

Media Literacy: Quotes

“Media study does not replace text. It broadens and deepens our understanding of texts.”

Philip M. Anderson, “Visual & Verbal Thinking” in [Media Literacy, A Reader](#)

“We need a lot more critical thinking and media criticism taught in schools at a very early age.”

John Stauber author of “The Best War Ever” (from Sept.2006 [interview](#))

“The more I grasp the pervasive influence of media on our children, the more I worry about the media literacy gap in our nation’s educational curriculum. We need a sustained K-12 media literacy program—something to teach kids not only how to use the media but how the media uses them. Kids need to know how particular messages get crafted and why, what devices are used to hold their attention and what ideas are left out. In a culture where media is pervasive and invasive, kids need to think critically about what they see, hear and read. No child’s education can be complete without this.” **FCC Commissioner Michael Copps** (prepared [remarks at June 2006 event](#))

“the set of 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.”

2005, New Media Consortium’s definition of New Literacies

“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. 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.”

(The Alliance for A Media Literate America, 2000)

“Media literacy is concerned with helping students develop an informed and critical understanding of the nature of mass media, the techniques used by them, and the impact of these techniques. More specifically, it is education that aims to increase the students’ understanding and enjoyment of how the-media work, how they produce meaning, how they are organized, and how they construct reality. Media literacy also aims to provide students with the ability to create media products. ”

(Media Literacy Resource Guide, Ministry of Education Ontario, 1997)

“It would be a breach of our duties as teachers for us to ignore the rhetorical power of visual forms of media in combination with text and sound...the critical media literacy we need to teach must include evaluation of these media, lest our students fail to see, understand, and learn to harness the persuasive power of visual media.”

(NCTE Resolution on Visual Literacy)

“Media literacy refers to composing, comprehending, interpreting, analyzing, and appreciating the language and texts of...both print and nonprint. The use of media presupposes an expanded definition of ‘text’...print media texts include books, magazines, and

newspapers. Nonprint media include photography, recordings, radio, film, television, videotape, video games, computers, the performing arts, and virtual reality...constantly interact...(and) all (are) to be experienced, appreciated, and analyzed and created by students."

(SOURCE: NCTE, Commission on Media, Carole Cox, 1994, p.13)

Amy Goodman/Democracy NOW: "Thanks for the question. Media literacy is critically important to a democratic society. The great journalist IF Stone told journalism students there are two words they should remember: governments lie. I think many people have a natural skepticism about what government officials say. The problem is when the media act as a megaphone for those in power. The media is supposed to be, as we call our book, "The Exception to the Rulers." In the old Soviet Union, people knew to read between the lines of Pravda. Here in this country, the media has acted as a conveyer belt for the lies of the administration (and previous administrations). Just look at FAIR's study in the week leading up to and after Gen. Colin Powell gave his speech at the UN. Of the 393 interviews done by the 4 major nightly news casts around the issue of the war, ABC, CBS, NBC and PBS's Newshour, only 3 were with antiwar representatives. That does not represent mainstream America. At the time a majority were against the invasion, for inspections and for diplomacy. This is not mainstream media, this is an extreme media, beating the drums for war and misusing the public airwaves."

“When people talk to me about the digital divide, I think of it not so much about who has access to what technology as about who knows how to create and express themselves in the new language of the screen. If students aren’t taught the language of sound and images, shouldn’t they be considered as illiterate as if they left college without being able to read and write?”

George Lucas, filmmaker (Sept.2004, Edutopia, Life on the Screen)

“Media Culture is the result of the industrialization of information and culture. Images, sounds and spectacles help produce the fabric of life, dominating leisure time, shaping political views and social behavior, and providing the materials out of which people forge their identities.”

Doug Kellner

“Being literate in contemporary society means being active, critical, and create users not only of print and spoken language but also of the visual language of film and television...Teaching students how to interpret and create visual texts...is another essential component of the English language arts curriculum. Visual communication is part of the fabric of contemporary life.”

NCTE/IRA Standards for the English Language Arts (1996) as quoted in Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 48:1, September 2002, pps.74-75

“Our young people need to be educated to the highest standard in this new information age, and surely this includes a clear awareness of how the media influences, shapes, and defines their lives,”

says Richard Riley, U.S. Secretary of Education. “And let us also recognize this important fact:

These young people are the future media leaders of this nation.”

Quoted in Linkup, June/July 2002

“Media literacy is not just important, it’s absolutely critical. It’s going to make the difference between whether kids are a tool of the mass media or whether the mass media is a tool for kids to use.”

Linda Ellerbee, producer/host, Nick News

“No matter what the source, information is only powerful if students know what to do with it. As students are inundated with media messages, the challenge is not to amass more information, but to access, organize, and evaluate useful information from a variety of print and electronic sources.”

