



CHAPTER 2

TEACHING MEDIA LITERACY



Without an understanding of media grammars, we cannot hope to achieve a contemporary awareness of the world in which we live.

—Carpenter & McLuhan, 1960, p. xii

In Chapter 1, we introduced the media literacy core concepts and key critical-thinking (deconstruction) questions. Becoming familiar with both is important for teachers and students alike in order to understand media literacy and how the media work.

The Center for Media Literacy's founder, Elizabeth Thoman, stresses the importance of critical inquiry, but she goes on to say it's not just asking questions, but rather asking the right questions: "at the heart of media literacy is the principle of inquiry" (Thoman, 1993).

Bill Yousman of the Media Education Foundation sums it up best:

It's not about teaching kids how to watch TV. ... It's about teaching them to watch TV critically. In our schools we take it for granted that we should teach children how to analyze a poem in great detail. But in fact, children will be exposed to many more ads and sitcoms and video games and Hollywood movies in their lives than poetry. (Yousman, 2006)

Pedagogy and Principles of Teaching Media Literacy

In Chapter 3, I recommend some images from history and popular culture as starting points to get students thinking and questioning. When using an image, for example, I will strip away the caption (the context) in order to get students to simply focus on the image itself.

We know that young people are exposed to literally thousands of media messages daily. Even in school they are not immune from marketing and advertising. When teachers take the time to become familiar with youth media and popular culture, they will find it is the hook to engaging their students in learning, while at the same time meeting teaching standards and other learning objectives. So regardless of the medium (TV, radio, film, newspapers, magazines, internet) or the method (advertising, bias, propaganda, stereotypes, etc.) the concepts combined with the questions are essential starting points for analysis, deconstruction, interpretation and more.

Expansion and Explanation of Key Deconstruction Questions

The media deconstruction/construction framework shown in Table 2.1 below is based on the Center for Media Literacy's five key questions for consumers and producers.

Table 2.1 Media Deconstruction/Construction Framework

Core Concept	Key Deconstruction Question	Construction Question
1. All media messages are "constructed."	Who created this message?	What am I authoring?
2. Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules.	What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?	Does my message reflect understanding in format, creativity, and technology?
3. Different people experience the same media message differently.	How might different people understand this message differently?	Is my message engaging and compelling for my target audience?
4. Media have embedded values and points of view.	What values, lifestyles, and points of view are represented in, or omitted from, this message ?	Have I clearly and consistently framed values, lifestyles, and points of view in my content?
5. Most media messages are organized to gain profit and/or power.	Why is this message being sent?	Have I communicated my purpose effectively?

Source: Media Lit Kit, CML's Five Key Questions and Core Concepts (Q/Tips) for Consumers and Producers (Center for Media Literacy, 2009).

Key Words and Key Questions

The key words associated with the five key questions are authorship, format, audience, content, and purpose.

1. Authorship

The CML suggests these additional guiding questions be considered:

- What kind of “text” is it?
- What are the various elements (building blocks) that make up the whole?
- How similar or different is it to others of the same genre?
- Which technologies are used in its creation?
- How would it be different in a different medium?
- What choices were made that might have been made differently?
- How many people did it take to create this message?
- What are their various jobs? (Thoman & Jolls, 2003, p. 23)

2. Format

Again, these questions are recommended:

- What do you notice...(about the way the message is constructed)?
Colors? Shapes? Size?
 - Sounds? Words? Silence?
 - Props? Sets? Clothing?
 - Movement?
 - Composition? Lighting?
- Where is the camera? What is the viewpoint?
- How is the story told visually? What are people doing?
- Are there any visual symbols? Metaphors?

