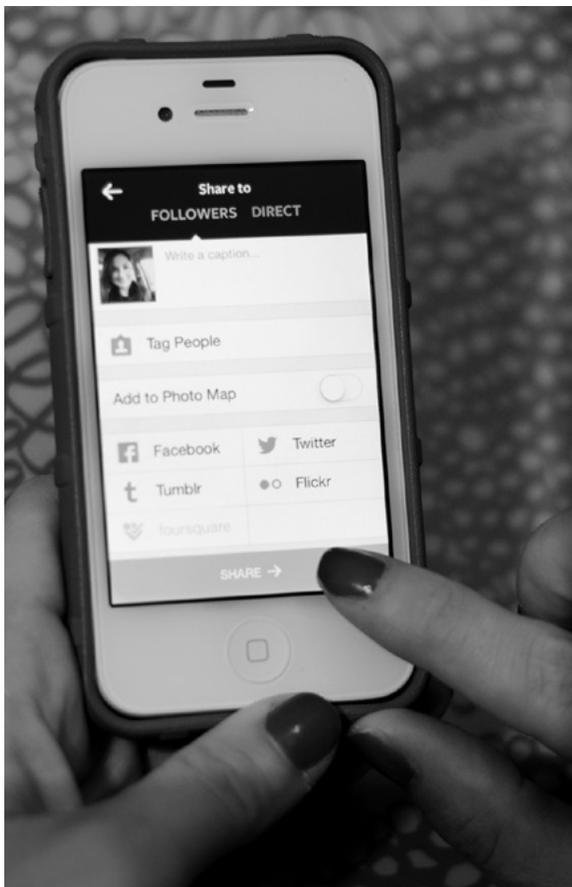
The rule of thirds and framing will help students learn to compose aesthetically pleasing images. Avoiding mergers and using lines will help students develop the focal point of their image and become aware of distracting background elements. By considering how to frame images to create balance in photographs, the final product will most likely be an image that represents the true intentions of the photographer. Images of self-expression and self-representation will be of a higher caliber and less

likely to cause post-sharing regret. Image creation is only one part of this process; to increase one's digital literacy in the area of photographic communication one must also learn to analyze images.

Image Analysis

While there are several analytical strategies for image deconstruction and analysis, visual semiotics can help educate students on the ramifications of photo posting behavior. Visual semiotics involves deciphering the layers of meaning within a photograph, specifically the denotative and connotative meanings (Barthes, 1977). The denotative meaning involves understanding the face value of the image while the connotative meaning goes much deeper. One might examine the aesthetics, pose, effects, objects, syntax, and photogenia while examining the connotative layer of an image (Barthes, 1977).

At the connotative level, students will develop a sense of multiple interpretations of an image. They will also learn how photographic technique and digital enhancement can change the meaning of a photograph. They will understand how certain poses contain implicit meanings to viewers and learn how the presence or absence of certain objects changes the meaning of the image. The syntax of the image



might also be considered – the corresponding text or categorization could be revealing unintended messages to audiences. An awareness and understanding of these concepts is of critical importance in an image-based society.

By teaching visual semiotics, the learner will begin to understand how the different elements of a photograph work individually and collectively to create various meanings. Students of digital literacy will benefit from this awareness of implicit meaning when they view photos and when they create an image of the self. Both image creation and image analysis can be powerful tools that are most effective if taught through experiential learning.

Experiential Learning

Teachers of new media have developed various types of lesson plans that incorporate experiential learning. Kolb's Experiential Learning Model (Kolb, 1984) is a four-stage cycle of experiential learning. In the cycle, the stages are concrete experiences, re-

“The goal is to slow down the process and to ... develop a sense of photographic ethics that focuses on goal-directed photo sharing behavior.”

flexive observation, abstract concepts, and active experimentation. Using this model, educators can teach photographic communication in a way that meets course goals and provides a practical learning experience for students.

While learners can enter the cycle at any point in time, there are benefits to starting with *reflective observation*. In reflective observation, students review the images posted by members of their network and use visual semiotics to analyze the images. Next, students should be taught concepts such as impression management, privacy, narcissistic behavior, ethics, and personal brand development. Through these activities students enter the stage of *abstract conceptualization*. This stage helps the learner make



connections between their observations and course concepts. Following the cognitive stage of abstract conceptualization, students engage in *active experimentation*. In this stage of the cycle, students create and share images with their classmates on a simulated or closed social networking site. This will provide students with a practical application of photographic composition as it relates to sharing images of the self. Finally, students enter the *concrete experience* stage. Students will develop feelings towards their own photographic communication behaviors during the concrete experience. The affect associated with photo sharing should provide students with a more complex cognitive framework in future instances of image capture and image sharing. By the end of the lesson, students should develop a sense of ethical awareness related to photo sharing.

In conclusion, as photographic communication continues to increase in our society educators need to teach composition and analytical skills.

These skills can be taught through experiential learning inside and outside of the classroom. The goal is to slow down the process of photo sharing and to help communicators develop a sense of photographic ethics that focuses on goal-directed photo sharing behavior. Providing these skills early on will prepare young people for adulthood in a world where their professional and personal lives are visually displayed in the public eye. ❄

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Toward Media and Information Literacy: A Case in Hong Kong

Alice Y. L. Lee, Ph.D

Dr. Alice Y. L. Lee is an Associate Professor at the Department of Journalism, Hong Kong Baptist University. Her research interests include media education, online news media, media and information literacy (MIL) and Net Generation. She is the vice-chairperson of the Hong Kong Association of Media Education.



The importance of media literacy (ML) has been widely recognized by teachers and parents in recent decades. Many countries have included the teaching and learning about the mass media in their school and college curricula, and media literacy activities have been introduced to various kinds of youth programs around the world. However, for large social transformations and rapid technological changes, traditional media literacy alone may not be sufficient for people to deal with the huge volume of media messages and information from different communication platforms. Therefore, there have been calls to redefine the concept of media literacy, making it more compatible with the postmodern digital reality.

Through analyzing the millennial development trends, this paper shows that in Hong Kong, the concept of media literacy is being extended to media and information literacy (MIL). The paper is divided into two parts: (1) the rationales for developing MIL, and (2) the advocates' efforts in putting MIL education into practice.

In this paper, MIL is defined as a compound concept that integrates media literacy, information literacy and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills. A media and information literate person is expected to be able to access, evaluate, and use media and information from all sources.

The Changing Hong Kong Socio-Technological Environment and MIL

Literacy has a close relationship with communication technology. Many scholars have pointed out that changes in communication technology will lead to changes in the concept of literacy (Casaregola, 1988).

In the early years of the 21st century, the Internet's shift from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 had a huge effect on media literacy. The Web 2.0 Internet application has changed how people deal with the media and handle information. Media users have become "prosumers" as user-generated content has entered the mainstream media. In Hong Kong, media literacy training has undergone a paradigm shift, moving from media education 1.0 to media education 2.0. The new curriculum aims to cultivate not only smart media consumers, but also responsible media users.

Web 2.0 is a "read-write Web." All kinds of grassroots media such as YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, Wikipedia and other social networking sites have emerged. Media technology and information technology have further converged, and the line between media and information is no longer distinct. A variety of digital devices that are associated with information technologies are readily available in the Hong Kong market.

Meanwhile, the age of Web 3.0 is just around the corner. The management of Hong Kong Yahoo have

predicted that Hong Kong will enter the Web 3.0 era in 2016. Web 3.0 will be a “read-write-execute Web.” Super computers will help users analyze all kinds of online information and provide personal services. Web 3.0 has several characteristics (Lee, 2012), (1) network computing, (2) a world wide database, (3) wireless access, (4) the intelligent Web, and (5) intelligent application. In the near future, Web search engines will comprehend not only the keywords, but also the specific meaning of our requests. The Web

“Although the new media can bring citizen convenience, the new worlds lacks linearity, stability, and continuity, because hypertext is non-linear.”

will be able to synthesize and analyze all of our digital footprints on the Web and fully understand each user’s personality, hobby, power consumption, and educational level. The Web will know more about us than we know ourselves. Through artificial intelligence, a computer can identify useful suggestions and solutions for the user from the database. People will be fully linked to the Web and going online will be very convenient through mobile devices. Thus, the Internet will further play a dominant role in the people of Hong Kong’s work and life.

Media literacy educators in Hong Kong have realized that this new technological scenario will pose a number of challenges to media users, particularly to young people. First of all, they have to know how to handle the influences of the new media. The new media and information environment will breed a new culture. The author of *The Third Wave*, Alvin Toffler (1980), remarked that in the “Second Wave” industrial society, mass media shaped a mass mind, producing the standardization of behavior required by the industrial production system. However, the Third Wave will bring along de-massified media, with a new info-sphere emerging alongside the new techno-sphere. The de-massification of the media

will de-massify our minds and give rise to “blip culture.” As Third Wave people get used to the bombardment of blips, they will gain greater individuality, due to a de-massification of personality and culture. Hong Kong is now developing itself as an ICT-based society. People’s lives are enveloped by information technology. Although the new media can bring citizens convenience, the new world lacks linearity, stability and continuity, because hypertext is non-linear. What the digital media present is a non-logical social reality and they cultivate young people’s narcissistic characteristics. According to Toffler (1980, p. 187), a computer can help people to “organize or synthesize ‘blip’ into coherent models of reality” and “stretches the far limits of the possible.” Yet, the intelligent Web may also be very manipulating. In Hong Kong, many young people have become addicted to social media and mobile games. Some scholars have warned that heavy users of search engines will suffer from memory loss and will be unable to read long and in-depth articles. Therefore, young people in Hong Kong need to understand the effects of the new media and develop strategies to handle their influences.

Young people also need to know how to assess large amounts of information from different sources. These sources are not limited to newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and movies, but also include the new media, the Internet, databases, archives, libraries, and museums. ICT combines traditional media with the new media and creates a link between online and offline. All of the information platforms will become connected, and people will need a new kind of literacy to wisely handle information from all of these different sources.

Learning how to use communication power is another big challenge. The American scholar Henry Jenkins remarked that Web 2.0 has turned our media environment into a participatory environment. The rules of the game for communication have been overturned: new technologies offer media users a power of communication that they have never before enjoyed. The Web 2.0 Internet application turns young people into prosumers. There is a need for a new literacy program to guide them to use this pow-

er for constructive, creative activity and social participation. In the coming Web 3.0 age, if a person is to maintain critical autonomy, not be manipulated by the media, know how to protect his/her privacy, and use the Internet for knowledge creation and media production, then he/she will have to acquire new competencies and skills.

In the past decade, a number of new literary concepts have been put forward, such as ICT literacy, digital literacy, Internet literacy, new media literacy, multiliteracies, multimodal literacy, and information literacy. Among them, media literacy, information literacy and ICT skills are regarded as the most essentials (Badke, 2009; Markauskaite, 2006). To handle the challenges posted by the new communication technologies, Hong Kong media literacy educators are aware that our young people need MIL to help them survive.

Meanwhile, Hong Kong is transitioning from an industrial society to a knowledge society, in which most of the population will be “knowledge workers.” Young people need to recognize the information needs of the future society. In fact, many scholars have pointed out that in the new society, information power and knowledge will be important life skills. Peter Drucker (1998), the pioneering researcher on knowledge society, expressed that knowledge will quickly become obsolete in the new society; therefore, knowledge workers have to learn and create new knowledge frequently. In a community, everyone needs to take information responsibility to facilitate the efficient flow of information.

Moreover, in the new society, young people will need to constantly innovate and cultivate high-order thinking skills. However, they will need to learn generic skills, rather than the specialist subjects of the industrial era. Education scholars point out that people in the 21st century need five groups of skills (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2008). Apart from “knowledge of core subjects” (English, mathematics, science, history and economics), “life and career skills” and “21st century themes” (global awareness, financial, business and entrepreneurial literacy and civic literacy), they need “information, media and technology skills” (information literacy,

media literacy and ICT literacy) and “learning and innovation skills” (creativity and innovation skills, critical thinking and problem solving skills and communication and collaboration skills). Among these, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills sees media literacy, information literacy and ICT as crucial elements in its program (Badke, 2009).

In UNESCO’s view, in the 21st century, everyone should be media and information literate (Wilson, Grizzle, Tuazon, Akyempong and Cheung, 2011). If people in a society have low levels of MIL, it is very difficult for the society to smoothly progress into a knowledge society. For this reason, local media literacy educators regard cultivating media and information literate citizens as an urgent educational task.

MIL Initiatives

Over the past two decades, media literacy has developed well in Hong Kong. As Hong Kong enters the knowledge society and marches toward the Web 3.0 era, media and information literacy education will be fundamental to the city’s young people. Some media education practitioners have advocated that

“To handle the challenges posted by the communication technologies, Hong Kong media literacy educators are aware that our young people need MIL to help them survive.”

media education in the city should be extended to MIL education, and it has begun to gather momentum over the past few years.

The MIL initiative in Hong Kong actually started in the late 1990s, when media literacy advocates began to pay attention to the convergence of media technology and computer technology. The infomedia revolution inspired local media literacy educators to redefine the concept of media literacy and a new concept of “infomedia literacy” was put

forward (Lee, 1999). At that time, a group of media literacy teachers in the city were working on a media education textbook project for secondary school students. The writing team recognized the importance of infomedia literacy and a chapter on Internet literacy was added to the book series.

“Despite the fact that the roles of information literacy and ICT skills were not clearly specified in the combined concept, it nevertheless laid the foundations for the development of multiliteracy training.”

Breakthrough, a youth organization, also paid attention to the newly established, trendy Internet culture. Members of this organization were forward-looking and were also aware of the necessity of integrating media literacy with information literacy. They thought that young people in Hong Kong should be equipped with a new kind of literacy to handle the new media and information environment. With this insight, they put forward the “Media and Information Literacy Education” (MILE) Project (Breakthrough, 2003). The MILE program proposed a three-step approach to deconstruct media and information, involving awareness/access, critical analysis, and creative expression. The program stated that a MIL student should be able to efficiently search, filter, organize, evaluate, and express information.

As communication technology advanced, the Shak Chung Shan Memorial Catholic Primary School and Good Counsel Catholic Primary School in Hong Kong conducted an innovative project entitled “The 21st Century Skills Learning: Creative Information Technology Education Project,” which aimed to integrate media learning with information technology. The project started in 2009 and was supported by the Quality Education Fund of the Education Bureau, HKSAR government. These two

schools are pioneers in the area of MIL.

