

# Media literacy

**Media literacy** is a repertoire of competencies that enable people to analyze, evaluate, and create messages in a wide variety of media modes, genres, and formats.

## 1 Education

The terms 'media literacy' and 'media education' are used synonymously in most English-speaking nations. Many scholars and educators consider media literacy to be an expanded conceptualization of literacy. In 1993, a gathering of the media literacy community in the United States developed a definition of media literacy as the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and create messages in a wide variety of forms. lack of education means lack of awareness and we get it from the media.

Media Education is the process of teaching and learning about media.<sup>[1]</sup> It is about developing young people's critical and creative abilities when it comes to the media. Media education should not be confused with educational technology or with educational media. Being able to understand the media enables people to analyze, evaluate, and create messages in a wide variety of media, genres, and forms. Education for media literacy often uses an inquiry-based pedagogic model that encourages people to ask questions about what they watch, hear, and read. Media literacy education provides tools to help people critically analyze messages, offers opportunities for learners to broaden their experience of media, and helps them develop creative skills in making their own media messages.<sup>[2]</sup> Critical analysis can include identifying author, purpose and point of view, examining construction techniques and genres, examining patterns of media representation, and detecting **propaganda**, **ensorship**, and **bias** in news and public affairs programming (and the reasons for these). Media literacy education may explore how structural features—such as **media ownership**, or its funding model<sup>[3]</sup>—affect the information presented.

In North America and Europe, Media literacy includes both empowerment and protectionist perspectives.<sup>[4]</sup> Media literate people should be able to skillfully create and produce media messages, both to show understanding of the specific qualities of each medium, as well as to create **independent media** and participate as active citizens. Media literacy can be seen as contributing to an expanded conceptualization of literacy, treating mass media, popular culture and digital media as new types of 'texts' that require analysis and evaluation. By transforming the process of **media consumption** into an active and critical pro-

cess, people gain greater awareness of the potential for misrepresentation and manipulation (especially through **commercials** and **public relations** techniques), and understand the role of mass media and participatory media in constructing views of reality.<sup>[5]</sup>

Media literacy education is sometimes conceptualized as a way to address the negative dimensions of mass media, **popular culture** and **digital media**, including **media violence**, **gender** and **racial stereotypes**, the **sexualization** of children, and concerns about **loss of privacy**, **cyberbullying** and **Internet predators**. By building knowledge and competencies in using media and technology, media literacy education may provide a type of protection to children and young people by helping them make good choices in their media consumption habits, and patterns of usage.<sup>[6]</sup>

### 1.1 Concepts of media education

David Buckingham has come up with four key concepts that “provide a theoretical framework which can be applied to the whole range of contemporary media and to 'older' media as well: Production, Language, Representation, and Audience.”<sup>[1]</sup> These concepts are defined by David Buckingham as follows:

#### 1.1.1 Production

Production involves the recognition that media texts are consciously made.<sup>[1]</sup> Some media texts are made by individuals working alone, just for themselves or their family and friends, but most are produced and distributed by groups of people often for commercial profit. This means recognizing the economic interests that are at stake in media production, and the ways in which profits are generated. More confident students in media education should be able to debate the implications of these developments in terms of national and cultural identities, and in terms of the range of social groups that are able to gain access to media.<sup>[1]</sup>

Studying media production means looking at:

- **Technologies:** what technologies are used to produce and distribute media texts?
- **Professional practices:** Who makes media texts?
- **The industry:** Who owns the companies that buy and sell media and how do they make a profit?