- What's the emotional appeal? Persuasive devices?
- What makes it seem "real?" (Thoman & Jolls, 2003, p. 24)

3. Audience

Consider these questions:

- Have you ever experienced anything like this?
- How close does it come to what you experienced in real life?
- What did you learn from this media text? What did you learn about yourself from experiencing the media text?
- What did you learn from other people's response—and their experience?
- How many other interpretations could there be? How could we hear about them?
- How can you explain the different responses?
- Are other viewpoints just as valid as mine? (Thoman & Jolls, 2003, p. 25)

4. Content

- How is the human person characterized? What kinds of behaviors/consequences are depicted?
- What type of person is the reader/watcher/listener invited to identify with?
- What questions come to mind as you watch/read/listen?
- What ideas or values are being "sold" to us in this message?
- What political ideas are communicated in the message?
- What judgments or statements are made about how we treat other people?
- What is the overall worldview?
- Are any ideas or perspectives left out? How would you find what's missing? (Thoman & Jolls, 2003, p. 26)

5. Purpose

- Who's in control of the creation and transmission of this message?
- Why are they sending it? How do you know?
- Who are they sending it to? How do you know?
- Who is served by, profits, or benefits from the message?
 - the public?
 - private interests?
 - individuals?
 - institutions?
- Who wins? Who loses? Who decides?
- What economic decisions may have influenced the construction or transmission? (Adapted from Thoman & Jolls, 2003, p. 27)

Additional Deconstruction Questions

Here are additional questions for clarifying the purpose (Key Question 5) of the message:

- What's being sold in this message?
- What's being told?
- Who profits from this message?
- Who pays for it?

Getting our students to become critical thinkers (and viewers) by questioning media messages is an important goal. Over time, I've developed and used the following series of critical thinking questions:

1. Who is the producer/storyteller of the message?
2. What is their purpose/motive/agenda?
3. Who is the intended (primary) target audience?

- How do you know?
 - Is there another (secondary) audience?
4. What does the message say? How does it say it?
 5. How do you know what the message means?
 6. What format/medium does the producer use?
 7. What are the advantages of the format/medium?
 8. What methods/techniques does the producer use to make the message attractive/believable?
 9. What lifestyle is portrayed in the message? What clues tell you?
 10. Who makes money or benefits from the message?
 11. Who/what is left out of the message?
 12. Whose interests are served by telling/showing the message in a particular way?
 13. Do you agree with the message?
 14. How might different people interpret the message differently?
 15. What do you know, what do you not know, and what would you like to know?
 16. Where can you go to verify the information or get more reliable information?
 17. What can you do with the information you have obtained from the message?

Pedagogical Concepts

The five core concepts and corresponding key questions developed by the Center for Media Literacy are just one of the models for teaching media literacy. Another framework for teaching media literacy is the Media Literacy Triangle (Figure 2.1) developed by Eddie Dick of the Scottish Film Council and included in Rick Shepherd's *Elementary Media Education: The Perfect Curriculum* (1992). This model drives and supports curriculum development and learning outcomes.

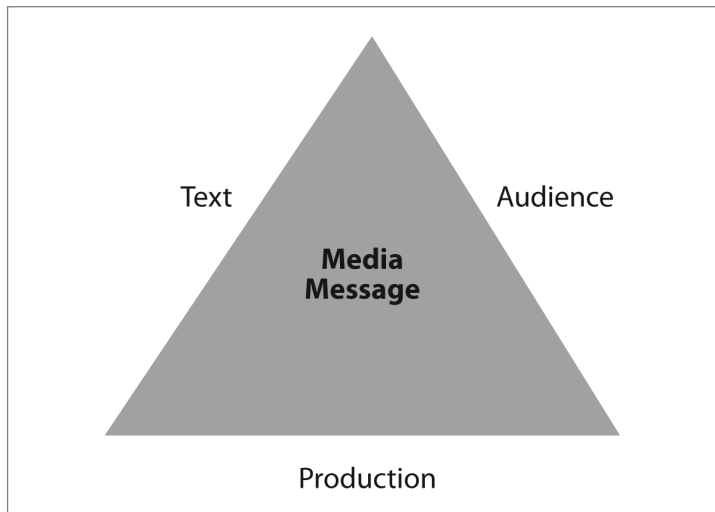


FIGURE 2.1 Media literacy triangle (Shepherd, 1992).