In recent years, UNESCO has put a lot of effort into promoting MIL. Members of the Hong Kong Association of Media Literacy (HKAME) have joined the UNESCO working teams and updated local media literacy practitioners with more MIL information, readying the movement for a real start (Wilson, Grizzle, Tuazon, Akyempong and Cheung, 2011). In addition, local media literacy scholars have conducted a number of studies on MIL.

Retrospection and Foresight of MIL Practices

The MIL programs in Hong Kong have just launched, but there is a long way to go. A retrospective look at the development of the MIL initiatives in the past decade can certainly inform local advocates about what to do next. Meanwhile, its lessons or shortcomings may also help other countries in formulating their MIL strategies. The Hong Kong experience is summarized below.

First, local media literacy educators recognized the importance of conceptual change. Hong Kong media education advocates were aware of the need to extend the concept of media literacy to a compound concept in the 1990s. At that time, the new concept of “infomedia literacy” was introduced and communicated to the peer media literacy educators. Despite the fact that the roles of information literacy and ICT skills were not clearly specified in this combined concept, it nevertheless laid the foundations for the development of multiliteracy training. Over the years, more effort has been put into building the theoretical framework of this concept and its advocates have decided to use the term “media and information literacy” (MIL) instead of “infomedia literacy”, to match the UNESCO effort.

Second, Hong Kong MIL advocates were willing to try to conduct new projects, even though they were not mature enough in the beginning. They put MIL into practice at an early stage; the MILE Program of Breakthrough, for instance, was launched in 2000. Yet, there is room for improvement. The MILE Program attempted to integrate media literacy with information literacy, but it did not emphasize much about the cultivation of stu-

dents' ICT skills. For the 21st Century Skills Learning Project, which was a school course, it combined media literacy with ICT skills, but the information literacy training was a very small part. Yet, the MIL programs have managed to move forward over the years. The MIL initiatives in Hong Kong were basically carried out steadily, but they were piece-meal projects. When these institutions ran out of funding, their projects were downsized. Building sustainable MIL programs will be the important task for advocates in the near future. Nevertheless, making attempts to introduce different kinds of initial MIL practices, even though piece-meal in nature, is still worthwhile.

Third, it is good for the MIL advocates to participate in international projects. Hong Kong advocates joined the UNESCO's MIL writing teams. When they participated in developing a MIL curriculum and MIL indicators, they enhanced their knowledge and understanding of MIL. MIL is a global movement and it is important for the local advocates to form allies with their international counterparts, to jointly promote MIL.

Fourth, to promote MIL in the community, it is necessary to spread the idea around. Hong Kong MIL advocates are enthusiastically writing articles, presenting talks and organizing seminars to promote MIL. However, they have not yet fully utilized the Internet to get the new concept across to teachers, parents and young people. Advocates should turn to social media to deliver the message in future.

Conclusion

The twenty-first century is an era of information. This paper discusses why and how MIL has been introduced and practiced.

In the past decade, we have witnessed revolutionary changes in communication technology and the learning mode of the Net Generation. Many countries are now moving toward becoming knowledge societies. As the world progresses, media literacy educators need to provide updated literacy training for our children and young people so that they can fully participate in the emerging knowl-

edge societies. As MIL is an essential millennium life skill, Hong Kong media educators will continue to take action to implement MIL programs in this Chinese city. ❀

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Media Literacy Research Symposium Album



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Neil Andersen, ALLIANCE FOR MEDIA LITERACY Media literacy research is important because it helps people understand evolving media, media literacy and media literacy education. Until we understand media, we cannot use them beneficially.

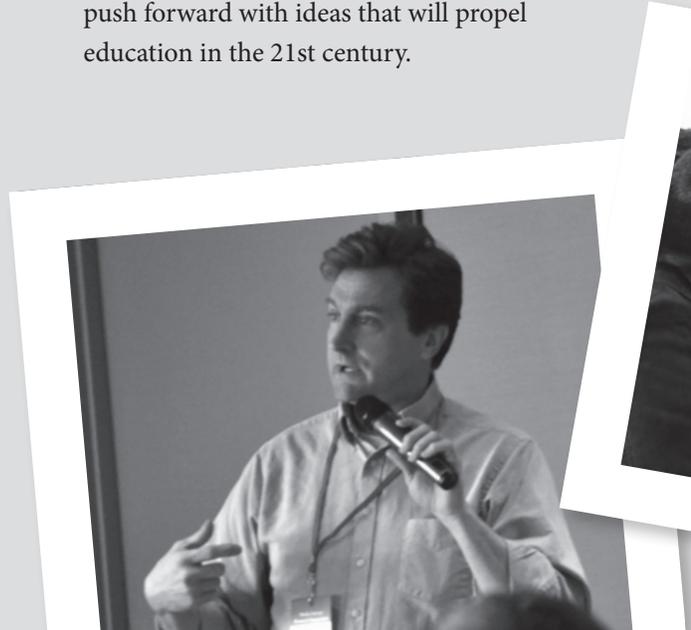


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Belinha De Abreu Media literacy education has always been to me the answer for helping students achieve deeper thinking and creating real-world connections in schools. Research in this area can provide enduring conversations on teaching and learning that delves further into some of the pre-conceived notions presented by the media.



.....
Frank Baker, MEDIA LITERACY CLEARINGHOUSE I can think of no better time than now for those who care about media literacy education to identify the much needed research that will help us all advance media literacy in the nation's schools and beyond. This gathering of expert minds is a fantastic opportunity to push forward with ideas that will propel education in the 21st century.

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Gretchen Schwarz, BAYLOR UNIVERSITY Media literacy still dares to advocate for question asking, problem posing, critical thinking, and deep, meaningful activities in the schools that connect to life outside the schools. Media literacy acknowledges the ethical aspect of learning and teaching, as well. Media literacy research is important to guide, support, and inspire those educators who seek to do media literacy today.





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Katherine Fry, BROOKLYN COLLEGE AND THE LAMP PROJECT Media literacy research is important for many reasons. One in particular is that we need to track and understand the way changes in media technologies are changing us, not only educationally and developmentally, but also throughout our lives. Only systematic, rigorous research can help us track the vast changes that correlate with changes in media—both content and technology.



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Denise Agosto, DREXEL UNIVERSITY It is crucial that we broaden our view of literacy to include a wider range of information formats—including paper books, e-books, video clips, music lyrics, and much more—and to broaden the range of skills viewed as crucial to being “literate”—including not just reading and writing, but also accessing, creating, interpreting, and critiquing.

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Marieli Rowe, NATIONAL TELEMEDIA COUNCIL Research must be the bedrock upon which rests a solid, long-range, valid, proven and continuing practice of teaching media literacy education.

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Tessa Jolls, CENTER FOR MEDIA LITERACY If academics are to consider media literacy as a serious field that enables citizens to examine media in a systematic way, then research is THE path toward acceptance. To grow, media literacy programs must be consistent, measurable, replicable and scalable—with research providing the proof.

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Sonia Livingstone, THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE Perhaps we should stop extolling the virtues of having media literacy, and start counting the cost of not having media literacy. How would we measure the detriment that low media literacy results in? For which groups, or in which spheres of life, is the lack of media literacy most problematic? How can we evidence such concerns?



It's the teachers' job, isn't it? Media literacy mediation at German schools

Claudia Riesmeyer



Claudia Riesmeyer, Ph.D., is research associate at the Institute for Communication Studies and Media Research of Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich, Germany. Her research interests and publications focus on media literacy (and socialization agents), political socialization, journalism, public relations, and qualitative methods.

Introduction

Without a doubt, the Internet has become an essential part of everyday life in the last several years. Facebook, YouTube, and instant messaging are among the social web applications used most frequently by young Germans (Livingstone, Haddon, Görzig, & Ólafsson, 2011). Because of their wide range of technical equipment with Internet access, and because of the mostly unrestricted usage they enjoy, children and youngsters are always online. They regularly check out the profiles of others, upload pictures, or chat with friends. At the same time, online risks such as cyber bullying and harassment are increasing on the social web. Thus, the Internet can be described as a free space in the otherwise well-protected parental home – a possibility to act in private, and relatively independently. Whereas some researchers still focus on the negative effects of media use (Potter, 2010: 681), others stress the empowerment function of media literacy (Hobbs, 2011: 422).

Calls for media literacy education to protect children and youngsters from the risks and harms of the online environment are becoming even louder. As a consequence, media literacy and media skills education have become buzzwords today. Media literacy is not only a way to prevent risks, but also an opportunity to enable children and youngsters to take advantage of the various opportunities the Internet offers.

Alongside media literacy education at home (by parents and/or older siblings and/or friends) or outside of the home by external socialization agents (such as private initiatives), the school plays an important role for media literacy's mediation (Lee, Shah, & McLeod, 2012). These starting points raise questions as to whether teachers know how to take advantage of the Internet's opportunities, and how the risks are to be managed. Are the teachers literate enough to do so? Furthermore, are they able to mediate media literacy?

A qualitative case study, which is part of a larger research project at the University of Munich, shows how competently German teachers are using the opportunities the Internet offers and how they mediate media literacy. In 2013, I conducted with my students more than 20 qualitative interviews with teachers, who work for all school types (primary, secondary modern, secondary schools) in Germany. The interviews addressed their everyday life, their Internet use, their media literacy, and their role as socialization agents.

Dimensions of media literacy

The case study is based on a model of media literacy that two colleagues and I developed. This model relies on the self-determination theory regarding the everyday users and takes their everyday needs into account (Pfaff-Ruediger, Riesmeyer, & Kuempel, 2012). In self-determination theory, basic needs

are the “central organizing concept” (Deci, & Ryan, 2000). Deci and Ryan empirically identified three basic needs necessary for growth and well-being: autonomy, relatedness, and competence. Competence refers to the feeling of being good at something you do. Autonomy means not only being independent—for example from parents—but also being in tune with yourself. Relatedness to your peers is also a central need while growing up (Deci, & Ryan, 2000: 231). These needs guide every action, including media use, and the pursuit of these needs influences the development of children. Developmental tasks can be derived from these needs as well.

Following the self-determination theory, and by integrating existing concepts of media literacy (Dewe, & Sander, 1996; Baacke, 1999; Groeben, 2002; Livingstone, 2004), we suggest a multidimensional skill-based concept of media literacy. In addition, our concept includes the known dimensions access, analysis, evaluation and content creation (Livingstone, 2004), as well as development tasks.

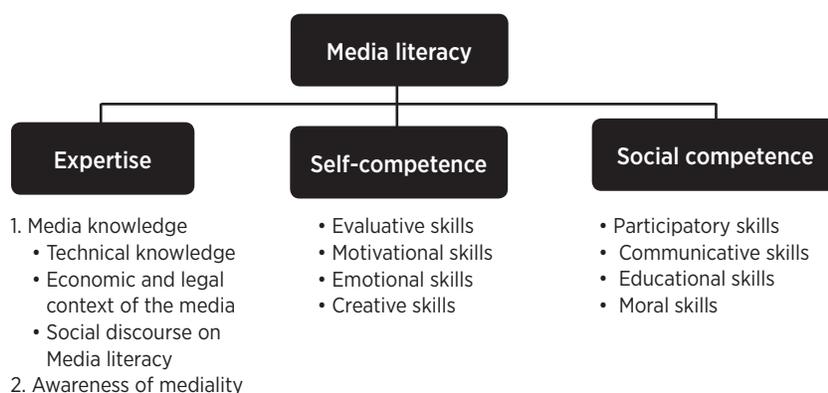


Figure 1: A skill-based model of media literacy (Pfaff-Ruediger et al., 2012: 46)

Expertise focuses on the need for competence, including knowledge of technical, economic or legal topics regarding the media system, media effects, the social discourse on risks and harms, and awareness of mediality. *Self-competence* concentrates on the need for autonomy (and identity). It covers evaluative, motivational, emotional, and creative skills. *Social competence* is based on the need for relatedness and involves participatory, communicative, educational and moral skills (Pfaff-Ruediger et al.,

2012: 46). Most of these skills are interdependent: For instance, moral skills require evaluative skills, and creative skills require technological ones. Following self-determination theory, users are media literate if they are able to fulfill their developmental tasks successfully by using the media to reflect on the risks and consequences of their media use.

Method

The project is based on qualitative interviews with German teachers as one central socialization agent. For this study, we used theoretical sampling to select the participants. Selection criteria were age, federal state (because of federalism, the individual federal states within Germany are responsible for education, and therefore also for the school curricula), and school type. The teachers were between 27 and 59 years old (median: 34.6 years). The topics in the interview guideline were based on the theoretical assumptions. The interviews addressed their everyday life, their Internet use, their media literacy, as well

as their role as socialization agents. To analyze the data, I followed a theory-driven approach, which differed from classic grounded theory or hermeneutics. By means of theoretical coding, I used our model of media literacy to interpret the qualitative data (Creswell, 2007). I developed a portrait of each person, analyzing

their different skills and contextualizing them with reference to their everyday lives and their work at school (Pfaff-Ruediger et al., 2012: 47).

Which media do they use?

Regardless of age, the interviewed teachers own a wide range of technical equipment. Apart from traditional equipment like radio or television, the spectrum ranges between two laptops, a tablet and/or iPad, and at least one smart phone. The Internet, or

for that matter equipment with online access, substitute other traditional media. Teachers in the sample group do not read newspapers anymore. Those, who do, read it online using an application, possibly on their iPad.

It is striking to note that classical media do not play an important role for the interviewees. Although they use radio or television daily or weekly, the Internet has become an essential part of their lives in the last few years. Like their pupils, they are online generally between two and four hours a day. “The Internet is omnipresent and my non-plus-ultra”, says Susanna (27). This pattern of usage represents Internet use as a whole: In a professional context, teachers go online to search for information for their lessons (such as material, ideas from colleagues, or practical examples). In a private context, they use the Internet to connect with friends and to cultivate contacts. Facebook and other social network sites such as YouTube were among their most frequently used platforms.

In summary, it was remarkable that the teachers’ media use resembled that of their pupils. The Internet and social media shaped their media use, which was characterized by a wide range of technical equipment with online access. This result is important because the media use is associated with media literacy.

How media literate are teachers?

Following the aforementioned concept of media literacy, the interviewed teachers stress the opportunities the Internet offers and the risks it poses. They act online, and in doing so satisfy their needs (e.g. searching for information, connecting with colleagues or friends). Influenced by their role as teachers, their social competence is comprehensively developed. Therefore, they reflect on their media use, and consider the moral consequences of their work. In their professional role, they educate others, help them, and support them. In the professional context, the interviewees try to speak with their pupils about their online activities. In their private life, they search for feedback from their friends or family.