- Connections between media: How do companies sell the same products across different media?
- Regulation: Who controls the production and distribution of media, and are there laws about this?
- Circulation and distribution: How do texts reach their audiences?
- Access and participation: Whose voices are heard in the media and whose are excluded?<sup>[1]</sup>

### 1.1.2 Language

Every medium has its own combination of languages that it uses to communicate meaning. For example, television uses verbal and written language as well as the languages of moving images and sound. Particular kinds of music or camera angles may be used to encourage certain emotions. When it comes to verbal language, making meaningful statements in media languages involves “paradigmatic choices” and “syntagmatic combinations”.<sup>[1]</sup> By analyzing these languages, one can come to a better understanding of how meanings are created.<sup>[1]</sup>

Studying media languages means looking at:

- Meanings: How does media use different forms of language to convey ideas or meanings?
- Conventions: How do these uses of languages become familiar and generally accepted?
- Codes: How are the grammatical ‘rules’ of media established and what happens when they are broken?
- Genres: How do these conventions and codes operate in different types of media contexts?
- Choices: What are the effects of choosing certain forms of language, such as a certain type of camera shot?
- Combinations: How is meaning conveyed through the combination or sequencing of images, sounds, or words?
- Technologies: How do technologies affect the meanings that can be created?<sup>[1]</sup>

### 1.1.3 Representation

The notion of ‘representation’ is one of the first established principles of media education. The media offers viewers a facilitated outlook of the world and a re-representation of reality. Media production involves selecting and combining incidents, making events into stories, and creating characters. Media representations allow viewers to see the world in some particular ways and not others. Audiences also compare media with their own experiences and make judgements about how realistic they

are. Media representations can be seen as real in some ways but not in others: viewers may understand that what they are seeing is only imaginary and yet they still know it can explain reality.<sup>[1]</sup>

Studying media representations means looking at:

- Realism: Is this text intended to be realistic? Why do some texts seem more realistic than others?
- Telling the truth: How do media claim to tell the truth about the world?
- Presence and absence: What is included and excluded from the media world?
- Bias and objectivity: Do media texts support particular views about the world? Do they use moral or political values?
- Stereotyping: How do media represent particular social groups? Are those representations accurate?
- Interpretations: Why do audiences accept some media representations as true, or reject others as false?
- Influences: Do media representations affect our views of particular social groups or issues?<sup>[1]</sup>

### 1.1.4 Audience

Studying audiences means looking at how demographic audiences are targeted and measured, and how media are circulated and distributed throughout. It means looking at different ways in which individuals use, interpret, and respond to media. The media increasingly have had to compete for people’s attention and interest because research has shown that audiences are now much more sophisticated and diverse than has been suggested in the past decades. Debating views about audiences and attempting to understand and reflect on our own and others’ use of media is therefore a crucial element of media education.<sup>[1]</sup>

Studying media audiences means looking at:

- Targeting: How are media aimed at particular audiences?
- Address: How do the media speak to audiences?
- Circulation: How do media reach audiences?
- Uses: How do audiences use media in their daily lives? What are their habits and patterns of use?
- Making sense: How do audiences interpret media? What meanings do they make?
- Pleasures: What pleasures do audiences gain from media?

- **Social differences:** What is the role of gender, social class, age, and ethnic background in audience behavior?<sup>[1]</sup>

Further to the concepts presented by David Buckingham, Henry Jenkins discusses the emergence of a participatory culture, which our students are actively engaged in.<sup>[7]</sup> With the emergence of this participatory culture, schools must focus on what Jenkins calls the “new media literacies”, that is a set of cultural competencies and social skills that young people need in the new media landscape.<sup>[7]</sup> In the new media literacies we see a shift in focus from individual expression to community involvement, involving the development of social skills through collaboration and networking.<sup>[7]</sup> Jenkins lists the following skills, as essential for students in this new media landscape:

- **Play:** The capacity to experiment with the surroundings as a form of problem solving.
- **Performance:** The ability to adopt alternative identities for the purpose of improvisation and discovery.
- **Simulation:** The ability to interpret and construct dynamic models of real world processes.
- **Appropriation:** The ability to meaningfully sample and remix media content.
- **Multitasking:** The ability to scan the environment and shift focus onto salient details.
- **Distributed Cognition:** The ability to interact meaningfully with tools that expand mental capacities.
- **Collective Intelligence:** The ability to pool knowledge and compare notes with others toward a common goal.
- **Judgement:** The ability to evaluate the reliability and credibility of different information sources.
- **Transmedia Navigation:** The ability to follow the flow of stories and information across multiple modalities.
- **Networking:** The ability to search for, synthesize, and disseminate information.
- **Negotiation:** The ability to travel across diverse communities, discerning and respecting multiple perspectives, and grasping and following alternative norms.<sup>[7]</sup>

## 1.2 UNESCO and media education

UNESCO has had a long-standing experience with media literacy and education. The organization has supported a number of initiatives to introduce media and information literacy as an important part of lifelong learning.<sup>[8]</sup> Most recently, the UNESCO Action for Media Education and Literacy brought together experts from numerous regions of the world to “catalyze processes to introduce media and information literacy components into teacher training curricula worldwide.”<sup>[8]</sup>

### 1.2.1 UNESCO questionnaire

In 2001, a media education survey was sent out by UNESCO in order to better understand which countries were incorporating media studies into different schools’ curricula, as well as to help develop new initiatives in the field of media education. A questionnaire was sent to a total of 72 experts on media education in 52 different countries around the world. The people who received this questionnaire were people involved in academics (such as teachers), policy makers, and educational advisers. The questionnaire addressed three key areas:

- 1) “Media education in schools: the extent, aims, and conceptual basis of current provision; the nature of assessment; and the role of production by students.”<sup>[9]</sup>
- 2) “Partnerships: the involvement of media industries and media regulators in media education; the role of informal youth groups; the provision of teacher education.”<sup>[8]</sup>
- 3) “The development of media education: research and evaluation of media education provision; the main needs of educators; obstacles to future development; and the potential contribution of UNESCO.”<sup>[8]</sup>

The results from the answers of the survey were double-sided. It was noted that media education had been making a very uneven progress because while in one country there was an abundant amount of work towards media education, another country may have hardly even heard of the concept. One of the main reasons why media education has not taken full swing in some countries is because of the lack of policy makers addressing the issue. In some developing countries, educators say that media education was only just beginning to register as a concern because they were just starting to develop basic print literacy.<sup>[8]</sup>

In the countries that media education existed at all, it would be offered as an elective class or an optional area of the school system rather than being on its own. Many countries argued that media education should not be a separate part of the curriculum but rather should be added to a subject already established. The countries which deemed media education as a part of the curriculum included the United States, Canada, Mexico, New Zealand, and Australia. Many countries lacked even just basic research on media education as a topic, including Russia

and Sweden. Some said that popular culture is not worthy enough of study. But all of the correspondents realized the importance of media education as well as the importance of formal recognition from their government and policy makers that media education should be taught in schools.<sup>[8]</sup>

## 2 History

Media literacy education is actively focused on the instructional methods and pedagogy of media literacy, integrating theoretical and critical frameworks rising from constructivist learning theory, media studies and cultural studies scholarship. This work has arisen from a legacy of media and technology use in education throughout the 20th century and the emergence of cross-disciplinary work at the intersections of scholarly work in media studies and education. Voices of Media Literacy, a project of the Center for Media Literacy representing first-person interviews with media literacy pioneers active prior to 1990 in English-speaking countries, provides historical context for the rise of the media literacy field and is available at <http://www.medialit.org/voices-media-literacy-international-pioneers-speak> Media education is developing in Great Britain, Australia, South Africa, Canada, the United States, with a growing interest in the Netherlands, Italy, Greece, Austria, Switzerland, India, Russia and among many other nations. UNESCO has played an important role in supporting media and information literacy by encouraging the development of national information and media literacy policies, including in education<sup>[10]</sup> UNESCO has developed training resources to help teachers integrate information and media literacy into their teaching and provide them with appropriate pedagogical methods and curricula.