A *text* is any media product we wish to examine. Anyone who receives a media text is a member of an *audience*. *Production* refers to everything that goes into the making of a media text (Shepherd, 1992).

Most educators agree that effective media literacy pedagogy must involve the use of authentic media texts, in which students are actively engaged in not only analyzing media, but creating it as well. Let's take advertising as an example. An elementary educator might start by having his or her students begin to identify and be aware of signs.

Students might draw five different types of sign. The teacher might introduce a billboard as one type of sign—and thus students begin to be aware that signs are ads and use colors, words, and images to get attention.

A middle grades educator might have his or her students engage in a semester-long survey of their environment, identifying where ads are located, including at home and at school. Students could use digital cameras to photograph the ads, making note of locations, demographics, techniques of persuasion, and more. Using magazines found at school or at home, students could conduct a "content analysis," noting which products are pitched and who is being targeted. A high school teacher might take students into the real world of advertising. They might view episodes of AMC's

Mad Men to get a feel for how ad agencies pitched campaigns in the 1960s. Students might research how a particular product or candidate might have been marketed then and compare it to how it is marketed now, noticing the similarities and the differences.

The teacher could invite a retired advertising executive who could help dispel some of the myths portrayed in the *Mad Men* series. Another engaging advertising activity would be to engage students in learning how to “read” an ad, analyzing and deconstructing the words, images, layout, and inferred and sub-text messages, as well as the economics behind it. The teacher might then have students create their own ads by using online tools such as Glogster or VoiceThread, or by simply using construction paper and markers. It is the combination of analysis plus production that makes media literacy education so effective.

Most schools today understand that learning must also engage the student in higher order thinking skills (HOTS). A major element in HOTS is learning to ask questions of what we see, read, and hear. Media literacy, as we have seen, certainly fits in here with its emphasis on “critical inquiry.”

Table 2.2 Bloom’s Digital Taxonomy (Churches, 2008)

Higher Order Thinking Skills	
Creating	Designing, constructing, planning, producing, inventing, devising, making
Evaluating	Checking, hypothesizing, critiquing, experimenting, judging, testing, detecting, monitoring
Analyzing	Comparing, organizing, deconstructing, attributing, outlining, finding, structuring, integrating
Applying	Implementing, carrying out, using, executing
Understanding	Interpreting, summarizing, inferring, paraphrasing, classifying, comparing, explaining, exemplifying
Remembering	Recognizing, listing, describing, identifying, retrieving, naming, locating, finding
Lower Order Thinking Skills	

Since the mid 1950s, educators have relied on, and put into practice, Bloom’s Taxonomy of Learning. The verbs that comprise Bloom’s taxonomy describe the

skills students should know to be effective learners of knowledge. Over time, Bloom's taxonomy has changed to reflect many of the changes in education thinking. Most recently, a Bloom's Digital Taxonomy has emerged; at the top of the higher order thinking skills sits the verb *creating*. And what would students create? In this model (see Table 2.2), students are creating media, such as film, video, blogs, podcasts (audio), and more.

Why Study the Media?

Today's students spend much of their waking time connected to the media. Among young people aged 8–18, the average amount of time spent with all media (TV, music, computers, video games, print, and movies) is 7 hours and 38 minutes, however, “today's youth pack a total of 10 hours and 45 minutes worth of media content into those daily 7 1/2 hours” (Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2010, p. 2). This figure actually shocked researchers for the Kaiser Family Foundation when they announced the latest data in January 2010. They had expected time spent viewing TV, for example, to be displaced by new media. It was not.

So young people are enamored of the media. How can we, as educators, take advantage of their love of media? Tap into it. When we recognize the media and popular culture of our students, and incorporate it into instruction, we demonstrate that we value their media and its connection to learning.

One of the things all educators need to acknowledge is that media are also texts. This book will help you begin to teach with and about the media. Currently media analysis and deconstruction activities are not common in textbooks. This book will help you, and your students, begin to recognize the importance and relevance of media literacy and its place in the classroom.

