

Concepts: Critical Inquiry About Media Messages

Questions To Ask About Media Messages

“At the heart of media literacy is the principle of inquiry.”

Elizabeth Thoman, Skills & Strategies for Media Literacy

1. Who is the producer/storyteller of the message?
2. What is their purpose/motive/agenda? (to inform, to persuade, to educate, to call to action, to entertain, to shock)
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? (Follow the Money Trail activity here)
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; 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?

Source: some of the above is derived from a curriculum entitled KNOW TV and from previously published works.

Conceptual Framework for Media Education

By Chris Worsnop

Media Image	Questions to Ask
Industry	Who's in charge? What do they want of me, and why? What else do they want? HOW DO I KNOW?
Product	What kind of text is this? Are conventions followed or broken? How is this message constructed? HOW DO I KNOW?
Audience	Who is this intended for? What assumptions does the text make about the audience? Who am I supposed to be in relation to this text? HOW DO I KNOW?
Values	How real is this text? How/where do I find the meaning? What values are presented? What is the commercial message? What is the ideology of this text? What social/artistic/political messages does the text contain? HOW DO I KNOW?

Predisposition	<p>Do I agree with (assent to) this text's message? Do I disagree with (resist) this text's message? Do I argue/negotiate with the message of this text? HOW DO I KNOW?</p>
Perception	<p>How does the text fit my personal values/beliefs/ideology? How does the text relate to my personal needs/hopes/fears/experiences? HOW DO I KNOW?</p>
Skills	<p>What skills do I need to apply to this text? How do I deconstruct/reconstruct this text? What new skills does this text demand of me? HOW DO I KNOW?</p>
Receiver	<p>What does all this mean in the end? HOW DO I KNOW?</p>

What really counts in the end is what we make of the text. All learning is an act of construction.

Source:

© Chris Worsnop, 1999. Adapted by the author from *Screening Images: Ideas for Media Education*. Wright Communications, 1994. Original post at:
http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/resources/educational/teaching_backgrounders/media_literacy/conceptual_framework_worsnop.cfm?RenderForPrint=1