### 2.1 India

Media Clubs in schools is a Central Institute of Educational Technology, NCERT project to promote media literacy in India. The project was launched in 2009-2010. This project in fact is the extension of projects undertaken on media literacy in the year 2007-2008 and 2008-2009. The first phase of the project focused on the mapping of Media Literacy initiatives across the world. A document was prepared titled "Media Literacy initiatives across the world". The document is the collation of print and electronic material available on media literacy initiatives in various part of the world. In case of India, various experts from the field of media, media educators and media literacy experts were interviewed and a comprehensive print report was prepared. In addition to the print report three video programs on media literacy initiatives in India were produced. This phase was followed by the second phase in which reading material

was prepared for students as well as teachers. School teachers were also trained in media literacy. Various media educators and the experts handling media literacy projects were invited to share their experiences with the teachers. The training programs were huge success with more than 100 teachers being trained in face to face mode. That was the first time in India when such training programs on media literacy were organized for teachers. Thereafter, media studies as a subject was introduced in schools as a pilot project. The recently launched third phase (2010-2011) is the extension of discussion held in first and second phases with the teachers. Teachers who were open to the idea of having media discourse at school level were quite apprehensive of having it in the form of another new subject. According to them introduction of new subject would add to the curriculum load and also they shared their unpreparedness to handle this subject. Then came the concept of establishing media clubs in Schools. At present in India there are around 100 media clubs which are running successfully. These media clubs will be mentoring new media clubs next year. More on Media Clubs by the coordinator, Media Literacy Project, India at <http://www.slideshare.net/anubhutyadav/media-habits-of-school-students-18> Media studies as a subject has entered the boundaries of schools in India little late but at last. Disregarding media from the school curriculum has always bothered many experts who are working in the field of media studies. Many initiatives were started to introduce children, parents and teachers to the concepts of media studies but all happened out of schools. One of the key point made by the NCF 2005 i.e. connecting knowledge to the life outside the school, has actually opened the door for media studies, a subject which has never in the past was given its due importance in school curriculum. It was realized that students' media experiences are as important as their experience with their parents, peers and teachers and by allowing them to bring their media experiences in classroom, a creative environment can be created where they could get a chance to discuss issues which are very integral to their life. It will enable the students to see behind the screen and read between the lines and to be an active citizen of the world's largest democracy. The vision of democracy articulated by the Secondary Education Commission (1952) is worth recalling here and how media understanding fits into the vision is motivating enough for those who would be interested in taking this initiative forward. "Citizenship in a democracy involves many intellectual, social and moral qualities... a democratic citizen should have the understanding and the intellectual integrity to sift truth from falsehood, facts from propaganda and to reject the dangerous appeal of fanaticism and prejudice... This is what media literacy initiatives world over propagates. The strategies to implement them may vary in different countries but the idea is to make students to reflect critically on media issues. It entails the acceptance of multiple views on social issues and commitment to

democratic forms of interaction and helps children to see issues from different perspectives and understand how such issues are connected to their lives. The content and language of media products provide ways of looking at the world. The media is a hidden curriculum for students which should be explored. This has been explored in many countries and is called by various names in different parts of the world like television literacy, critical viewership skills, critical viewing skills. These projects were started with the initiative of an individual or small group and later on it attracted like minded people and became success. In fact a media study is one of the fastest growing subject which need to be introduced not only at college or university level but also at school level. Undoubtedly it is important to engage students in media discourse and the subject needs to be taken to school but then it has its own challenges. First, most teachers are unfamiliar with the subject and are poorly equipped to teach this subject as the subject is not a part of Bachelor of Education or Master of education curriculum. Second, introduction of one more subject may increase curriculum load on students. Keeping in view the need for media discourse at school level and the challenges, a media club in school can provide a solution. Both media educators and teachers can be involved in setting up and running of the Media Clubs. A community based learning (CBL) approach is proposed with the goal of engaging multiple elements involved in the community in learning process including local newspaper, channels, colleges, parents and teachers. At present Media clubs are running in Delhi, Kerela and West Bengal. In year 2011-2012 project will be extended to all states in India. The purpose is to promote media literacy across the nation . Participation of other states in this project will have the following benefits: Sharing of the experience of already established media clubs with other states. National studies like tracking media habits of children of India. Participating states can get information on development and planning aspect of media clubs from the Delhi experience. States can share their experiences and handle state specific issues while talking about media literacy. Students and teachers of different states will be connected with each other while working on Media Literacy projects. Media Literacy Initiative in India <http://www.nroer.gov.in/gstudio/resources/videos/show/54274/>