A Framework for Teaching Media Literacy

One popular framework to use with students to help them better understand media and media literacy is the TAP Questioning Model. In Figure 2.2, TAP represents three sides of a triangle and stands for text, audience, and production.

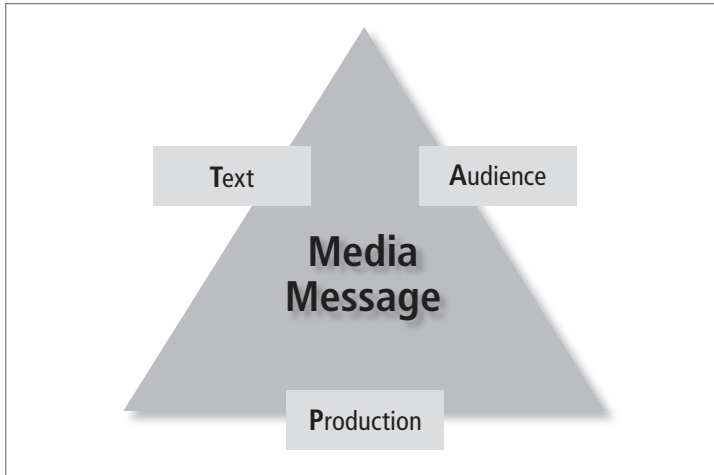


FIGURE 2.2 TAP Questioning Model.

Text is typically associated with something in print. A text can be a film, a TV show, an advertisement, a radio program, a photograph, or video game.

Audience is the particular demographic that each text is designed specifically for.

Production is the process of making (putting together) or creating media texts.

Students could study a media text by applying a specific list of questions. Take a look at the following questions, taken from Diane Marks' (2009) materials for her course at Appalachian State University:

Text

- What kind of media work is this (magazine, T-shirt, poster, etc.)?
- In what ways does this media work tell a story?
- What type or category of story is it?
- Does it follow a formula?
- What are the codes and conventions used?

- What are the characters like?
- Are there any stereotypes?
- What values are being promoted?
- How do I know this?
- Whose point of view do the values represent?
- Are my values represented?
- Why or why not?

Audience

- Who is the target audience for this media work?
- How can I tell?
- How and why does this media work appeal to its audience?
- How does this media work appeal to me?
- What things do I like and dislike?
- In what ways do people use or consume the media work to make it more enjoyable?
- What is the message (implicit and explicit)?

Production

- Who produced this media work and for what purpose?
- How can I influence the production of this kind of media work?
- How is this text distributed or sold to the public? Who profits?
- How was the text made?
- What production techniques are used?
- What rules and laws affect the media work (copyright, running time, trademarks, etc.)?
- How could I produce a similar media work? (Marks, 2009)

The BFI (UK) Model

The British Film Institute (BFI) has codified media education “curriculum statements” in terms of conceptual understanding. These key aspects have had a global influence beyond the United Kingdom (Buckingham, 2001). In New Zealand, for instance, media education has developed around the following BFI key concepts.

BFI’s Original Key Concepts of Media Literacy

1. **Media Audiences**
Who is watching? How audiences are identified, constructed, addressed and reached; how audiences find, choose, consume, and respond to media texts.
2. **Media Technologies**
How do they do that? What kinds of technologies are available to whom, how to use them, the differences they make to the production process as well as the final product.
3. **Media Agencies/Ownership**
Who made/owns what? Who produces the text; roles in production process, media institutions, economics and ideologies, intentions and results.
4. **Media Languages**
How do they convey meaning? How the media produces meanings; codes and conventions; narrative structure.
5. **Media Categories**
What is it? Different media (television, radio, cinema, etc.); forms (documentary, advertising, etc.); genres, other ways of categorising text; how categorisation relates to understanding.
6. **Media Representation**
How are things, places, and people portrayed in the media? The relation between media texts and the actual places, people, events, ideas; stereotyping and its consequences.