Regarding aspects of self-competence, it is striking that all of our interviewees score highly in motivational, emotional, and evaluative skills

(i.e. are able to find what they need). Because their self-competence is comprehensively developed, they act as their own socialization agents. Everything teachers know about the media system and its function, as well as their skills, they have learned alone at home. It was “learning by doing” (Rebecca, 30). The learning was “hard” (Rebecca, 30), in the sense of trial and error. In case of difficulties, they ask the “internet” for help and “google the problem. “I am an autodidact”, says Ortrun (27). Their role could be described best as ‘myself as socialization agent’. Other socialization agents play only a marginal role. Some older interviewees said that their spouse or kids help them, but this was an exception. While studying at university, media literacy education was not offered. Only one of the younger interviewees mentioned media didactics.

The final dimensions of the media literacy model cover expertise and background knowledge. The interviewees had detailed knowledge about the media system with regard to its financial and technical aspects, and this knowledge incites criticism. “I am not a media slave”, says Anna (34), demonstrating her attitude. On the one hand, the fear of data abuse breeds distrust in social networks. “Some aspects can be dangerous, not everything is transparent for me,” says Kerstin (55). On the other hand, the fear results in strict privacy settings. In their everyday life, there is a strict rule, which is sometimes established and monitored by the school supervisors: Teachers do not become friends with their pupils online.

Which media skills do pupils need?

Beside their own media literacy, it is interesting which skills teachers would prefer for their pupils to have. The interviewees stress that media handling has to be responsible. A person is considered to be media literate if they are able to fulfill their needs by finding what they are searching for. “A benefit must be visible”, says Carolin (28). Moreover, they should reflect on the content, consider the sources of the information, and use a variety of sources. However, media literacy also means keeping a critical distance to the sources.

The teachers also refer to the time span of media use. The Internet is a “time killer”, Anna (34) says. Often, pupils use the Internet for too long and become addicted (Kerstin, 55). In the teachers’ opinion, time management is a central component of media literacy. Here, they add one skill to the aforementioned concept of media literacy: The time reasonable media use and online acting.

Beside media criticism, and self- and social competence on a lower level, technical knowledge is necessary to be media literate. “Someone has to know how the PC works”, says Sabrina (26). In this regard, the teachers criticize media literacy’s socialization: Often they teach expertise during lessons, but pupils lack in social and self-competence. But both are necessary for social living. “Although they are central conditions, these skills are not components of media education at school” (Ortrun, 27). “Expertise is the basis” (Susanna, 27), social and self-competence are voluntary exercises. Thus, the pupils have to learn and make up for gaps in their media literacy. But who should mediate media literacy?

Whose task? Parents, teachers, or someone else?

The teachers’ answers are clear: In their opinion, the mediation of media literacy is part how parents’ raise the child, and also takes place at school. Teachers work together with parents and have an educational task to fulfill. “We should cooperate” Ortrun explains (27), “we should follow a common aim” (Susanne, 35).

On the one hand, parents should set a good example for their kids (Maria, 33). They should regulate media and Internet use. Kerstin (55) referred to parents who put their kids in front of the TV screen or PC. “That’s the worst thing you can do.”

On the other hand, teachers should impart media literacy and educate. Risks and harms, as well as opportunities have to be covered. The interviewees believe that they play an important role, because pupils spend much of the day at the school. “We should support our pupils in their development. That’s our professional task”, Carolin (28) says.

Besides parents and themselves, teachers mention another socialization agent, which is important for developing media skills: “The circle of friends is sometimes more important than all other socialization agents”, said Anna (34). Friends or older siblings often fulfill the socialization task because they have more knowledge than parents do, have to fulfill the same developmental tasks, and share the same everyday life experience. Moreover, the inhibition threshold to ask for advice seems to be lower.

Gaps and mistakes: What has to be improved?

The longer the interviews take, the more gaps in media education become visible. The named mistakes and gaps could be classified in three areas:

- *First*, they cover *technical* gaps and basic needs. Often there is a lack of technical equipment in schools, or the equipment is becoming obsolete. Teachers lack laptops, computers, and projectors. In most cases, the equipment is only available in one classroom. To compensate for this drawback, teachers often take their own technical equipment with them and use it in lessons (sueddeutsche.de, 2014). As a consequence, the media use during classes varies greatly—between never and several times a week.
- *Second*, teachers criticized the *anchorage* in the curriculum. Media education is not even part of the curriculum in every federal state. If media literacy is taught, it happens in all subjects. “It is like watering cans: Everywhere a little bit, but nowhere properly”, says Marianne (38). She prefers media education as a separate subject taught for a minimum of one school year, where technical and social basics of usage could be imparted. Textbooks and material has to be prepared for this subject. This subject has one advantage: In Germany, the curriculum is tightly packed. There is no real space yet for media education in the school context.
- This aspect links with the *third* one: the *commitment*. The importance of media literacy mediation depends on teacher’s interest,

that is to say, if the teacher recommends that media literacy be part of the lesson – if not, there is no mediation for media literacy. Often only expertise and technical skills, such as to typing with ten fingers, are taught. In some schools in some federal states, the subject computer science has been introduced, but this is an exception.

The interviewees postulate commitment from their colleagues: “Teachers have to go with the time and be active. They cannot wait for someone to come and urge them,” Susanne (35) says. She prefers compulsory in-service trainings for teachers of all ages, and integrating media education and didactics into teaching studies. In this way, they could keep up with their pupils, who have a competitive edge as digital natives.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates the importance of teachers’ media literacy as socialization agents. Because of social media’s omnipresence in pupils’ life, teachers have to react, have to know how to use “new” media, and have to know how to teach. In the teachers’ opinion, media literacy’s mediation is a part of how parents raise children, and also occurs in the school context. Increasingly, friends of the same age fulfill this educational task. However, the study shows mistakes and gaps in this respect. The teachers criticize the existing concept and curriculum in three points: The obsolete or lacking technical equipment, the missing anchorage in the curriculum, and the imperfect commitment between their colleagues. Media literacy is essential for living in the 21st century—and this importance should be reflected in the curriculum and schools’ everyday life.

In spite of this importance, pupils still lack in social and self-competence. They often lack skills, which are necessary in the online world (Pfaff-Ruediger et al. 2012). As a result, it is necessary to reinforce social competencies, because social practice alone does not create skills. The interviewed teachers recommend the following three strategies:

- to support intercommunication by integrating parents, teachers, and peers,

- to support teachers’ and parents’ media literacy, and
- to raise awareness about the results of online actions (like cyber bullying)

If the opportunities were stressed and the risks discussed, social media and the Internet could enrich the lives of teachers as well as the lives of their pupils. ✱

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Integrating Mobile Technologies into Innovative and Transdisciplinary Media Literacy Projects

Melda N. Yildiz, Ed.D.

Melda N. Yildiz is a teacher educator in the School for Global Education and Innovation at Kean University. Melda served as the first Fulbright Scholar in Turkmenistan. Since 1994, she taught, published and presented featuring Media Literacy Education, Multimedia Production, Women Studies, Asian Studies, and Global Education. She received Ed.D. from University of Massachusetts on Math & Science and Instructional Technology; M.S. from Southern Connecticut State University; and B.A. from Bogazici University, Turkey.



Abstract

This paper outlines the role of mobile technologies such as phones, Global Positioning System (GPS), and tablet PC technologies in developing transdisciplinary media education projects for K-12 education. It also offers creative strategies and possibilities for integrating mobile technologies into the curriculum; and demonstrates interactive *gallery walk* projects such as StarTalk grant using iPad touches to teach Hindi language, and Global Kitchen Project to develop healthy eating habits among elementary students using augmented reality. We explored a wide range of meanings participants associated with media literacy activities: the impact of mobile technologies in a developing multicultural and multilingual curriculum that promotes differentiated instruction; the ways in which participants responded to interactive gallery walk projects; and how participants gained alternative points of view on global issues and renewed interest in world languages and global education.

Introduction

The “m” in m-Learning refers to mobile. In this paper, my pre-service teachers and I decided to use “m” in various contexts, from media literacy to multilingual education. We developed a 9M curriculum model (Yildiz, et. Al 2014) based on 7 state core curriculum and Common Core Standards (e.g. Music, Maps, Math, Media) for designing our transdisci-

plinary, inclusive and interactive K-12 curriculum projects using mobile technologies. As the National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE) states in their website, “Media literacy education—the process of teaching how to access, analyze, evaluate, create, and communicate using media in all of its forms—supports many of the most challenging goals of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).”

In this paper, we share our transdisciplinary projects integrating all the subject fields using the 9M curriculum model and explore the inclusive, innovative, and cost effective strategies and tools for our curriculum projects. For our projects, we aim to accomplish three main goals: (1) promoting cultural and linguistically responsive curriculum while developing global competencies and media literacy skills through mobile technologies (e.g. iPads, iPods, flip cameras); (2) describing the participants’ reactions, discoveries, and experiences using mobile technologies; and (3) showcasing their multilingual multicultural multimedia.

We provided hands-on workshops and training on the use of mobile technologies, educational apps and games, and augmented reality software to in-service and pre-service teachers who participated in the study. In our transdisciplinary projects and activities, in-service and pre-service teacher participants were also invited to co-design and provide feedback on the curriculum, and they were encouraged to:

¹ Partnership for 21st Century Skills. “A Framework for 21st Century Learning,” December 17, 2012, <http://www.p21.org/>

- argue the challenges and advantages of mobile technologies (iPads) in the multicultural, multilingual curriculum;
- develop skills in designing transdisciplinary project based learning activities;
- examine the process of integrating 21st century skills for teaching and life long learning;
- integrate the use of new media in an instructional context;
- develop lesson plans, assessment tools, and curriculum guides that incorporate 21st Century Skills and mobile technologies across grades and subjects.

Global Kitchen Project

Global Kitchen Project (Yildiz, et al, 2014) was designed to promote health education and media literacy using mobile technologies among elementary students. By collaborating with health educators, and in-service teachers, two undergraduate pre-service teachers and I developed, implemented, and conducted the study “Global Kitchen Project” to integrate media literacy and 21st century skills. This project had an experiential and exploratory look at making global connections through the lens of media literacy education using mobile technologies.

Situated within the context of teaching and learning, our research team developed a transdisciplinary curriculum project-based curriculum revolving around global education, health, and media literacy as a means to promote healthy eating behaviors among children in low income schools. Through project-based learning activities such as comparing lunch boxes around the world and playing interactive games and apps on tablet PCs, children participated in five media literacy education modules. Each module focused on providing a global point of view on healthy eating habits as well as cultivated interest and commitment to global health issues.

Research conducted investigated 78 second and third grade students in four classrooms from two elementary schools. The project-based activities were self and peer assessed in collaboration with in-service teachers. New Jersey Common Core Standards as well as the national Common Core Stan-

dards, ISTE International Technology Standards, and the Partnership for 21st Century Skills frameworks were integrated.

StarTalk

Startalk (Start Talking) is the National Security Language Initiative (NSLI) that seeks to expand and improve the teaching and learning of languages that are not usually taught in K-12 schools in the U.S. (e.g. Arabic, Hindi, Russian, Swahili). Since 2010, Kean University provides introduction to Hindi and Urdu following the Startalk’s mission,

“to increase the number of Americans learning, speaking, and teaching critical need foreign languages by offering students (K–16) and teachers of these languages creative and engaging summer experiences that strive to exemplify best practices in language education and in language teacher development, forming an extensive community of practice that seeks continuous improvement in such criteria as outcomes-driven program design, standards-based curriculum planning, learner-centered approaches, excellence in selection and development of materials, and meaningful assessment of outcomes.”

In the summer of 2010, we co-developed and implemented an innovative language curriculum with native Hindi speaking instructors integrating Bollywood films and music to Hindi language writing and learning apps. We started each day with yoga, practicing Indian dance in the afternoon, tasting Indian breakfast and lunch, smelling spices and incense, playing cricket for learning numbers, field trips to local Indian restaurants to practice ordering food, and shopping at local Indian stores. Through authentic, transdisciplinary and project-based activities, our participants learned basic Hindi and Indian culture in two weeks. Each participant received an iPod touch with the apps, music, and video clips. They were encouraged to create digital videos, interact with Hindi speaking people around the world using Orkut social media, and podcast their re-

search-based project. At the end of two weeks, the participants' families and friends are invited to celebrate their presentations and projects as well as Indian dance performed by the participants.

Global Literacy Project

This project presented the participatory study conducted in Spring 2007 called "Global Literacy Project." It promoted teaching language, culture, history and literacy through media production in teacher education, offers creative strategies for producing media, for mentoring, and tutoring in class and over the internet with minimal resources. The research focuses on: (1) examining cultural and linguistically responsive curriculum designed for K-12 students who were in the U.S. as heritage language learners and the ones in Turkey were English as a foreign language learners; (2) multilingual tutoring and mentoring to K-12 students about culture, language, and history of the US and Turkey using Web 2.0 technologies; (3) identifying teacher candidates' reactions, discoveries, and experiences with the project; and (4) the process of developing learning objects such as digital storytelling projects focusing on across cultures throughout history.

Higher Education Exchange Project (HEEP) Cultivating Transformative Transdisciplinary Approach in University Teaching While Integrating Global Competencies, Critical Thinking and 21st Century Skills.

This Higher Education Exchange (HEE) presentation showcases the transdisciplinary, inclusive, multilingual, multicultural, and multimedia projects across content areas in developing global competencies. It also promotes critical thinking and 21st century skills among undergraduates, outlines innovative assessment tools, templates, and strategies to cultivate active thinking curriculum, and engages the audience in self reflection/study while reflecting on innovative transformative curricula, assessment tools, and strategies for 21st Century higher education teaching. Participants are encouraged to bring their mobile devices to interact with the materials as well as share their own teaching strategies, tips and

resources. This gallery walk aims to advance scientific knowledge of Transformative Critical Pedagogy as a means to promote heutagogy through the lens of innovative technologies.

HEE e-book project attempted to re-examine current higher education curriculum as opposed to transformative, collaborative, and inclusive curriculum. We explored transdisciplinary and Universal Design of Learning (UDL) curriculum projects that can be developed with limited resources and equipment in global education context.