## 2.2 United Kingdom

Education for what is now termed media literacy has been developing in the UK since at least the 1930s. In the 1960s, there was a paradigm shift in the field of media literacy to emphasize working within popular culture rather than trying to convince people that popular culture was primarily destructive. This was known as the popular arts paradigm. In the 1970s, there came a recognition that the ideological power of the media was tied

to the naturalization of the image. Constructed messages were being passed off as natural ones. The focus of media literacy also shifted to the consumption of images and representations, also known as the representational paradigm.<sup>[11]</sup> Development has gathered pace since the 1970s when the first formal courses in Film Studies and, later, Media Studies, were established as options for young people in the 14-19 age range: over 100,000 students (about 5% of this age range) now take these courses annually. Scotland has always had a separate education system from the rest of the UK and began to develop policies for media education in the 1980s. In England, the creation of the National Curriculum in 1990 included some limited requirements for teaching about the media as part of English. The UK is widely regarded as a leader in the development of education for media literacy. Key agencies that have been involved in this development include the British Film Institute,<sup>[12]</sup> the English and Media Centre<sup>[13]</sup> Film Education<sup>[14]</sup> and the Centre for the Study of Children, Youth and Media at the Institute of Education, London.<sup>[15]</sup>

## 2.3 Australia

In Australia, media education was influenced by developments in Britain related to the inoculation, popular arts and demystification approaches. Key theorists who influenced Australian media education were Graeme Turner and John Hartley who helped develop Australian media and cultural studies. During the 1980s and 1990s, Western Australians Robyn Quin and Barrie MacMahon wrote seminal text books such as *Real Images*, translating many complex media theories into classroom appropriate learning frameworks. In most Australian states, media is one of five strands of the Arts Key Learning Area and includes “essential learnings” or “outcomes” listed for various stages of development. At the senior level (years 11 and 12), several states offer Media Studies as an elective. For example, many Queensland schools offer Film, Television and New Media, while Victorian schools offer VCE Media. Media education is supported by the teacher professional association Australian Teachers of Media. With the introduction of a new Australian National Curriculum, schools are beginning to implement media education as part of the arts curriculum, using media literacy as a means to educate students how to deconstruct, construct and identify themes in media.

## 2.4 Africa

In South Africa, the increasing demand for Media Education has evolved from the dismantling of apartheid and the 1994 democratic elections. The first national Media Education conference in South Africa was actually held in 1990 and the new national curriculum has been in the writing stages since 1997. Since this curriculum strives to reflect the values and principles of a democratic society

there seems to be an opportunity for critical literacy and Media Education in Languages and Culture courses.

## 2.5 Europe

In areas of Europe, media education has seen many different forms. Media education was introduced into the Finnish elementary curriculum in 1970 and into high schools in 1977. But the media education we know today did not evolve in Finland until the 1990s. Media education has been compulsory in Sweden since 1980 and in Denmark since 1970. In both these countries, media education evolved in the 1980s and 1990s as media education gradually moved away from moralizing attitudes towards an approach that is more searching and pupil-centered. In 1994, the Danish education bill gave recognition to media education but it is still not an integrated part of the school. The focus in Denmark seems to be on information technology.