Source: New Zealand Ministry of Education’s bilingual website Te Kete Ipurangi (2011), [/media-studies.tki.org.nz/Teaching-media-studies/Media-concepts/Chart-of-key-concepts](http://media-studies.tki.org.nz/Teaching-media-studies/Media-concepts/Chart-of-key-concepts), (J. Bowker, BFI, 1991).

Canadian Key Concepts and Approach

In 1989, the Ministry of Education in Ontario published the influential *Media Literacy Resource Guide*, designed to provide educators with the necessary background on teaching media literacy. In this guide, eight key concepts were introduced and continue to be the framework for educators in the provinces of Canada.

Canada's Original Eight Key Concepts for Media Literacy

1. **All Media Are Construction.**
The media do not present simple reflections of external reality. Rather, they present carefully crafted constructions that reflect many decisions and result from many determining factors. Media Literacy works towards deconstructing these constructions, taking them apart to show how they are made.
2. **The Media Construct Reality**
The media are responsible for the majority of the observations and experiences from which we build up our personal understandings of the world and how it works. Much of our view of reality is based on media messages that have been pre-constructed and have attitudes, interpretations, and conclusions already built in. The media, to a great extent, give us our sense of reality.
3. **Audiences Negotiate Meaning in the Media**
The media provide us with much of the material upon which we build our picture of reality, and we all “negotiate” meaning according to individual factors: personal needs and anxieties, the pleasures or troubles of the day, racial and sexual attitudes, family and cultural background, and so forth.
4. **Media have Commercial Implications**
Media Literacy aims to encourage an awareness of how the media are influenced by commercial considerations, and how these affect content, technique, and distribution. Most media production is a business, and must therefore make a profit. Questions of ownership and control are central: a relatively small number of individuals control what we watch, read, and hear in the media.
5. **Media Contain Ideological and Value Messages**
All media products are advertising, in some sense, in that they proclaim

values and ways of life. Explicitly or implicitly, the mainstream media convey ideological messages about such issues as the nature of the good life, the virtue of consumerism, the role of women, the acceptance of authority, and unquestioning patriotism.

6. Media Have Social and Political Implications

The media have great influence on politics and on forming social change. Television can greatly influence the election of a national leader on the basis of image. The media involve us in concerns such as civil rights issues, famines in Africa, and the AIDS epidemic. They give us an intimate sense of national issues and global concerns, so that we become citizens of Marshall McLuhan's "Global Village."

7. Form and Content Are Closely Related in the Media

As Marshall McLuhan noted, each medium has its own grammar and codifies reality in its own particular way. Different media will report the same event, but create different impressions and messages.

8. Each Medium Has a Unique Aesthetic Form

Just as we notice the pleasing rhythms of certain pieces of poetry or prose, so we ought to be able to enjoy the pleasing forms and effects of the different media.

Source: Ontario Ministry of Education, 1989; Pungente & O'Malley, 1999.

Center for Media Literacy and the U.S. Approach

In the 1970s, the Center for Media & Values was created (later becoming the Center for Media Literacy). CML, "the Center," was, for the longest time, the main proponent of media literacy education in U.S. schools, churches, and after-school settings. CML was at the forefront of media literacy education by promoting the Five Core Concepts as a beginning framework for studying and understanding media messages. The concepts included ideas

Origin of CML's Five Core Concepts

The Five Core Concepts have been around quite awhile. They are based on 18 concepts originally introduced by Len Masterman of the U.K. The concepts later migrated to Canada and were shortened to eight. Elizabeth Thoman shortened them to five in the U.S. during the 1990s.

previously promoted by media educators in the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. These have become universal in media literacy education circles.

Teachers could and should post these in the classroom, use them as handouts, and begin to help students understand media literacy using this approach.