At the end of the HEE session, accomplished four main goals through using 21st century skills: (1) promoting transdisciplinary approach to higher education integrating global literacy while providing cultural and linguistically responsive curriculum; (2) documenting the participants' reactions, discoveries, and experiences participating in Multilingual Multicultural Media projects across content areas (e.g. math, geography, cultural studies); (3) identifying innovative activities, exercises, and assessment strategies and tools that align with the local and national standards addressing Transformative Education, Global Competency, and Media Literacy; and (4) investigating the role of multiple literacies (e.g. information, technology, geography, media literacy) and the use of new technologies (mobile tools such as GPS, tablet PCs, robotics) in developing global competencies among college students.

Theoretical framework, standards and research used in developing the Higher Education Exchange (HEE) are:

- Mezirow, J. (1997). Transformative learning: Theory to practice. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 74, 5-12.
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- Global Competence Matrix- www.edsteps.org/ccsso/SampleWorks/matrix.pdf

- Global Teacher Education- <http://www.globalteachereducation.org/internationalization-framework-teacher-preparation>
- NJ Core Curriculum Content Standard- <http://www.nj.gov/education/cccs/standards/9/index.html>
- Partnership for 21st Century Skills <http://www.p21.org/>
- National Center On Universal Design for Learning, at CAST-<http://www.udlcenter.org/>
- The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Standards (formerly the NETS) for Teachers (ISTE Standards•T) <http://www.iste.org/Standards/standards-for-teachers>

As higher education faculty, we have been seeking to improve our practice by: 1) documenting our discoveries, struggles and reflections on our journey in our classes; 2) challenging our teaching style and philosophy; and 3) trying to bring the theory into practice while pursuing innovative teaching models that would lead to positive pedagogical transformations. I believe through a transdisciplinary approach to curriculum design, we can transform the way we teach and integrate global competencies and media literacy skills while cultivating media production and promoting action among students. Thus, this transdisciplinary and inclusive curriculum design is important because it provides authentic learning activities, and intends to capture the role of 21st century skills in education, but also examines the health aspects of children in global education context by collaborating with children around the world using social networking tools (e.g. Skype).

The study serves as a framework to inform policy and develop professional development for global education and health education fields that encourage high-quality interdisciplinary global education projects. It will help to promote children's global competencies and critical autonomy especially those who have limited access to mobile technologies and resources to health education. These students can be healthier and better positioned to succeed in formal schooling and later in life.

In conclusion, the main goal of this study was

to draw on the natural links between mobile technologies and global education; explore how a critical approach to the study of global education combines knowledge, reflection, and action; promote educational equity; and prepare new generation to be healthy and productive members of a multicultural global society. ❄

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SELECTED APPS, GAMES AND RESOURCE:

- Global Kitchen Project- <http://myildiz.weebly.com/global-kitchen.html>
- Aurasma- Augmented reality app
- QR code- Quick Response Code- machine-readable optical label
- BrainPop- used the Nutrition module and quizzes
- ShopWell- Scan bar codes to customize for individual needs and find out nutrition details
- Word Lens- App translates text
- Solusville- Healthy neighborhood- <http://www.nourishinteractive.com/kids>
- Center for Media Literacy- Nutrition Education- <http://www.medialit.org/reading-room/cml-pilots-media-literacy-unit-obesity-nutrition-education>
- Selling Obesity – Lesson plan <http://mediasmarts.ca/lessonplan/selling-obesity-lesson>

Classroom Research: An Opportunity and a Challenge

Tessa Jolls

Tessa Jolls is President and CEO of the Center for Media Literacy, a position she has held since 1999. She also founded the Consortium for Media Literacy, a nonprofit which provides research and a monthly newsletter publication. During her tenure at CML, she restructured the organization to focus, grow and change, preparing to meet the demand for an expanded vision of literacy for the 21st Century. Her primary focus is working in partnership to demonstrate how media literacy works through school and community-based implementation programs. She actively contributes to the development of the media literacy field internationally through her speaking, writing and consulting, with curriculum development and research projects, and through publishing and disseminating new curricular and training materials.



For media literacy to be seen as a viable field with education resources that truly have a contribution to make to education, media literacy materials and processes must be evaluated in real-world settings and shown to be effective. Otherwise, there is a chicken-or-egg situation that goes like this: education interventions need to be evidence-based to be credible to the education community, but it takes evidence-based interventions to get funding for future work.

The Center for Media Literacy (CML) has long served as a research and development laboratory. CML has pioneered the development of frameworks, lessons, and curricula with its CML MediaLit Kit™, and has also provided advocacy through the publication of articles and e-books on its 1000+ page website, www.medialit.com. CML's curriculum, *Beyond Blame: Challenging Violence in the Media*, was a groundbreaking effort first published in 1995. Elizabeth Thoman, the Center's Founder, was executive editor of the curriculum, and when it was published, it sold thousands of copies nationwide. But *Beyond Blame* was never formally evaluated, and in continuing its work, CML found that providing evidence of *Beyond Blame's* effectiveness was a major criteria for its acceptance in the health education community.

With this goal in mind, CML undertook a longitudinal study beginning in 2002, in partnership with UCLA's Southern California Injury Prevention Research Center (SPIRC), to see whether:

- Professional development training for teachers contributed significantly to the effectiveness of the curriculum,
- Students' knowledge acquisition was enhanced, and whether student attitudes and behaviors were affected by the curriculum, and
- The CML Core Concepts and Key Questions for Deconstruction were correlated to student outcomes.

The study focused on an implementation of CML's *Beyond Blame* curriculum for middle school students. Three peer-reviewed journals that are Medline Indexed have published results of this implementation study, conducted in 7 school districts in Southern California. The results were positive and are contained at <http://www.medialit.org/sites/default/files/Injury%20Prevention%20Journal%202013.pdf>,

However, there is always a need for more research, and in undertaking evaluation of results for the media literacy field, it is also important for re-

searchers to be aware of considerations that apply to classroom research—questions such as:

- What steps are involved in undertaking such research?
- What human and financial resources are needed?
- What are lessons learned from CML's experience that might be useful?

The Big Picture

If doing classroom research were easier, more people would undoubtedly be undertaking such projects. But there are many obstacles to doing high quality evaluations—especially longitudinal evaluations that involve students.

To mitigate the difficulties, researchers often do the classroom trainings themselves, rather than train teachers to deliver the lessons to students. However, this undermines the idea that ordinary teachers in ordinary classes can replicate the program in consistent and high quality ways. Ideally, teachers should deliver the curricula so that there is assurance that delivering the curricula is doable and that teachers' everyday concerns are addressed.

Furthermore, it is important to be sure that the Common Core State Standards be addressed if the implementation occurs in a public school setting. Teachers are required to address the Common Core in their lessons, and research projects should be no exception—in fact, the credibility of the curricula itself is at stake. Researchers are sometimes unaware of the requirements that teachers face, but if such requirements are neglected, schools can't be expected to participate in any study or to value a media literacy intervention.

Also the timing of the study must coincide with the school schedule since teachers and students must be available to use the curricula in the time necessary for its successful completion. This seems like a foregone conclusion, but the vagaries of school schedules, such as year-round schools, present some big obstacles to scheduling and gathering data in a timely manner that provides a useful "snapshot" for research.

And in many cases, various languages must be

accommodated, not so much from the standpoint of the students and teachers, but from the perspective of communicating with parents. Studies must submit and receive approval from Institutional Review Boards (IRB) and the protocol will need to propose methods for obtaining consent from both students and their parents.

Two aspects of a study's design—a control group and longitudinal follow-up—increase study rigor and the validity of results. However, these aspects are also harder to implement. In a real-world setting, it is often difficult to randomize classrooms to receive the intervention or serve as controls, and randomizing classrooms may not be successful if the number participating in the study is small. In a non-randomized design, it is important for researchers to assess differences between schools, classrooms, and students who receive the intervention and those that serve as controls to make sure the groups are comparable. It also may be ethically appropriate to offer the curriculum to controls after the intervention is complete, so that controls also receive the benefit of the curriculum that they contributed toward the research.

If the study is longitudinal, be prepared! It is necessary to track teachers and students who may be in a new classroom, account for losses-to-follow-up because of movement to other schools and teacher turnover, absenteeism, and protection of identities. Depending on the demographics of the school population, there can be significant losses of participation along the way, and this must be anticipated by involving more teachers and students to begin with.

Steps

There are many steps necessary in conducting a longitudinal study that is classroom-based. These studies are expensive, requiring a team of highly qualified people, including administrators, teachers, students, media literacy experts, curriculum writers, recruiters and relationship managers, and researchers and statisticians capable of implementing complex methods for longitudinal classroom-based (e.g., clustered) research using sophisticated soft-

Tessa's Advice: Words to the Wise

When considering whether to undertake classroom-based longitudinal research, remember these words of wisdom:

- 1. More than likely, doing such research will involve a long road.** If you are an independent agency, think about how much time and staff resources you can reasonably put into such a project. Also, keep in mind that typically the university (if a university is your research partner) receives the lion share of any funding, and yet your agency will be doing LOTS of work to support the project.
- 2. Know what you want out of the research.** What questions do you want answered? Why? Will the researchers cooperate with your goals? Is it reasonable to expect answers? To what end will you use the research results?
- 3. Allow plenty of time.** You will need to call on various administrators and teachers that you know to gain participation, and the recruiting, the scheduling, and the IRB process are all great time eaters.
- 4. Is the whole team absolutely committed to the end?** There are many frustrations, obstacles, and logistics involved—all which require teamwork, patience, and grit. Key team members, especially, need to understand the importance of the work and how their contribution can make a difference in the field, in contributing to innovative work and in helping students succeed.
- 5. Have funding.** These studies are expensive and probably cost more than anticipated. Be prepared, because in some ways, conducting a longitudinal study is like building a house—once the project is underway, it will take what it takes and you must be prepared for the unexpected.
- 6. Find the “friendlies.”** Recruiting participants—school districts, school administrators and teachers—is difficult. Find people who are friendly to media literacy and to your project, and call in your chips. You will need them!
- 7. Provide some rewards.** Paying teachers to get substitutes for training sessions, giving teachers a bonus for completion, giving students goodies like yogurt drinks or opportunities for recognition—all are ways to increase motivation, and to insure completion of the project, and a thoughtful way to say “thank you” for all the help. In the end, we ask for and receive far more than we give to the dedicated people who make the research possible.
- 8. Don't expect miracles.** In spite of the effort that such research takes, don't expect others to swoon over your data, no matter how rare it is. People are busy, and they have their own agendas—your research is yet another pebble in the greater pond of advancing media literacy.
- 9. Look to the future.** It will take many longitudinal studies to establish media literacy firmly in the education constellation. There is a long road ahead on showing that media literacy programs are replicable, measurable, effective and scalable. If this work is as important as you think it is, you will be increasing confidence in media literacy's effectiveness, and thereby its necessity in schools, and that is the most that you can reasonably expect. But worth it!
- 10. Promote your work.** If no one knows about it, no one can build on it or use it to make the argument that media literacy is important. Build promotion in as part of your effort and your budget.

ware. In the end, study staff must be capable of interpreting data and translating the significance of study findings in meaningful ways across diverse scientific, educational, and political settings.

Such research is expensive: the longitudinal study that CML conducted not only had to cover university overhead and salaries/fees for the researchers, but also CML's considerable time and expenses for recruiting and coordinating schedules, for curriculum redesign and updating, and for follow through on reporting, as well as items such as teacher bonuses and student snacks. Grant support is a must for most organizations.

In CML's case, the study was initiated in 2002, when UCLA's SPIRC approached CML to see if we were interested in working on a research design and grant proposal. The project was funded the following year, in 2003. We began the project in 2004-2005 when we conducted a Pilot Program to test the previous curriculum and determine if a full-blown longitudinal study was worth the effort. As part of the preparation for the Pilot Program, we had to design the survey instruments, submit all materials and take training for the UCLA's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for human research subjects, and gain the relevant permissions from districts, school principals, teachers, and parents. After we received the IRB approval, we were able to enter classrooms and perform the work, with training teachers to deliver the curriculum and to administer pre and post tests to the students.

Since results of the Pilot Program were promising, we completely revised and freshened the *Beyond Blame* curriculum in 2006, and we recruited school districts, school principals and teachers to participate in the forthcoming longitudinal study. In the meantime, we also had to again submit all materials to UCLA's IRB for research on human subjects. Due to school schedule considerations, we implemented the new curriculum in 2007-2008. In 2008, we did data entry (a major undertaking since a several thousand students were involved), and did some preliminary analysis. In 2008, we also did our second post-test, sampling students who had previously participated in the study, to see whether their

learning, attitudes, and behaviors held over time. To meet research requirements demanded by California Healthy Kids, there had to be a minimum of six months before students took the first post-test and the second post-test. After the 2nd post-test was entered, final qualitative and quantitative analyses were conducted.

Despite staff turnover and funding changes, the researchers remained committed to drafting and submitting papers to peer-reviewed journals. Finally, in 2013, the longitudinal study results were published in *Injury Prevention*, a well-regarded peer reviewed journal. At last, the cycle was complete with results that CML and the entire implementation team could indeed be proud of. Staff continued to analyze data, since there is a wealth of information which can be extracted from such a major, data-rich study.

Evaluation of the Evaluation

One could reasonably ask: was it worth it—in terms of both the human and financial resources that were spent? Given that, through our study, we were able to establish that CML's approach to media literacy—both its overall framework and its specific application to violence prevention—made a positive impact on students, and helped establish media literacy as an evidence-based teaching strategy that can affect student knowledge, attitude and behaviors, the answer is a resounding YES. But easy, it was NOT. ❖

High School Journalism, Media Literacy, and the Common Core State Standards

Alan Hoffmann

A common question being asked by media literacy education advocates is, “What does the Common Core mean for our movement to include media literacy in education?” Forty-five states initially signed on to the Common Core State Standards, making the standards a hot topic in education policy circles. Media literacy advocates are not alone in their asking of the question. But, given the already existing struggles to implement media literacy into school curriculum, the Common Core State Standards might be seen as an additional hurdle. Journalism programs around the country are facing cuts. Funding issues are at the heart of these cuts, but the question about journalism’s academic value plays into this as well. For years, schools have struggled as to how much a journalism credit is worth (if it is worth anything at all), and now with the implementation of the Common Core State Standards, these programs face questions about their importance once again. However, proponents of these programs and of media literacy education should take heart. An examination of the CCSS shows that there is at least a push towards media literacy education within them and a strong journalism program can be at the heart of a school’s English Language Arts program.