France has taught film from the inception of the medium, but it has only been recently that conferences and media courses for teachers have been organized with the inclusion of media production. Germany saw theoretical publications on media literacy in the 1970s and 1980s, with a growing interest for media education inside and outside the educational system in the 80s and 90s. In the Netherlands media literacy was placed in the agenda by the Dutch government in 2006 as an important subject for the Dutch society. In April, 2008, an official center has been created (mediawijsheid expertisecentrum = medialiteracy expertisecenter) by the Dutch government. This center is more a network organization existing out of different partners who have their own expertise with the subject of media education. The idea is that media education will become a part of the official curriculum.

The history of media education in Russia goes back to the 1920s. The first attempts to instruct in media education (on the press and film materials, with the vigorous emphasis on the communist ideology) appeared in the 1920s but were stopped by Joseph Stalin's repressions. The end of the 1950s - the beginning of the 1960s was the time of the revival of media education in secondary schools, universities, after-school children centers (Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Voronezh, Samara, Kurgan, Tver, Rostov on Don, Taganrog, Novosibirsk, Ekaterinburg, etc.), the revival of media education seminars and conferences for the teachers. During the time when the intensive rethinking of media education approaches was on the upgrade in the Western hemisphere, in Russia of the 1970s-1980s media education was still developing within the aesthetic concept. Among the important achievements of 1970s-1990s one can recall the first official programs of film and media education, published by Ministry of Education, increasing interest of Ph.D. to media education, experimental theoretic and practical work on media education by O.Baranov (Tver), S.Penzin (Voronezh), G.Polichko, U.Rabinovich (Kurgan), Y.Usov (Moscow), Alexander

Fedorov (Taganrog), A.Sharikov (Moscow) and others. The important events in media education development in Russia are the registration of the new specialization (since 2002) for the pedagogical universities - 'Media Education' (№ 03.13.30), and the launch of a new academic journal 'Media Education' (since January 2005), partly sponsored by the ICOS UNESCO 'Information for All'. Additionally, the Internet sites of Russian Association for Film and Media Education (English and Russian versions) were created. Taking into account the fact that UNESCO defines media education as the priority field of the cultural educational development in the 21st century, media literacy has good prospects in Russia.

## 2.6 Canada

In North America, the beginnings of a formalized approach to media literacy as a topic of education is often attributed to the 1978 formation of the Ontario-based Association for Media Literacy (AML). Before that time, instruction in media education was usually the purview of individual teachers and practitioners. Canada was the first country in North America to require media literacy in the school curriculum. Every province has mandated media education in its curriculum. For example, the new curriculum of Quebec mandates media literacy from Grade 1 until final year of secondary school (Secondary V). The launching of media education in Canada came about for two reasons. One reason was the concern about the pervasiveness of American popular culture and the other was the education system-driven necessity of contexts for new educational paradigms. Canadian communication scholar Marshall McLuhan ignited the North American educational movement for media literacy in the 1950s and 1960s. Two of Canada's leaders in Media Literacy and Media Education are Barry Duncan and John Pungente. Duncan died on June 6, 2012, even after retired from classroom teaching but was still active in media education. Pungente is a Jesuit priest who has promoted media literacy since the early 1960s.

Media Awareness Network (MNet), a Canadian non-profit media education organization, hosts a Web site which contains hundreds of free lesson plans to help teachers integrate media into the classroom. MNet also has created award-winning educational games on media education topics, several of which are available free from the site, and has also conducted original research on media issues, most notable the study *Young Canadians in a Wired World*. MNet also hosts the Talk Media Blog, a regular column on media education issues.