Center for Media Literacy Five Core Concepts

1. **All Media Messages Are “Constructed”**
Whether it’s the morning newspaper, a hip-hop video, or the image of a young woman on a magazine cover: they’re all constructed.
2. **Media Messages Are Constructed Using a Creative Language with Its Own Rules**
Each new medium or technology brings a new vocabulary, for example the language of film.
3. **Different People Experience the Same Media Message Differently**
The headline “Paris Liberated” might be interpreted by an older person to mean World War II, but might also mean “Paris Hilton getting out of jail” to someone younger.
4. **Media Have Embedded Values and Points of View**
The image of President Bush with a dunce cap, sitting on a stool in the corner of the room (on the cover of *Rolling Stone* magazine) reveals much about the point of view of the publication.
5. **Most Media Messages Are Organized to Gain Profit and/or Power**
In 1983, fifty corporations controlled the majority of American media; by 2004 that number was four. What are the ramifications if only four companies control much of what you see, read and hear?

Source: Thoman & Jolls, 2003, p. 18.

Since the introduction of the CML’s core concepts and critical-thinking questions, many other organizations have, in their own way, recognized the importance of teaching with and about the media. In 1996, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) passed a resolution urging language arts teachers to consider the importance of bringing visual texts into the classroom. The resolution said:

Viewing and visually representing (defined in the NCTE/IRA *Standards for the English Language Arts*) are a part of our growing consciousness of how people gather and share information. Teachers and students need to expand their appreciation of the power of print and nonprint texts. Teachers should guide students in constructing meaning through creating and viewing nonprint texts. (www.ncte.org/positions/statements/visualformofliteracy)

Since 2003, the National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE, formerly AMLA) now defines *media literacy* as empowering:

Media literacy empowers people to be both critical thinkers and creative producers of an increasingly wide range of messages using image, language, and sound. It is the skillful application of literacy skills to media and technology messages. (namle.net/publications/media-literacy-definitions)

Media Literacy: Skill for the Future

As communication technologies transform society, they impact our understanding of ourselves, our communities, and our diverse cultures, making media literacy an essential life skill for the 21st century.

In 2003, the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (Adolescent and Young Adult, English Language Arts standards) recognized the importance of media and visual literacy when it declared:

Accomplished teachers know that students must become critical and reflective consumers and producers of visual communication because media literacy has become an integral part of being literate in contemporary society. Teachers understand how words, images, graphics, and sounds work together in ways that are both subtle and profound. They understand that students need to learn the power of visual communication, from the uses of typefaces and white space on a written report to the uses of graphics and video in multimedia

productions. (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2003, p. 15)

In 2005, the phrases “new literacies” and “21st century literacy” began to become popular. New Media Consortium (NMC) defined this literacy “subset”:

[The] abilities and skills where aural, visual, and digital literacy overlap. ... These include the ability to understand the power of images and sounds, to recognize and use that power, to manipulate and transform digital media, to distribute them pervasively, and to easily adapt them to new forms. (NMC, 2005)

In 2006, the College Board’s Standards for College Success (in English Language Arts/Media Literacy) said:

To be successful in college and in the workplace and to participate effectively in a global society, students are expected to understand the nature of media; to interpret, analyze, and evaluate the media messages they encounter daily; and to create media that express a point of view and influence others. These skills are relevant to all subject areas, where students may be asked to evaluate media coverage of research, trends, and issues. (College Board, 2006)

In 2009 the annual K–12 Horizon Report declared the number one critical challenge for schools as: “a growing need for formal instruction in key new skills, including information literacy, visual literacy, and technological literacy” (Johnson, Levine, & Smith, 2009).

The 2010 K–12 Horizon Report continued to include this critical challenge when it stated: “Digital media literacy continues its rise in importance as a key skill in every discipline and profession” (Johnson, Levine, Smith, & Stone, 2010, para. 2).

Media literacy is among the key skills future workers will need. The Future Workskills 2020 report, released in 2011 by the Institute for the Future (IFF) for the University of Phoenix Research Institute (www.iftf.org/uploads/media/SR-1382A_UPRI_future_work_skills_sm.pdf), identified six drivers of change (disruptive shifts that will reshape the workforce landscape) and ten skills necessary for this future workforce to be able to address these changes.

Among the drivers of change is driver number four: A New Media Ecology. The report describes the new media ecology by saying: “our sensibility toward reality and truth is likely to be radically altered by the new media ecology. We must learn to approach content with more skepticism and the realization that what you see today may be different tomorrow” (IFTF, 2011).