High school journalism courses and programs can be difficult to describe, mostly due to the variety in which they take shape. Across the United States, programs function in different ways. Some schools allow journalism to count towards a student’s required English courses. Other schools only offer it as an elective. Some schools treat journalism as a club or extra-curricular activity. Sometimes, the journalism instructor is certified to teach journalism; other times the instructor is not. Some programs publish once a month, maybe less, while

Alan Hoffmann graduated from Montana State University with a degree in English education in May, 2014. He teaches English in Montana.



others strive to publish once a week. For this paper I will use “high school journalism” to refer to any course or program that produces content for publication on a regular basis. This would exclude courses such as yearbook classes, which typically only publish at the end of the year. The other term that I will use is “media literacy”. This project utilizes the Center for Media Literacy’s definition of the term, which is, “the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and create media in a variety of forms,” (www.medialit.org). American and global societies are getting more and more technologically advanced, especially in terms of how we transmit information. Being able to discern that information and think critically about it is an essential skill for students growing up in the 21st Century.

The link between the Common Core State Standards and media literacy has been explored. Bridget Dalton writes in “Multimodal Composition and the Common Core State Standards”, “The standards assume that being literate means being *digitally* literate,” (Dalton, 333) (emphasis in original). Dalton goes on to quote the Common Core State Standards, which states that students must be able to, “analyze and create a high volume and extensive range of print and non-print texts in media forms old and new,” (CCSS ELA Standards, 4). The word “media” appears in the English Language Arts section of the CCSS 56 times, underscoring Dalton’s

argument. Most of these instances call for students to be able to, “Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and formats,” (Common Core State Standards, 49). While the CCSS does not make an explicit call for media lit-

“As with all academic programs, administrators and school boards are asking if journalism programs fit within the Common Core State Standards.”

eracy, it does suggest that schools begin moving in that direction. The CCSS even says that students that are proficient in the standards, “use technology and digital media strategically and capably,” adding, “They are familiar with the strengths and limitations of various technological tools and mediums and can select and use those best suited to their communication goals,” (Common Core State Standards, 7). This would seem to address the fears that Bill Cope and Mary Kalantis express in their paper, “‘Multiliteracies’: New Literacies, New Learning”. They write:

The ‘back to the basics’ movement has had considerable success in taking education back over the past decade to what appears, in the retrospective view of its advocates, to be the halcyon days of traditional schooling. One mark of its success has been the imposition of high stakes standardized testing in which the school undertakes, once again, the process of social sifting and sorting against a singular and supposedly universal measure of basic skills and knowledge. Another sign of the success of this movement is the return to didactic, skill and drill curriculum which jams content knowledge to fit the tests. (16)

This paper was written in 2009, and the warnings should not go unheeded. Just because the Common Core seemingly calls for media literacy, does not mean that schools will follow through when

designing curriculum. For example, journalism programs are being cut. While many statistics can be used to illustrate this point, it is worth pointing out that the Scholastic Journalism Institute deems that the “widespread elimination of programs for economic or academic reasons” is the most serious threat to high school journalism. It is ranked higher than even censorship issues (SJI White Paper, 1). The Institute offers a number of reasons for the program cutbacks. “Low enrollment numbers for courses, pressure to add remedial courses to address testing regimes, addition of Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate programs, and increasingly, budget cutbacks, can provide the excuse to move journalism out of the curriculum,” (1). The situation appears to be dire. In the past decade, statewide enrollment in journalism courses has fallen by over 14 percent in California. If there is a case study for how “back to basics” advocates are “winning” the battle for schools, journalism programs make for an excellent focal point.

While media literacy can (and should) be taught in any subject, this paper focuses on journalism courses. According to the Center for Media Literacy, “30% of a class or course should be spent in production or in creating with media,” (www.medialit.org). A journalism class is a prime example where the focus can be on such a production. Schools across the country are beginning to branch out from the traditional journalism course publication method of simply printing a paper. In a survey of 99 journalism instructors done for this project, 59% of respondents indicated that they produced content for multiple media platforms. This was usually done with a website. Journalism programs can also utilize social media (such as Facebook or Twitter), visual media (such as a TV broadcast or videos posted online), and audio media (such as podcasts). However, the inclusion of different media does not by itself make the case for the keeping of journalism programs. As with all academic programs, administrators and school boards are asking if journalism programs fit within the Common Core State Standards.

Joslyn Sarles Young looks at this question ex-

tensively in her paper, “Linking Learning: Connecting Traditional and Media Literacies in 21st Century Learning”. Young followed two groups of students taking part in out-of-school programs that gave students the opportunity to either produce radio content or visual content. Though the programs took place out of school, they still showed how these types of programs fit within the CCSS. One student Young interviewed states, “In school, when a teacher tells you that you have to have a main idea and supporting points, it didn’t seem that relevant to me. But, when I started making radio pieces, I learned about why it’s so important to structure your main points and make a strong message,” (76). This student is meeting Writing Standard 9.5: “Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.” The next Standard addresses the publication of these works: “Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology’s capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically,” (Writing Standard 9.6). If students are able to get their content out to audiences across a variety of platforms, they will have achieved this standard as well.

To illustrate how the Common Core State Standards might fit into a journalism course, I will use an example that may not seem very academic, compared to a research paper or formal essay. Imagine a student has been assigned to write a report on the status of the high school’s volleyball team. That student might first read up on how the team has been doing on the season, either from a past issue or article of the journalism program’s class or from the local professional newspaper. This would align with Writing Standard 9.8: “Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following

a standard format for citation.” From there, the student might form a hypothesis about the team’s play. He then might test this hypothesis by going to a match and observing the team in action. After watching the match and conducting interviews, the student will be ready to write the article. Here, the student might put his hypothesis to the test (or revise it) and write about his observations. Writing Standard 9.2 is used: “Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.”

The student might also be employing Writing Standard 9.3 if the article takes more of a narrative approach. Subsection (a) of W 9.3 states, “Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation...create a smooth progression of experiences or events.” The retelling of the match could take on different forms, each one covered by the CCSS. No matter the approach, the student will be asked to, “Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience,” (Writing Standard 9.4). As long as the student is writing in a concise style and supports his arguments with facts and evidence, that student will be living up to the Common Core State Standards. Covering a sports team may be one of the least academic en-

“By its nature, journalism can offer a link between the school and community not typically seen in other courses.”

deavors that a student could engage in, but one can see how even in this setting the student can live up to the standards. Going back to my original definition of these courses having a frequent publication schedule ties back into Writing Anchor Standard 10 states that students should, “Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sit-

ting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.” A journalism course, especially one with a frequent publication schedule would allow students to do exactly that. Students can engage in projects of varying depth and scope and publish their works for an audience that consists of their classmates, teachers, community, and if published in an online format, that audience could include the world.

High school journalism programs do not need to be confined to such articles though. Regina Marchi notes in *From Disillusion to Engagement: Minority Teen Journalists and the News Media*, when students are able to write about issues concerning their daily lives, they can produce powerful content. Marchi, like Young, interviewed students involved in out of school journalism programs. She found that, “Free from the hierarchy of school administrators, school boards and other potentially censorious entities, the youth had broad editorial freedom to report on issues impacting their daily lives,” (759). Students that Marchi interviewed did stories on drug use, gang violence, teenage preg-

“By its nature, journalism can offer a link between the school and community not typically seen in other courses.”

nancy, and the foreclosure process. This allows students to become engaged in their community. While the Common Core does not speak to such community involvement, getting students to do this is a common goal for schools. By its nature, journalism can offer a link between the school and community not typically seen in other courses. Additionally, Marchi notes that having multiple forms of publication can be beneficial to all students, writing,

“Another benefit of these programs was their emphasis on audio and visual forms of reporting. This is not to suggest that

students from low-income communities cannot have strong writing skills, but to acknowledge that radio and video formats facilitate journalistic participation for students whose writing skills may not be strong, whether because English is not their first language or because they attended underfunded schools that are unable to adequately address their educational needs,” (759).

She later adds that the teens involved in these programs saw improvement in their writing skills. One student told her, “I’m a better writer now. [Coordinator’s name] is always on my case about stating things concisely,” (760).

The Common Core State Standards state in their introduction to ELA standards that students proficient in the standards, “value evidence” (7). While this is written in reference to analyzing a text, the valuing of evidence should be the basic tenant of a scholastic journalism program. Students should be analyzing their sources to find who will give them the best information about a story they are working on. They should be able to check their facts. Students should be able to arrange their findings and quotes into a cohesive manner so that it makes sense. In a traditional sense, these skills might be used in a research paper or essay. However, a journalism course utilizes these skills as well, and may offer other benefits (student engagement, community involvement, use of different media) that a traditional, “back to basics” approach to ELA does not.

Journalism teachers themselves see the diversification of media use as fitting within English Language Arts. In the survey conducted for this project, for the most part, teachers were fairly comfortable in teaching students to produce texts across a variety of platforms. Teachers were asked to gauge their comfort level in teaching students to produce written texts, visual texts (such as videos), audio texts (such as podcasts), and content for a website. Fifty-seven percent indicated that they were at least somewhat comfortable in teaching the production of video texts, 60% said they were at least somewhat

comfortable teaching the production of audio texts, and 87.5% said they were at least somewhat comfortable teaching students to produce content for a website. The survey had a follow-up to each of these questions for those respondents who said that they were not comfortable teaching the production of these texts. They were asked if they were not comfortable because they themselves needed additional professional development, if the school needed additional resources, if the subject area was not English Language Arts, or if there was some other reason. Out of all the respondents who said they were not comfortable teaching production for video, audio, or content for web (a total of 76 respondents across all three of these questions) not one teacher said that they felt the subject area was not within the English Language Arts. While the results of my survey may be skewed due to the fact that the questions were asked of journalism teachers who would support their programs, it is still telling that all believed that their programs fit within English Language Arts, regardless of publication model. Remember that the Common Core calls for students to be able to publish across a variety of platforms and be able to analyze different media. A multimodal journalism program would achieve that.

David Coleman was one of the authors of the Common Core State Standards. In the summer of 2011, Coleman was speaking to a group of New York City school administrators, letting them know what to expect with the new standards. Near the end of his talk, Coleman summed up his thoughts on what the CCSS asked students to do. They should “be able to read like a detective and write like an investigative reporter” in order to meet the standards. While this alone does not give journalism a rubber-stamped approval, it is an enlightening choice of words. What better way to have students “write like an investigative reporter” than to have them report on their school and community? Journalism programs, and other courses that focus on media literacy, have a place within the Common Core State Standards. They have benefits to students and schools alike in the form of an engaging part of any school’s English Language Arts curriculum. ❖

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An Insider's Perspective

Ryan Farrington



Ryan Farrington graduated with a Master of Arts in Educational Technology from Fairfield University. Currently he is the Director of Media Services at Housatonic Community College in Bridgeport, CT where he advocates for accessibility and effective use of technology in higher education teaching and learning.

I have a unique perspective on the Media Literacy Research Symposium at Fairfield University because I was there as both an attendee and a staff person in order to assist attendees and the conference hosts, Drs. Belinha De Abreu and Paul Mihailidis. For months leading to the event, I knew about the conference and heard of speed bumps along the way. But my knowledge of the field of media literacy research was limited. As a former librarian and computer teacher, I knew about the importance of media and its role in shaping our lives and especially the lives of young people. However, the notion of media literacy research as a growing field was a fresh one to me, and was limited to a course in graduate school and my conversations with Dr. De Abreu. In fact, I knew only from Dr. De Abreu's excitement that I should celebrate hearing that Douglas Rushkoff would be the keynote speaker. (Such a dynamic speaker and a treat his keynote turned out to be!) Being invited to help at the Symposium was my first hands-on experience in the field of media literacy research, and until that point I had, at best, participated as an observer. Anything I knew before March 21st is proof of what I have absorbed by taking courses with Dr. De Abreu and being her graduate assistant for 3 semesters while earning my MS in

Educational Technology from Fairfield University. That all changed the day of the symposium.

When I finished my coursework in the Fall of 2013, Dr. De Abreu invited me to create a video for the opening session of the Symposium that addressed the question: "Why does Media Literacy Research matter?" The question had a rhetorical tone to it, and it sounded like a fun task, so I quickly agreed—but as soon as I began working on the video, I realized I didn't know the answer.

What if I had the wrong answer? I stressed about what the correct answer might be, thought back to my coursework with Dr. De Abreu, and I researched for countless hours to figure it out. Of course I could think of the many reasons media literacy was important to me, but wondered if my thoughts

were universal. The idea of media literacy research confused me too!

It wasn't until I had the opportunity to speak with the Symposium attendees that I understood the passion for media literacy research was the common denominator that brought together so many intellectuals, teachers and, well, me. At the end of the day, long after the video was shown, I realized that the purpose of the symposium was to bring together each of the conference's guests and his/ her perspectives. It truly was the rawest example of collaboration, networking, discussing, and exchanging knowledge that I have ever seen. All attendees brought our own questions and our own opinions as to why media literacy research is important to each of us. Most important to me was that my lack of knowledge in the area, along with my questions, were welcomed.

Looking back on the Media Literacy Research Symposium, I understand the amazing opportunity I was given to be able to sit in on a panel consisting of Marieli Rowe, Tessa Jolls, and Neil Andersen. I also dropped in on a portion of a presentation given by Bill Shribman, where there was standing room only by the time I got there. There was the keynote by Doug Rushkoff, as well as an opportunity to par-

take in roundtable discussions behind the book sale and book signing.

With as much as I have learned from Dr. De Abreu, nothing prepared me for the knowledge I gained being in the presence of so many advocates for media literacy research. The Symposium was a huge success, with guests and speakers bringing international perspective on the topic. Late in the evening, I had an opportunity to chat with a few other attendees, as well as hear them speak about media literacy research with renewed passion and fresh ideas. My experience there has at least gotten me thinking about my future and my role in media literacy research and education. It was a great experience, and I am looking forward to the next Media Literacy Research Symposium! ✱

A Proponent & an Understanding

Matthew D. Norko



Matthew Norko is a graduate of Fairfield University and has worked at Greens Farms Academy since 2005. Currently the Assistant Director of Information Technology, Matt works primarily with middle and high school students as well as with faculty, finding meaningful approaches to integrating technology into the curriculum.

When I first learned of the Media Literacy Research Symposium being held at Fairfield University, I assumed that I had a fairly decent grasp about the topic and how it related to my work as an Academic Technology Coordinator in a middle school. After all, I “knew” what media was, and I was already a strong propo-

nent of educating students to better understand the information they now have at their disposal. After having attended though, I can attest to how much I now need to focus on in this area if I am to appropriately relay this field’s importance to those with whom I work and to the students whom I teach. As to not pass this information along to others is to perpetuate the very (lack of) fundamental understanding that media literacy research strives to reverse.