## 2.7 The United States

Media literacy education has been an interest in the United States since the early 20th century, when high school English teachers first started using film to develop

students' critical thinking and communication skills. However, media literacy education is distinct from simply using media and technology in the classroom, a distinction that is exemplified by the difference between "teaching with media" and "teaching about media."<sup>[16]</sup> In the 1950s and 60s, the 'film grammar' approach to media literacy education developed in the United States, where educators began to show commercial films to children, having them learn a new terminology consisting of words such as fade, dissolve, truck, pan, zoom, and cut. Films were connected to literature and history. To understand the constructed nature of film, students explored plot development, character, mood and tone. Then, during the 1970s and 1980s, attitudes about mass media and mass culture began to shift. Around the English-speaking world, educators began to realize the need to "guard against our prejudice of thinking of print as the only real medium that the English teacher has a stake in."<sup>[17]</sup> A whole generation of educators began to not only acknowledge film and television as new, legitimate forms of expression and communication, but also explored practical ways to promote serious inquiry and analysis—in higher education, in the family, in schools and in society.<sup>[18]</sup> Typically, U.S. media literacy education includes a focus on news, advertising, issues of representation, and media ownership. Media literacy competencies can also be cultivated in the home, through activities including co-viewing and discussion.<sup>[19]</sup>

Media literacy education began to appear in state English education curriculum frameworks by the early 1990s as a result of increased awareness in the central role of visual, electronic and digital media in the context of contemporary culture. Nearly all 50 states have language that supports media literacy in state curriculum frameworks.<sup>[20]</sup> In 2004, Montana developed educational standards around media literacy that students are required to be competent in by grades 4, 8, and 12. Additionally, an increasing number of school districts have begun to develop school-wide programs, elective courses, and other after-school opportunities for media analysis and production.

There is no national data on the reach of media literacy programs in the United States.<sup>[21]</sup> The evolution of information and communication technologies has expanded the subject of media literacy to incorporate information literacy, collaboration and problem-solving skills, and emphasis on the social responsibilities of communication. Various stakeholders struggle over nuances of meaning associated with the conceptualization of the practice on media literacy education. Educational scholars may use the term *critical media literacy* to emphasize the exploration of power and ideology in media analysis. Other scholars may use terms like *new media literacy* to emphasize the application of media literacy to user-generated content or *21st century literacy* to emphasize the use of technology tools.<sup>[22]</sup> As far back as 2001, the Action Coalition for Media Education (ACME) split from the

main media literacy organization as the result of debate about whether or not the media industry should support the growth of media literacy education in the United States. **Renee Hobbs** of Temple University in Philadelphia wrote about this general question as one of the "Seven Great Debates" in media literacy education in an influential 1998 *Journal of Communication* article.<sup>[23]</sup>

The media industry has supported media literacy education in the United States. **Make Media Matter** is one of the many blogs (an "interactive forum") the Independent Film Channel features as a way for individuals to assess the role media plays in society and the world. The television program, **The Media Project**, offers a critical look at the state of news media in contemporary society. During the 1990s, the Discovery Channel supported the implementation of **Assignment: Media Literacy**, a statewide educational initiative for K-12 students developed in collaboration with the Maryland State Board of Education.

Because of the decentralized nature of the education system in a country with 70 million children now in public or private schools, media literacy education develops as the result of groups of advocates in school districts, states or regions who lobby for its inclusion in the curriculum. There is no central authority making nationwide curriculum recommendations and each of the fifty states has numerous school districts, each of which operates with a great degree of independence from one another. However, most U.S. states include media literacy in health education, with an emphasis on understanding environmental influences on health decision-making. Tobacco and alcohol advertising are frequently targeted as objects for "deconstruction," which is one of the instructional methods of media literacy education. This resulted from an emphasis on media literacy generated by the Clinton White House. The Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) held a series of conferences in 1996 and 1997 which brought greater awareness of media literacy education as a promising practice in health and substance abuse prevention education. The medical and public health community now recognizes the media as a cultural environmental influence on health and sees media literacy education as a strategy to support the development of healthy behavior.