Kathleen Tyner, author, “Literacy in A Digital World”

“While media campaigns and other prevention strategies are essential ingredients for reducing substance abuse among adolescents, it is simply not possible for any federal agency, state organization, or private sector group to reach all young Americans with compelling and frequent messages about the dangers of drugs. So, instead, we must help give our young people the essential critical viewing skills to assess those messages—both direct and indirect— that glamorize drug-taking behavior, so that youth can see through the glitz and glamour to the underlying social ills of substance abuse, and to prepare their own prevention messages for peers, parents, and opinion leaders. We are learning that media literacy can provide this vision and skill in a powerful way...”

Robert W. Denniston, of the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention of SAMHSA/HHA,

on the links between media literacy and problems associated with drug use by young people

“I firmly believe that more media literacy instruction can be very useful

in our efforts to promote tolerance and combat violence. With the increased exposure of young people to an incredibly broad array of messages from an equally broad array of media messengers, it's all the more important that we teach our young people how to make sense of what they're seeing, hearing, and feeling. We need to teach them how to separate fact from fiction and fantasy. Only if we provide appropriate guidance can we expect our young people to understand that not everything on the screen has a place on the street corner or in the classroom." **US Attorney General Janet Reno, in interview with *Cable In The Classroom's Al Race, 1999***

"Film and television, newspapers, books and radio together have an influence over individuals that was unimagined a hundred years ago. This power confers great responsibility on all who work in the media...[as well as] each of us who, as individuals, listen and read and watch...it is not the case that we have no power over what we take from the media." "When the media focuses too closely on the negative aspects of human nature, there is a danger that we become persuaded that violence and aggression are its principle characteristics...good news is not remarked on precisely because there is so much of it." **Dalai Lama (Tenzin Gyatso's) 1999 book *Ancient Wisdom, Modern World*: Ethics For A New Millennium" p.210-212**

" Media literacy courses can give young people the power to recognize the difference between entertainment, television that is just bad and the information they need to make good decisions."

What they need is “a clear awareness of how the media influences, shapes and defines their lives.” **Richard Riley, US Secretary of Education, December 13, 1995**

“Media education can and has revolutionized the way we think about public health.

The shift to a focus on the environment rather than the traditional focus on the host or agent has come about largely because of media education. We’ve begun to see all kinds of problems that used to be seen as individual choices or flaws – from violence to substance abuse to eating disorders – as partly the result of the environment in which people make their choices. And the most important aspect of our environment, of course, is the media.”

“Huge and powerful industries – alcohol, tobacco, junk food, guns, diet – depend upon a media-illiterate population. Indeed they depend upon a population that is disempowered and addicted. These industries will and do fight our efforts with all their mighty resources. And we will fight back, using the tools of media education which enable us to understand, analyze, interpret, to expose hidden agendas and manipulation, to bring about constructive change, and to further positive aspects of the media.”

Jean Kilbourne, author: *Deadly Persuasion : How Advertising Manipulates Us in an Age of Addiction*

“It’s important that parents and citizens really lobby for media literacy to be taught in schools, starting with kindergarten. We’re doing our students a real

disservice if we don't teach them to become critical consumers of the media."

Jean Kilbourne, quoted in *Christian Science Monitor*, November 24, 1999

"It is no longer enough simply to read and write. Students must also become literate in the understanding of visual images. Our children must learn how to spot a stereotype, isolate a social cliché, and distinguish facts from propaganda, analysis from banter, and important news from coverage."

Ernest, Boyer, President, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching: Former U.S. Commissioner of Education.

"Television may well be the most important innovation in communication since the printing press, and it communicates in images that as much visual and aural as verbal: learning the vocabularies of the arts, including the media arts, is an essential tool for understanding, and perhaps one day communicating, in the medium of television."

1988 National Endowment for the Arts report *Toward Civilization*

"First of all, I don't think anyone could claim to be media literate if he or she didn't understand that one of the principle functions of commercial media is not so much the provision of information or entertainment, but the segmentation and packaging of audiences for delivery and sale to advertisers... It's the audience which is the real product of the media, and not the programs." – **Len Masterman**

"We must prepare young people for living in a world of powerful images,

words and
sounds.”