Throughout the symposium, there were a number of wonderfully poignant panel discussions and breakout sessions that catered to a multitude of different aspects and interests within the media literacy research realm. Aside from the keynote presentation, there was one session in particular that spoke to me in a meaningful way with regard to the students I teach. That session delved into aspects of social media through pictures. Often an underappreciated form of media, sites like Instagram have almost no words associated with them, yet have created immensely popular social followings. The power of photography is nothing new, but now that nearly every person has a high definition camera in his or her pocket along with a sizeable social network, individuals have the ability to share (for better or worse) a personally meaningful moment with potentially thousands of people a day without ever having to say or write a single word. Most im-

importantly for the students I teach, who use this medium extensively, understanding how to frame this new technology to tell the story you’re meaning to tell is an important part of its use. The classic example of having your photo taken while wearing a sports sweatshirt with your

last name written on it, might seem harmless when physically shown to friends, but is far different when posted by a 13 year-old and shared with 200 “followers” who can all in turn share it with anyone.

Very different from the rest of the symposium, but much in line with the enthusiasm of those present, Douglas Rushkoff offered a fantastic keynote

presentation. His masterful descriptions of media and their pervasiveness as well as who controls that content led to some “ah-ha” moments throughout the room. Perhaps the most telling and inspirational aspect of his speech was not in the words, but in the delivery. He, of course, had important things to say, but whether he meant to or not, his delivery was a haphazard mash up of ideas spewing back and forth and coming from all different angles. As if it was done in a moment of genius, his delivery represented the very thing that media literacy means to me—the collection of bits of information from all over to create one cohesive message.

Over the course of the day, there were two themes that arose time and time again which made defining media literacy easier for me. Those two themes were understanding and curating. Either of these two things can be looked at irrespective of the other, but only together do they begin to explain what media literacy is and why it’s important.

It is hard to tell exactly how much new data is created each year, but it is easy to agree that people today have access to more information than ever before. With so much data available, most of which is free and accessible on mobile devices, we now need to know an entirely different set of skills, just to be able to use that data. More than ever, it’s incredibly

important that everyone has an understanding of the media he or she is exposed to. Knowing where the media you’re consuming are coming from (or why) is sometimes just as important as the information itself. It gives the information a bit of context and can even help validate or invalidate that which you’re consuming. Just as important as understanding that media fare, though, is being able to curate it. With such an immense amount of data available, there’s no way anyone can be expected to always find the “best” anything. Being able to understand the media and curate them to find the best fit is now an absolutely needed skill, not something that simply helps the lucky few who “get it”.

Attending the Media Literacy Research Symposium was an incredible experience. Being able to listen and talk to people with a passion for spreading the word about the importance of media literacy and the research to go along with helping the field grow was invaluable. The symposium has helped me to gather a deeper knowledge of the field and all that it encompasses. It is a topic, which I will share with my own colleagues and students as we all explore the different aspects of media literacy together. ❄



The Future of Media Literacy: The Human-Machine Connection

Renée Cherow-O'Leary, Ph.D.

Renée Cherow-O'Leary is President of Education for the 21st Century, a media consulting group in New York City which develops curriculum and educational materials primarily for children, parents and teachers in multiple platforms, conducts qualitative research, and develops conceptual “white papers” for non-profit and for-profit educational organizations. Among other university appointments, Dr. O'Leary has served as professor of English Education at Teachers College, Columbia University and as a visiting scholar at Harvard University's Graduate School of Education. She began her career in newspaper reporting and children's book publishing.



1970 was an important year. Feminists marched en masse to declare that women were a force, unified by a vision of “liberation.” The first Earth Day was declared after the image of Earth as a big blue marble floating in space touched off a global awareness that we had a responsibility to protect the fragility and beauty of our planet. Thousands marched to protest the Vietnam War. And Alvin Toffler wrote his paradigm-shifting book, *Future Shock*, about the speed of social change and the problem of and necessity for adaptation to a rapidly changing world.

In that same year, Buckminster Fuller, an American architect, systems thinker, inventor, and futurist wrote: “I live on Earth at present and I don't know what I am. I know that I am not a category. I am not a thing—a noun. I seem to be a verb, an evolutionary process—an integral function of the universe.”

What triggers a paradigm shift where cultural movements rise and re-define all that came before? What turns balance into a tipping point? These questions are essential ones about vision and transformation—as relevant today as the sudden emergence of the Arab Spring or the revolution of the iPhone. What I propose is to look at media literacy as one

kind of cultural movement that grew up as responsive to a certain kind of media production and that now “lives” in a world quite different from the forces that originally propelled its birth. I want to briefly do a meta-analysis of media literacy and the cultural movements pulling it forward into what is in process. As Buckminster Fuller said, “we are verbs and thus the inevitable transformations of culture require that we not stay static. And, of course, that is not possible even if were an outcome devoutly to be wished.” Move we must—but where and how?

I want to start with the brilliant and prescient inventor and artist, Leonardo Da Vinci. In his very famous depiction, *L'Uomo Vitruviano*, of a man spanning the world, he showed that man with two sets of arms and legs. Looked at one way, the man has both feet firmly grounded on the earth with arms totally balancing his weight. But looked at simultaneously with the other set of arms and legs, the man is encompassing a much larger space and his arms are reaching upward, perhaps towards heaven. The man is poised between the practical and the aspirational, the local and the universal. One might say this is what media represents. Media have given us a voice to speak to each other across all barriers of geography and with the inventions of film and recording to speak across time. We take this completely for

granted now, though in many ways it is a miracle.

If we look at more modern conceptions, we might start with Marshall McLuhan whose work changed a generation and yet is rarely mentioned today. In 1964, when he wrote *Understanding Media*, he said that media were extensions of our nervous systems creating outreach to all parts of the world, creating a global village, and building in us a reciprocal system of messaging, taking in and giving

“Media have given us a voice to speak to each other across all barriers of geography and with the inventions of film and recording to speak across time.”

out. The man of DaVinci’s picture was suddenly able to be wired to the world he spanned and was never the same.

Subsequently and almost simultaneously, Urie Brofenbrenner and Neil Postman saw media as ecological. Brofenbrenner, working from a developmental psychology perspective, saw the human being in the center of nested social systems. Moving outward from the child to family, school, religious institutions, neighborhood, and peers as a microsystem, he saw links to the wider community. Media play a role for him in what he says is the exosystem. In 1979 when he developed his theory, Brofenbrenner said this system is one in which the individual does not have an active role but is affected by forces out of his control. It is on the cusp but not connected to the attitudes and ideologies of the culture, called the macrosystem. Finally, he posits the chronosystem, the sociohistorical circumstances defining any key historical period. Each system contains roles and norms and rules which may shape psychological development. Neil Postman around the same time developed his idea of media ecology. The man in the center of the circle, the wired man, was interpenetrating all the other worlds. Media connections created, for Postman as it did for McLuhan, a total

paradigm shift. The medium was the message and its role in our perception and reception transformed both individual development and culture.

Some of you in the field of English may remember a brilliant theorist named James Moffett. Moffett wrote extensively on how we learn to communicate. He did not mention media per se, but he created the concept of universes of discourse. All of us who learn language with a sense of cultural nuance know how to move back and forth between our local and intimate sense of personal communication and more formal approaches. The idea of universes of discourse allowed for the fact that people had sophisticated communications “radar” allowing them to create the messages most resonant for a given audience. His work is a counterpoint to McLuhan’s emphasis on the medium, the technology. Moffett emphasized a subtle kind of cultural listening and messaging. He did care about the medium which, in his view, was the human being not any technology that human used.

Then came the advent of the digital age. The computer was ubiquitous and the World Wide Web, the fulfillment of McLuhan’s prophecy long after he was dead, became essential to our sense of capability in the world and in our systems. If you remember Y2K at the turn of the millennium, we were afraid that all of our systems would crash—banking, transportation, business data transmission—and with it, chaos could rule. This was the first recognition that perhaps we were no longer in total control of the “machinery” that we had created. In effect, it could, like the brilliant conception of Frankenstein that Mary Wollstonecraft created in 1818, come to overtake us and even destroy us! Both *1984* written in 1949 and *2001: A Space Odyssey*, the film by Stanley Kubrick in 1968, hinted at these man-machine collisions and that there could be an evil undercurrent to our glowing technological achievements. Man-machine started to be a conscious dichotomy and not always a benign one.

In the early 2000’s, a set of new developments, created in a Harvard dorm room in 2003 by Mark Zuckerberg, and by Harvard dropouts, Bill Gates, and Steve Jobs, were changing the media landscape.

Though media were always social, “social media” was something new, an opportunity to see and be seen on the most personal level and minute-by-minute. Not at all like Brofenbrenner’s placement of media on an outer rung, this was media ecology times 10! Imagine Da Vinci’s man holding an iPhone, wearing ear buds in touch with the world—but truly no longer alone. Instead, he is constantly connected and traversing the world in an instant. To have this access, he has given up his privacy. The tradeoff does not seem to distress the millions of people who are in the world of social media or who play the kinds of massively multiplayer online role-playing games. The blending of worlds is no longer just inner and outer, as perhaps Moffett or Brofenbrenner might have categorized them. The worlds have now transformed into two other dichotomies—REAL and VIRTUAL. The whole nature of reality is now called into question by a paradigm shift such the ones Thomas Kuhn, (1962), in his groundbreaking book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, might have discussed like the Copernican recognition that the earth traveled around the sun and not the other way round!

Henry Jenkins at MIT recognized and popularized the idea that the cultural transformation these new media provided created what he called a “participatory culture.” It required new skills including performative, playful, simulation-making, multitasking, distributed cognition, judgment and transmedia navigation. What Jenkins saw, in my view, was the disaggregation of the self from the core individual to collective meaning making as the quintessential behavior of the digital, new media age. Neil Postman had feared the loss of the individual and reasoned discourse. At the end of his life, he had become a technological pessimist, a conservative about media, in the sense that he wanted to preserve a certain kind of linear, coherent, unified literacy. Postman wrote a book called *Technopoly* (1992) in which he outlined all his fears. What Jenkins’ work presaged or recognized was that this kind of individualism was no longer possible. There were too many strands of connection, like McLuhan’s nervous system extensions of man, run amok!! This



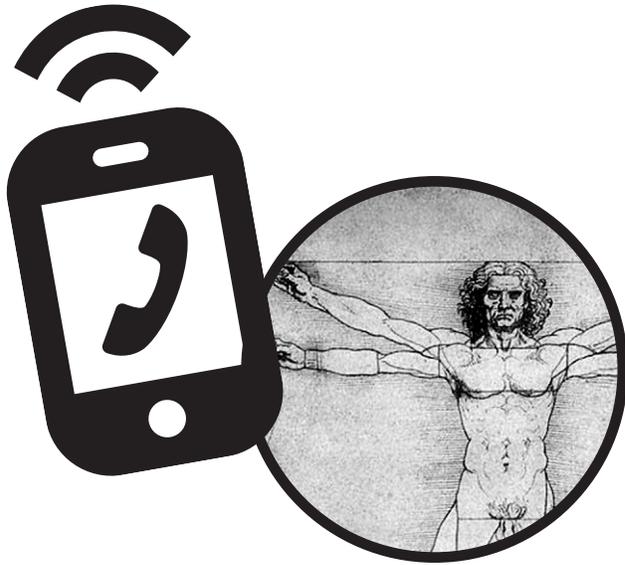
was not your grandfather’s literacy and we certainly all know it.

In more academic and government circles, the talk was of 21st century literacies. Partnerships to foster these were established in the corridors of power; schools began to reckon with the meanings this change would mean for education. In the meantime, young people and commercial media interests were creating new forms of communication—Snapchat, Instagram, apps of all sorts—that were selling

“Mediated worlds now exist between two new dichotomies—REAL and VIRTUAL”

for billions of dollars. Theorists be damned!

Around the turn of the millennium, another theorist Ray Kurzweil, a technological optimist, started writing books about the machines at our fingertips. He saw technology as our salvation! Our technologies would give us immortality far beyond the transcending of time and space that our early media inventions—radio, photography, film were providing. In the world of digital media, we could live forever. Our human intelligence was going to be surpassed by the superior capacities of our machines. In fact, artificial intelligence was going to



far exceed any human's ability to make decisions, compute, research, and find significance in what has come to be called Big Data. Kurzweil's book *The Age of Intelligent Machines*, (1992) began to posit a race between our biology, development of the decoding of DNA and the mapping of the genome and our technologies. He felt that the intelligent machines, (robots, for example), would come to dominate our landscape but right now technology and biology were on parallel tracks. Artificial intelligence would be extensions of man in ways we had never anticipated. In his subsequent book, *The Age of Spiritual Machines*, (2000), Kurzweil developed a 100 year time line. Our machines would be the vehicle to save us from death, they were the places where we might download our brains and perhaps, at some point in the future, we might even achieve immortality. He coined a term a few years later in his next book, *The Singularity is Near* (2006). The singularity is the time at which our technology supersedes our biology and a totally new society is born, one that might seem very frightening to some but transformative to others. Kurzweil sees a kind of evolution that adds our machines to any Darwinian concepts so that we and our machines can or will be ONE.

When we look at contemporary theories responding to these new developments of media in the 21st century now, we see some very different

questions arising. Kevin Kelly, the former editor of *Wired* magazine, wrote a book, *What Technology Wants*, (2011), that is essential reading for anyone interested in the social transformations of our time. Kelly calls all of our linked technologies 'The Technium' and he says it has a mind of its own. (if you saw the movie, *HER*, you saw that the operating systems were all unifying and forming alliances). The Technium is EVOLUTION ACCELERATED. Ironically, Kelly quotes Buckminster Fuller too and says that the technium is a tendency not an entity. The Technium and its constituent technologies are more like a grand process than a grand artifact. If the greater forms of technologies are inevitable, what is next, he asks. (p. 128)

Next are the urgent questions raised by theorists Jaron Lanier who wrote *You Are Not a Gadget* (2011) and his new book, *Who Owns the Future* (2014). In it, he raises the questions of what it means to be a human being. Multiliteracies like multiple intelligences, challenge our hearts and minds to find our core abilities and our human center in the face of our inventions, our machines. Is there something essential in our humanity—is there not only a spiritual machine but still a spiritual human, a person connected to other people in human (and possibly non-technical) ways. Will we soon not even know what that means??