Interdisciplinary scholarship in media literacy education is emerging. In 2009, a scholarly journal was launched, the *Journal of Media Literacy Education*,<sup>[24]</sup> to support the work of scholars and practitioners in the field. Universities such as **Appalachian State University**, **Columbia University**, **Ithaca College**, **New York University**, **Brooklyn College of the City University of New York**, the **University of Texas-Austin**, **The University of Rhode Island** and the **University of Maryland** offer courses and summer institutes in media literacy for pre-service teachers and graduate students. **Brigham Young University** offers a graduate program in media education specifically for inservice teachers. The **Salzburg Academy for Media and Global Change** is another program that educates

students and professionals from around the world the importance of being literate about the media.

### 2.7.1 Impacts of Media Literacy Education on Civic Engagement

Media literacy education appears to have a positive impact on overall youth civic engagement.<sup>[25]</sup> Youth who attend schools that offer media literacy programs are more likely to politically engage online and are more likely to report encountering diverse viewpoints online.<sup>[26]</sup>

### 2.7.2 Youth Interest in Media Literacy

A nationally representative survey found that 84% of young people think they and their friends would benefit from training on verifying information found online.<sup>[21]</sup>

### 2.7.3 National Association for Media Literacy Education

More than 600 educators are members of the National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE), a national membership group that hosts a bi-annual conference. In 2007, this group developed an influential policy document, the *Core Principles of Media Literacy Education in the United States*.<sup>[27]</sup> It states, “The purpose of media literacy education is to help individuals of all ages develop the habits of inquiry and skills of expression that they need to be critical thinkers, effective communicators and active citizens in today’s world. Principles include: (1) Media Literacy Education requires active inquiry and critical thinking about the messages we receive and create; (2) Media Literacy Education expands the concept of literacy in all forms of media (i.e., reading and writing); (3) Media Literacy Education builds and reinforces skills for learners of all ages. Like print literacy, those skills necessitate integrated, interactive, and repeated practice; (4) Media Literacy Education develops informed, reflective and engaged participants essential for a democratic society; (5) Media Literacy Education recognizes that media are a part of culture and function as agents of socialization; and (6) Media Literacy Education affirms that people use their individual skills, beliefs and experiences to construct their own meanings from media messages.

## 3 See also

- Discourse
- Information and media literacy
- Information literacy
- Intertextuality
- Multiliteracy

- Postliterate society
- Transmediation
- Visual literacy
- digital literacy
- information literacy
- critical literacy

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## 5 Further reading

- Fedorov, Alexander. *Media Education and Media Literacy LAP Lambert Academic Publishing*
- *Study on Assessment Criteria for Media Literacy Levels (PDF)*
- *Study on the Current Trends and Approaches to Media Literacy in Europe (PDF)*

## 6 External links

- [Media Education Lab at the Harrington School of Communication and Media, University of Rhode Island](#) - Improves the practices of digital and media literacy education through scholarship and community service.
- [A Journey to Media Literacy Community](#) - A space for collaboration to promote media literacy concepts as well as a learning tool to become media-wise.
- [Audiovisual and Media Policies](#) - Media Literacy at the European Commission
- [Center for Media Literacy](#) - providing the CML MediaLit Kit with Five Core Concepts and Five Key Questions of media literacy
- [EAVI](#) - European Association for Viewers' Interests - Not for profit international organisation working in the field of media literacy
- [Information Literacy and Media Education](#)
- [National Association for Media Literacy Education](#)
- [Project Look Sharp](#) - an initiative of Ithaca College to provide materials, training and support for the effective integration of media literacy with critical thinking into classroom curricula at all education levels.
- [MED](#) - Associazione italiana per l'educazione ai media e alla comunicazione - the Italian Association for Media Literacy Education.
- [Advertising Standards Authority \(United Kingdom\)](#)
- [Body Image; Media images of the "ideal" female body: Can acute exercise moderate their psychological impact?](#)

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