UNESCO, 1982

“The professional persuaders have the upper hand: money, media access, sophisticated personnel utilizing scientific techniques, aided and abetted by psychologists and sociologists skilled in analyzing human behaviour. All of that on one side. On the other side the persuadees: the average citizen and consumer. Who trains the citizen?...There is no coherent, systematic effort in the schools today to prepare our future citizens for a sophisticated literacy.” **Hugh Rank, 1976, “Teaching About Public Persuasion: Rationale and A Schema.” *Teaching About Doublespeak***

Media literacy is a basic tool for citizenship in an Information Society.
Pat Aufderheide, Professor, School of Communication, American University

Patricia Aufderheide, Associate Professor of Communication, American University, writes about the necessity of becoming media literate in a report of The National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy: “Media literacy, the movement to expand notions of literacy to include the powerful post-print media that dominate our informational landscape, helps people understand, produce, and negotiate meanings in a culture made up of powerful images, words, and sounds...”

A media-literate person – and everyone should have the opportunity to become one – can decode, evaluate, analyze, and produce both print and electronic media. The fundamental objective of media literacy is critical autonomy in relationship to all media. Emphases in media literacy training vary widely, including informed citizenship, aesthetic appreciation and expression, social advocacy, self-esteem, and consumer competence” ([Aufderheide, 1993](#)).

“The development of curricula in media and visual literacy will not only sharpen people’s ability to decipher their world, but it will also contribute to a broadening of the public sphere. Literacy is never just about reading; it is also about writing. Just as early campaigns for universal print literacy were concerned with democratizing the tools of public expression—the written word—upcoming struggles for media literacy must strive to empower people with contemporary implements of public discourse: video, graphic arts, photography, interactive digital media. More customary mainstays of public expression—expository writing and public speaking—must be resuscitated as well.

“Media literacy cannot simply be seen as a vaccination against advertising, public relations and other familiar strains of institutionalized guile. It must be understood as an education in techniques that can democratize the realm of public expression and will magnify the possibility of meaningful public interactions. Distinctions between publicist and citizen, author and audience, need to be broken down. Education can facilitate this process. It can enlarge the circle of who is permitted—and who will be able—to interpret and make sense of the world, of who will be seen and heard from in America’s future.”

Stuart Ewen (excerpt from “PR, A Social History of Spin,” Used with permission)

If, as Aristotle said, “The unexamined life is not worth living,” so, in today’s life, “the unexamined culture is not worth living in.”

George Gerbner, Bell Atlantic Professor of Telecommunication, Temple

**University,
Philadelphia**

Media literacy is being able to engage not just with the immediate content of a media text, but also to be able to apply knowledge and understanding of institutional factors that have an impact on shaping the text itself and on the messages and values embedded within the text. Media literacy also involves knowledge and understanding of how different audiences in different times places may interpret the text in different ways. Crucially, the media-literate reader of the text is able to see that his/her own reading of the text may be at odds with that applied by some or all of the target audience.

Source: Wayne O'Brien -Media Education Assn, UK

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

Media Awareness Network

“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 expresses a point of view and influence others. These skills are relevant to all subject areas...”

College Board Standards for College Success, English Language Arts, 2006

“The more I grasp the pervasive influence of media on our children, the more I worry about the media literacy gap in our nation’s educational curriculum. We need a sustained K-12 media literacy program—something to teach kids not only how to use the media but how the media uses them. Kids need to know how particular messages get crafted and why, what devices are used to hold their attention and what ideas are left out. In a culture where media is pervasive and invasive, kids need to think critically about what they see, hear and read. No child’s education can be complete without this.”

FCC Commissioner Michael Copps (prepared [remarks at June 2006 event](#))

“Media Literacy is the ability to ‘read’ and understand visual, aural and digital messages. It means having the skills to understand and interact with the media analytically, critically and knowledgeably.”

(Burton, Lee 2005, ‘What is this Media Literacy Thing? Primary and secondary classroom ideas from across Australia, in [Australian Screen Education Online](#), Autumn 2005, issue 38, pp. 93-98.)

“Media literacy emphasizes the following elements: a critical thinking skill that allows audiences to develop independent judgments about media content; an understanding of the process of mass communication; an awareness of the impact of media on the individual and society; the development of strategies with which to discuss and analyze media messages; an awareness of media content as ‘text’ that provides insight into our contemporary culture and ourselves; the cultivation of an enhanced enjoyment, understanding and appreciation of media content; and in the case of media communicator, the ability to produce effective and responsible media messages.”

(Art Silverblatt in *Media Literacy, Keys to Interpreting Media Messages*, 2001)

Media literacy is an expanded information and communication skill that is responsive to the changing nature of information

in our society. It addresses the skills students need to be taught in school, the competencies citizens must have as we consume information in our homes and living rooms, and the abilities workers must have as we move toward the 21st century and the challenges of a global economy.

(Source: [Telemedium](#))

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(Source:

<http://english.ttu.edu/kairos/2.1/news/briefs/nctervis.html>)

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"being illiterate in the processes of any medium (language) leaves one at the mercy of those who control it."

Neil Postman/Charles Weingartner (Teaching As A Subversive Activity, 1969)