Sherry Turkle, too, asks about what it means for humans to be together qua humans and she posits that we have lost the connective thread that used to bind us together in community. Sherry Turkle says that technology is both self and the other, our second self. In her most recent book, *Alone Together*, (2012) she describes new and unsettling relationships and instabilities in how we understand privacy, community, intimacy and solitude. She feels we are in an era of "emotional dislocation" and that we must ask what are the costs and checks and balances on our technologies and what is sustaining about the human connection. At the threshold of the "robotic moment," we must ask what it means to have human purposes and then rediscover what they are and what we must commit to revive and manifest them.

What does this have to do with media literacy? It is my sense that media literacy is at a crossroads. It was born out of a response to mass media effects that were seemingly harming us. For many years, this was seen as preventative though, of course, we have moved beyond that. Media literacy has been instrumental, tactical, and reactive. I believe the age of extraordinarily fast-moving technological development has to match the speed of change with a different set of questions than it has in the past. What are we teaching and what should we be teaching as media literacy in the next 20 years will be different from the media world of the 90's (pre-Internet). When the New London Group began their work on the New Literacies, they called them *Multiliteracies: A Pedagogy for Designing Social Futures* (1999). I would like to go back to that terminology. What we are doing now in media literacy has to be integrated with the extraordinary social changes that our technologies have wrought. We must connect our future media literacy to the kinds of social futures that the extraordinary screenplay by Spike Jonze, for HER, connected us to. The medium, the message, and or both are the source of media literacy questions today. Our students need to understand how to see the alternative social futures to which our media lead. What does Facebook mean and how does our use of it alter our social reality? Multiliteracies like multiple intelligences challenge our hearts and minds to find our core abilities, I would say as a person whose work has always been in the humanities, our human center. Let me leave you with the words of Michio Kaku, from his book *Physics of the Future: How Science Will Shape Human Destiny and Our Daily Lives by the Year 2100*:

“We live in exciting times. Science and technology are opening up worlds to us that we could only dream about. When looking at the future of science, I see genuine hope. We will discover more about nature in the coming decades than in all of human history combined, many times over...But science does not stand still. By 2100, we shall have the power of the gods of mythology...

The computer revolution should give us the ability to manipulate matter with our minds, the biotech revolution should give us the ability to create life almost on demand and extend our life span, and the nanotech revolution may give us the ability to change the form of objects and even create them out of nothing. So the generation now alive is the most important ever to walk the surface of the earth for we will determine if we create an extraordinary expanded civilization or fall into the abyss” (2012).

Media literacy over the next twenty years, in my view, will begin to grapple with these questions. Our technologies, our media are only tools, but to which purposes we direct them will determine the future of our planet. ❁



Future Directions in Media Education Research & Collaboration: Opportunities and Challenges

Paul Mihailidis PhD



Paul Mihailidis, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor in Media Studies the school of communication at Emerson College in Boston, where he teaches media literacy and interactive media. His research focuses on the nexus of media, education, and civic voices. His most recent books are *Media Literacy and the Emerging Citizen: Youth Participation and Engagement in the Digital Age* (Peter Lang, 2014) and *News Literacy: Global Perspectives for the Newsroom and the Classroom* (Peter Lang, 2011) and the co-editor of *Media Literacy in Action: Theoretical and Pedagogical Perspectives* (Routledge 2014). Mihailidis directs the new global engagement lab at Emerson College, and the Salzburg Academy on Media and Global Change. He sits on the board of directors for the National Association of Media Literacy Education.

This past spring, 100 leading media literacy researchers and educators gathered at Fairfield University in Connecticut for a *Media Literacy Research Symposium*, marking the first standalone gathering devoted to the exploration of scholarship in the field. It also coincided with a new edited book [disclosure: I'm a co-editor] titled *Media Literacy Education in Action: Theoretical and Pedagogical Perspectives* (Routledge, 2013). The occasion provided a chance for leading media literacy scholars and educators from around the world to pause and contemplate where we are as a field, where we've been, and perhaps most importantly, where we are headed.

In this essay, I want to capture the essence of those discussions to lay out some of the opportunities and challenges that emerged from the Fairfield symposium, and to contextualize them as key trends as we look forward to where media literacy education needs to go in order to continue to grow as both a core educational discipline for engaged and inclusive pedagogies in digital culture, and as an emerging scholarly field where research and policy can interact to define the future of media literate societies. So here goes:

Opportunities

- **Building reputable outlets for research**— Since the early 1990s, when media literacy research began to appear in academic outlets on a more frequent basis, we've seen an exponential growth in the amount of work devoted to media, learning and engagement. Renee Hobbs estimates that in the past year over 50 doctoral dissertations on media education have been produced in the United States alone. Concurrently, we've seen the birth and growth of new journals devoted to media education—*Journal of Media Literacy Education*, *International Journal of Learning and Media*, *Journal of Media Education*, *Media Education Research*, *Journal of Digital and Media Literacy*—that collectively offer a space for scholars to gather and share their work. The opportunity here lies in creating more rigorous ecosystem for scholarship in our field, and one that enhances the standard and reputation of our academic outlets.
- **Building Collaborative ecosystems for scholar-**

ship and applied work – Along with the growth of research outlets for media education, we've seen the evolution of organizations that are working hard to promote media, news, information, digital, and other literacies across education and communities. This includes many state of the field reports, surveys that assess where media literacy is happening, and attempts to locate vibrant and forward thinking work in media literacy. These attempts are often done with little regard for others, and in some cases produce repetitive outcomes that often miss as many initiatives as they cover. To address this problem, it would be advantageous to gather a consortium of sorts for media education research, where scholars from all sub-disciplines, doing work in and across the media education field writ large, can engage with in the context of their work. This would help to create a central space for work in media education to embrace the collective work of scholars and share ideas and create meaningful and lasting collaborations.

- **Building a more civic and political focus** – This opportunity stems not from a need to produce work that advocates for any single ideology or political belief, but rather from the need to tie media literacy outcomes to a focus on reform and progress in formal and information educational settings, communities, advocacy groups, public institutions, and so on. Many of the outcomes in the field are tying their work into this area already, but with a more concentrated effort to create these connections, the field can be more transparent about how media literacy can provide the evidence for policy reform around education and civic life.

Many of these opportunities reflect the growth and existing work in the field already. The focus I've attempted to provide concerns ways to expand on existing work to provide more concrete and collaborative endeavors for the field of media education scholarship going forward. The challenges, however, are significant, and must be addressed if media education scholarship is to continue to grow in rigor, depth, and scope.

Challenges

- **Competing with Ourselves** – To support the growth of the media literacy field, a host of national and international organizations and movements exist that gather scholars, educators and activists to engage in conferences, meet ups, and collaborative ventures in media education. I want to re-iterate that I think this is a positive evolution of the field, but my issue is with no clear gathering spot for media educators to convene, we will continue to marginalize our collective capacity to make concerted growth as a unified front. Agile and small shops popping up in new and innovative ways will lead to more strong and structured work in the field. Without a central space to gather regularly, we run the real risk of continuing to reinvent the same work we've been engaged in for decades, and without consensus to show educators, community stakeholders, and policy makers the vast amount of time and energy we devote to build the field.

- **Re-inventing the wheel over and over again** – While the emergence of a subset of explorations into "literacies" has helped provide diverse scholarship and applied work in the field, it has also confused things a bit. The struggle over defining literacies, or better yet parsing literacies—media, news, health, information, digital, and so on—creates a disparate palate of work that overlaps in repetitive fashion over and over again. The challenge here is to enable and empower the multiple approaches to literacy education while avoiding redundancy. Without a central space for inclusion and sharing of resources, scholars will have less of an opportunity to interact, read from foundational texts and journals, and use the existing wealth of scholarship to build their particular area of research in new and dynamic ways.

- **Connecting Research to Policy** – The idea that our research can and should connect to policy, politics, and reform is a sensitive proposition. Because media literacy scholars often work in the context of youth and education, they focus on the learning

portion of evaluation, assessment and curriculum. This work utilizes mixed methods approaches to exploring media literacy, and the outcomes are rich and diverse. The challenge, then, is to shape this work into a meaningful framework for applied connections to policy and practice. Media literacy is an applied field by default, and the power inherent in this model is that we can translate our messages into more clear calls for reform and progress in education and the community.

- **Scalability & Funding** – The final challenge I see for progress in media literacy research is how we can take the current energy and growth of the media literacy field and create scalable and fundable models for more rigorous scholarship, applied research, and collaborative initiatives. For the field to move from a fringe space to a more recognized presence, we need funders to embrace the work that we do, taking our work into more national and international venues, and raising our visibility. This challenge is largely dependent on the resolution of the other three challenges, in that if we find common and vibrant approaches to the scholarship in our field, only then will we be able to gain the attention needed to move forward as one.

Looking Forward: Media Literacy Scholarship as Currency

Taking stock of the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead, I'm encouraged by the vibrant new work devoted to exploring the connections between media, education, and engagement of citizens in our mediated world. The work that was showcased in Fairfield signifies a real urge for scholarship to be a core part of the media education landscape.

Looking forward in 2014/15, there are many opportunities to present scholarship and work, starting with the Media Education Summit in Prague and the Youth and Media Summit in Brussels, both in November. The National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE) will be hosting its bi-annual conference in summer 2015 in Philadel-

phia. In Prague this Fall, in addition to the keynote scholars and host of researchers presenting their work, I'll be convening a plenary panel that explores the opportunities and challenges that face collaborative media education research and collaboration in global digital culture. Leading scholars from around the world will provide overviews of media education research from where they sit, and engage in dialog around the following questions: What are the main challenges for collaborative media education research & projects? What opportunities exist? What do media education researchers need to engage in more collaborative and funded researchers? What does media literacy need to look and sound like to be more attractive to large funding organizations? What role should media education be playing in global policy making?

I hope this essay is a start to our community thinking long and hard about these questions, and how we can use scholarship to build our field. For decades media literacy has gone in and out of the spotlight of educational policy makers and community organizations. We've run around in circles for a long time now, and perhaps the path to sustainability lies in building strong networks of scholarship that show evidence of media literacy's value to vibrant, tolerant and inclusive civic societies in digital culture. ✨

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Media Literacy Education in Action: Theoretical and Pedagogical Perspectives

Edited by **Belinha S. De Abreu and Paul Mihailidis**

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Reviewed by **Rob Williams, Ph.D.**

Board President of the Action Coalition for Media Education (ACME)

Rob Williams, Ph.D. teaches Media, Communications, Environmental Policy, and Global Studies/Core program at Saint Michael's and Champlain Colleges and the University of Vermont. A resident of Mad River Valley, Vermont, he publishes the 2VR news journal; consults with PH-International, the U.S. Department of State, and the College For America; and serves as the president of the Action Coalition for Media Education (ACME).

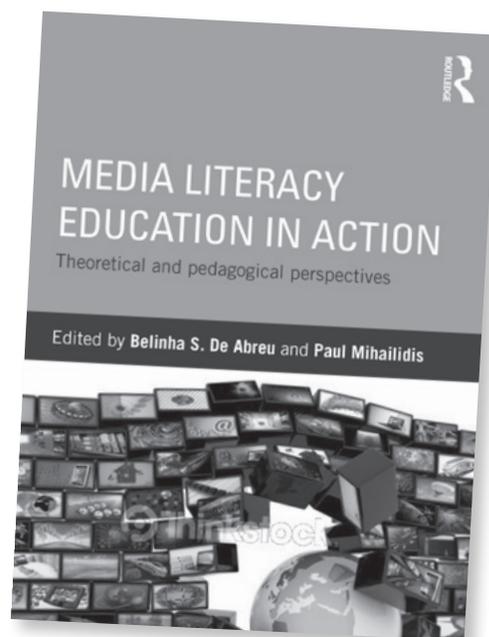


ACME had the good fortune to participate in the seminal Fairfield University Media Literacy Research Symposium during March 2014, organized by Fairfield University's Belinha S. De Abreu and Emerson College's Paul Mihailidis. Delivering the lunchtime keynote, veteran cyberpunk writer, media futurist, and *Frontline PBS* poster boy Douglas Rushkoff (quick aside: if you haven't seen *Merchants of Cool*, *The Persuaders*, *Digital Nation*, and his new film *Generation Like*, download them into your brain immediately—and then critique) noted that “today feels like an important moment in the history of the media education movement.” He then launched into a hilarious and at times scathing critique of the algorithmic forces (think Google's relentless digital efforts at world domination through info manipulation or Facebook's insidious data collecting in the name of “friend”ship) undermining the Team Human experience. No longer is the most important media education question the What (content) or the How (coding), Rushkoff concluded, but the Why. See his new *Frontline* film *Generation Like* for more information.

Among other remarkable moments from this fantastic day in Fairfield, which brought together 90

international media educators from diverse backgrounds in education, public health, production, and organization (both NAMLE and ACME members were present, as were MLE veterans from as far away as Ontario and London), was the “drop” of De Abreu and Mihailidis's new book, *Media Literacy in Action*, a seven-section paperback book featuring 26 essays sure to reinvigorate conversation about directions for the international media education effort for years to come.

Don't let the slim paperback or the happy global cover image fool you: This new collection, published by Routledge, means business. De Abreu and Mihailidis bring readers some of the most compelling veteran voices from the MLE field—the Davids



(Considine and Buckingham), Art Silverblatt, Frank Gallagher, and Neil Andersen—but also a wide variety of new and up-and-coming voices, including more point of views from women and international researchers (hooray!) and writers from Australia,

“Our hope is that ‘Media Literacy Education in Action’ can elicit new ideas, challenge existing ones, and help to form a unified network around media literacy educators around the world.”
—De Abreu and Mihaildis

well of wisdom from MLE practitioners around the world. If you are a teacher, administrator, parent, or citizen looking for inspired ideas for curriculum or community-building through media literacy education, then this new book is a must-read. In his opening chapter, English ML educator Julian McDougall (who attended the Fairfield conference) referred to media literacy education as an “unfinished project”—as it should be—and this new book is testament to the ever-evolving and diverse international project that media literacy has become. Read it closely, and learn much. ✨

Hong Kong, Lebanon, Canada, England, and the United States. While I cannot do the richness of this new collection too much justice in a short review, here are a few highlights:

- LAMP’s Katherine Fry reminder that “teaching is a subversive activity”;
- Sacred Heart University scholars Lori Bindig and Jim Castonguay’s look at ways in which media literacy scholars, educators, and activists can find common ground;
- Art Silverblatt, Yupa Saisanan Na Ayudhya, and Kit Jenkins’s call for an international framework for informational literacy (connecting to this, I must channel my ACME colleague Julie Frechette’s continuing and vital calls for “multiple literacies” approaches as a way forward in 21st-century media education);
- Jad Melki’s inspired work from Lebanon and the Arab world in building “a locally grown and sustainable curriculum”; and
- Nick Pernisco’s championing of media literacy education as a way to help “shrink the divide” and solve social inequalities.