To deal with this new media ecology, the IFTF recommends skill number six, A New Media Literacy, which is “the ability to critically assess and develop content that uses new media forms, and to leverage these media for persuasive communication” (IFTF, 2011).

Does Media Literacy Work?

In 2005, the Center for Media Literacy partnered with the Los Angeles Unified School District on an elementary media literacy in the arts program called Project SMARTArt. Teachers were introduced to the CML core concepts and students were engaged in activities that “explored the way ideas are communicated: how to recognize, interpret and convey messages” (Jolls & Grande, 2005).

Project SMARTArt provided the first formal study of how media literacy can be successfully integrated into an existing school’s arts classroom. Two media researchers conducted studies with students in an attempt to fill a void in media literacy education research. Working with high school students in one study, and college students in another, the researchers provided solid evidence about the efficacy of media literacy instruction.

In another study, Renee Hobbs and her team worked with a group of high school English educators in Massachusetts. Her work and study are both described in her book, *Reading the Media in High School: Media Literacy in High School English*. She reports that one of the main advantages of teaching media literacy was that students’ knowledge of comprehension, analysis, listening, and viewing transferred from nonprint to print. Hobbs said:

Overall, students had a more sophisticated understanding of how authors compose messages to convey meaning through their use of language, image, and sound and how readers respond with their own

meaning-making processes as they interpret messages.
(Hobbs, 2007)

Paul Mihailidis, an assistant professor of Media Studies at Hofstra University, conducted a study of 239 University of Maryland undergraduates. He found that the students enrolled in a media literacy course increased their ability to comprehend, evaluate, and analyze media messages in print, video, and audio formats. The study, published in the *International Journal of Learning and Media*, suggests that media literacy curricula and readings that are solely or primarily focused on teaching critical analysis skills are an essential first step in teaching media literacy (Mihailidis, 2009).

Getting Started

Purchasing pre-produced media literacy curriculum or workbooks might sound like a good idea, but in reality engaging students with real media texts is best. Many educators have found success by starting this way. In most of our schools, we already have access to videos, magazines, newspapers, and films. These can and should be put to use, as you will see, as perfect media literacy curriculum materials. Over the past 15 years, I have developed my own approach to teaching media literacy, beginning with visual literacy, moving to advertising, and then into moving images.

Visual literacy → Advertising → Moving images

I believe we should begin teaching media literacy by starting with the visual image: that might be a picture in a children's book, a photograph from the news, or a chart/diagram/ graphic in a textbook. Known as "visual literacy," this involves learning how to "read" an image in its context and understanding both how it was created and how it is being used. During this first stage, students should also have the opportunity to use cameras to create images. Their images could become part of their homework or simply part of a photographic display. After students learn the language of the image, I believe they will be ready to study images and words together—for example, in an advertisement.

There are literally hundreds of magazines available, and each targets a specific audience. Using a one- or two-page print ad in the classroom is another way to

engage students while meeting standards at the same time. But ads are not confined to print: they pass our radar screens as billboards, signs on trucks, commercials, product placements in television and film, and more. Once students begin to “read,” “analyze,” and “deconstruct” these ads, they will be ready to produce some of their own.

Last, but certainly not least, students will no doubt be engaged in studying moving images. The phrase “moving images” refers to both television and film. Here, students begin to study genre, narrative, symbolism, representation, production, editing, the languages of TV and film, and much, much more. It is at this stage that students begin collaborating as a team to create scripts and storyboards—important steps in the media-making process. Popular culture also offers teachers a multitude of ideas, programs, and films from which to choose.

Beginning Vocabulary

A number of key words and phrases are part of media literacy education. (Before I owned a mobile phone, I didn’t understand what “roaming” meant.) Remember CML’s second Core Concept: “Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules.” Because every medium has its own language (words and phrases), it will be important for you and your students to understand what each of these means as they begin to study media literacy. Refer to the glossary in Appendix B for a list of terms and their definitions.