These five examples are but sips from a deep

Present Shock: When Everything Happens Now

by **Douglas Rushkoff**

New York: Penguin, 2013, 296 pages

Review by William Kist



William Kist is an associate professor at Kent State University, where he teaches literacy courses in the English Education program at the undergraduate level and in the Curriculum & Instruction program at the graduate level. Bill can be found online at www.williamkist.com and on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/williamkist>.

Warning: don't read this book at bedtime. It will give you nightmares. Especially if the last thing you do before you turn out the light is check your email and Facebook account. If you are one of those people, then, according to Douglas Rushkoff, you are surely doomed. Here's just one of Rushkoff's bromides: "Yes, we are in a chronological crisis of depression, suicides, cancers, poor productivity, and social malaise as a result of abusing and defeating the rhythms keeping us alive and in sync with nature and one another" (p. 93). Hold on. There is a "but." "But what we are learning gives us the ability to turn this crisis into an opportunity" (p. 93). Whew! I was about ready to throw myself off the digital divide! Apparently, Rushkoff is trying to save us readers with his cautionary tale. Unfortunately, it seems like there is mostly caution involved in his storytelling. Now that we've been properly scared,

KIST *continued on next page*

Review by Ryan R. Goble

Ryan R. Goble is a doctoral candidate at Teachers College Columbia University, Teaching & Learning Coordinator at Glenbard High School District 87 (outside Chicago) and founder of mindblue.com and the social network Making Curriculum Pop.



For me, the best, and perhaps most relevant part of Douglass Ruskoff's *Present Shock* was the time I spent with the book on a perfect autumn day. My family's townhouse is situated on one leg of a triangle of homes that surrounds three acres of man-made tallgrass prairie. That day the sunlight accentuated the grasses' purple hues as they made waves in the crisp wind. Sitting on my porch, book and pen in hand, I dove into Rushkoff's conversation. For a moment I was floating above "a distracted present, where forces on the periphery are magnified and those immediately before us are ignored."

That distracted present is the complex zeitgeist that *Present Shock* brings into focus. Rushkoff's now familiar, highly readable voice brings one into a lively conversation constructed around his wide-ranging curiosities.

GOBLE *continued on next page*

we're left to figure out what to do about this mess we're in.

Ironically, Rushkoff is probably most known for leading popularized discussions of new media within a series of documentaries broadcast on PBS. Such programs as “The Merchants of Cool,” “The Persuaders,” and “Digital Nation” and the PBS Frontline special “Generation Like” have presented Rushkoff’s fireside chats about this brave new media

world in which we all live. In *Present Shock: When Everything Happens Now* (2013), however, Rushkoff presents a darker, more developed model or, rather, diagnosis, for what ails humanity in these new times. And this sickness is all due to the Internet and other various forms of new media. According to Rushkoff, we have four basic pathologies that have formed as a result of our new media uses: Narrative

Collapse, Digiphrenia, Overwinding, and Fractalnoia. Wait a minute, I have to check my email before I can continue. (And Rushkoff would respond that I am “Like compulsive gamblers at a slot machine rewarded with a few quarters every dozen tries... trained to keep opening emails in the hope of a little shot of serotonin” (p. 117).

OK, now I’m back. It was just junk email. Overall, I felt that Rushkoff was most persuasive in his chapter entitled “Digiphrenia,” a construct Rushkoff defines as being the state many of us are in—constantly divided between our digital selves and our analog, body-based selves. “By dividing our attention between our digital extensions, we sacrifice our connection to the truer present in which we are

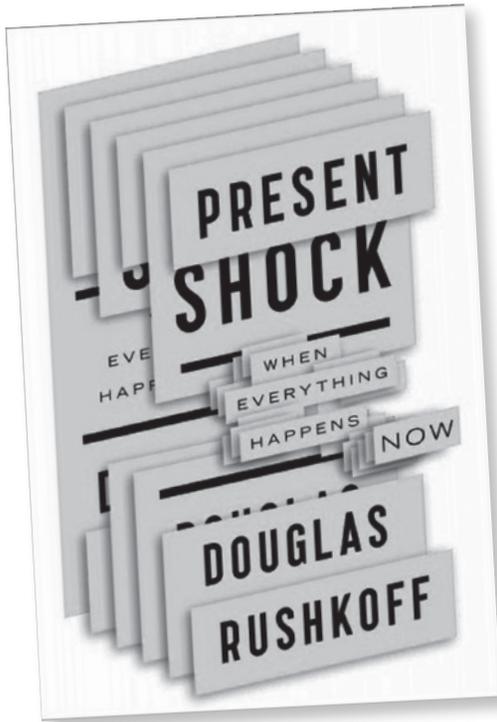
This field guide to the present begins with an exploration of the collapse of narrative. Citing endless TV shows that eschew clear resolutions (e.g. *Seinfeld*, *The Simpsons* and *The Sopranos*), the end of manufactured “brand mythologies” and the ascendancy of open ended video games Rushkoff finds us living “without long-term goals expressed for us as readily accessible stories.” In a world where:

people lose the ability to respond to anything but terror, if we have no destination toward which we are progressing then the only thing that motivates our movement is to get away from something threatening. We move from problem to problem, avoiding calamity as best we can, our worldview increasingly characterized by a sense of panic.

This sentiment is most clearly realized by the 24-hour news cycle and—for educators—the never-ending quest of school “reformers” to dramatically improve our schools overnight. In these perpetually present spaces, “no one has time to think, and insisting on a few hours or even an entire day to make a decision is regarded as a sign of indecision and weakness.”

Rushkoff presents video games as the “healthier, or at least more active” counterpoint to this lack of story in mass media. He sees games as media designed to “actively enjoy the present [while] trying to sustain the playability of the moment.” He points out that games still communicate values but they do it by offering choices. Game designers—especially those of socially conscious games – must heed the old screenwriter’s axiom to “show not tell.”

In fact, showing is what many successful post-narrative endeavors do; they focus on developing normative behaviors through experience. In the retail world this means a focus on the “brand experience” so real and virtual shopping environments become “not about the story you tell your customer but the experience you give him – the choices, immersion, and sense of autonomy.”



living” (p. 75). The tension between these competing attentions leads to “digiphrenia.” “Our boss isn’t the guy in the corner office,” Rushkoff warns, “but a PDA in our pocket. Our taskmaster is depersonalized and internalized—and even more rigorous than the union busters of yesterday. There is no safe time” (p. 85). Rushkoff makes a convincing argument that we are becoming slaves to our digital lives. Echoing another recent fiction book, Dave Eggers’s *The Circle* (2014), Rushkoff paints a picture of lives dominated by chasing the next text or email. It’s in these pages that Rushkoff is at his most chilling.

Rushkoff is less convincing in the other chapters in the book. In “Fractalnoia,” Rushkoff describes a world in which the Internet allows everything to be connected to everything else. “The hypertext link, as we used to call it,” Rushkoff explains, “allows any fact or idea to become intimately connected with any other. New content online no longer requires new stories or information, just new ways of linking things to other things” (p. 199). While this might seem to be interesting and even motivating to those of us who work in the field of education, Rushkoff is a killjoy here: “Of course, once everyone is connected to everyone and everything else, nothing matters anymore” (p. 199). Apart from any theological implications of the idea that everything is connected, as a former high school English teacher, I was reminded of the writings of such famous transcendentalists as Thoreau and Emerson, and even the poet Walt Whitman who saw the world in a blade of grass. Rushkoff’s attempt to scare us suddenly loses some effect.

In the chapter called “Overwinding,” Rushkoff suggests that we are attempting to “squish really big timescales into much smaller or nonexistent ones... just like overwinding a watch in the hope that it will gather up more potential energy and run longer than it can” (p. 136). In an apt example of this, Rushkoff provides a fascinating description of how ludicrous has become the planning for the retail event known as “Black Friday” in the U.S., mainly due to investors who now are examining sales re-

Without the clear compass of story the past actively competes with the present and future. This makes us disoriented in time, living in a state Rushkoff terms “digiphrenia.” The middle two chapters visit popular culture, economic history and social science to consider the new natures of time and its compression as drivers of the present.

To probe this idea he builds on Walter Benjamin’s famous essay “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.” We are reminded that digital things are infinitely reproducible; humans, being “analog” are not. This tension creates a world where “everything is running in parallel and sometimes from very far away. Timing is everything and everyone is impatient.”

Here the discussion takes an interesting detour into the periphery of contemporary science: Chronobiology. This emerging research area uses computer technology to manage time in relation to daily, lunar and seasonal cycles. Not knowing much about this field—I found myself researching the people and ideas mentioned while reading. In some cases Rushkoff was extrapolating from established science, in other cases ideas were a bit more fringe. Even if some of the claims explored end up not being substantiated, the exploration of time as a technology and the subtle varieties of time become provocative ways to consider the messages—as McLuhan would see them—of new technologies.

For me, the most intriguing and important section of the book was the chapter called “Fractalnoia” about our need to make sense of complex patterns in a tsunami of information. Here human’s ability to perceive patterns is presented as both shelter from the storm of information and the fuel of extreme thinking. While Rushkoff highlights making connections as a hallmark of creation, creativity and innovation, he believes it also leads to the craziness and conspiracy theories around things like the 9/11 attacks, Barack Obama’s birthplace, immunizations, climate change and evolution. Between these spaces Rushkoff searches for a generative space:

sults days in advance of Thanksgiving and extrapolating this analysis into prognostications about the nation's financial health. Indeed, Rushkoff covers an impressive range of topics to back up his arguments, from the mechanisms behind retail's "Black Friday" to techniques behind Walt Disney theme parks to game theory and the plotlines of *Real Housewives of Beverly Hills*. From that aspect, the book is entertaining, in a show-offy kind of way.

But Rushkoff kind of lost me at "hello," as, in the lead chapter in the book, he opines that humans are suffering a narrative collapse, that we no longer have stories that bind us together, that there is no drama, no insight in today's storytelling. What is most surprising about this argument is that Rushkoff spends many words bashing what most consider to be prime current examples of storytelling—the so-called "long-form" television dramas, pioneered by *The Sopranos*, and continuing through *Mad Men*, *Breaking Bad*, and *The Walking Dead*. Most commentators believe that we are in a golden age for television drama, but not Rushkoff. Pointing to what he calls the non-endings of *The Sopranos* and *Lost*, Rushkoff proclaims the bankruptcy of modern-day storytelling: "The shows are less about what will happen next or how the story will end, than about figuring out what is actually going on right now" (p. 32). But haven't there always been weak endings for grand stories? Authors such as Mark Twain and Charles Dickens have struggled with endings and been criticized. Responding to such criticism, Dickens made available an alternate ending to *Great Expectations*. *Present Shock* was published before the end of *Breaking Bad*, which most critics have suggested had quite a definite ending and narrative arc. It was F. Scott Fitzgerald who suggested in *The Last Tycoon* that "there are no second acts in American lives."

This book is definitely intended for a popular audience, along the lines of Sherry Turkle's *Alone Together* (2012) or even, going back a few years, Neil Postman's *Amusing Ourselves to Death* (1986). While these authors definitely have strong follow-

The more technologized and interconnected we become, the more dependent we are on the artist for orientation and pattern recognition. While I strongly advocate the teaching of computer programming to kids in grade school, I am just as much a believer in teaching kids how to think critically about the programmed environments in which they will be spending so much of their time. The former is engineering; the latter is liberal arts. The engineers write and launch the equations; the liberal artists must judge their usefulness, recognize the patterns they create, and—oh so very carefully—generalize from there ... In a fractal, it's not how much you see, but how well you see it.

Herein lies the great challenge for individuals and educators. How can we teach ourselves and our students to differentiate between patterns and paranoia? In more scientific terms, can we learn to extrapolate the "signals from the noise?" *Present Shock* gives us many signals to help us navigate through the noise.

Early in the text Rushkoff quotes novelist Zadie Smith saying "it is no longer the writer's job to tell us how somebody felt about something, it is to tell us how the world works." Echoing Smith's sentiment this book tries to create a current we can follow to understand the "existential now" as an ocean rather than a fishbowl.

I don't know that *Present Shock* is the definitive text of the moment. On the other hand, I do think Rushkoff's ideas present powerful conceptual frameworks for the work of media educators, cultural workers and anyone (likely all of us) struggling with the now.

In many ways I was hoping his conclusion—about the way apocalyptic thinking allows us to imagine slowing down from our present lifestyles—would end with a clear *Walking Dead* style climax. I anticipated a nice ten-point checklist we could all use to slay the challenges of the present. Instead, the

ings and are able to make interdisciplinary cases for their prophecies, they risk coming up short when eventually coming under the view of the long lens of history. Social commentator Adrienne LaFrance (@AdrienneLaF) recently tweeted this excerpt from *The New York Times* from 1858, written by someone complaining about the influence of the telegraph: “So far as the influence of the newspaper upon the mind and morals of the people is concerned, there can be no rational doubt that the telegraph has caused vast injury. Superficial, sudden, unsifted, too fast for the truth, must be all telegraphic intelligence. Does it not render the popular mind too fast for the truth?” If we are to believe this long-lost *New York Times* writer, we have had the answer to all our woes for over 150 years: blame it on the telegraph! ❄

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book ended a bit abruptly.

In some ways his linear narrative reads more to me like a feedback loop. Rushkoff purposely leaves the reader with many big questions to ponder beyond the back cover. As such, I found myself looking ahead, hoping to connect *Present Shock* with two other books on my shelf waiting to be read: neuroscientist Daniel Levitin’s *The Organized Mind: Thinking Straight in the Age of Information Overload*, and Naomi Klein’s *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate*. Maybe I would find some patterns to give each text additional meaning.

Of course, those two books are just tiny drops in an endless sea of TV, film, radio, e-mails, text messages, podcasts, appointments, relationships, work commitments and travel plans that want my attention NOW. For these common circumstances Rushkoff did present one big and simple idea best captured by my sixty minutes of reading on that perfect autumn afternoon. Concluding the book’s preface was a simple reminder that could have been its conclusion: “when things begin accelerating wildly out of control...press pause. We have time for this.” ❄

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“Prophecy no longer feels like a description of the future but, rather, a guide to the present... Our society has reoriented itself to the present moment.”
—Douglas Rushkoff, *Present Shock*

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