

Leadership Letter for Global MIL

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Institutionalizing Media Literacy Through Legislation

At last, media literacy is on the legislative agenda! Two significant bills – both from States on the West Coast, Washington and California – have recently passed, with more on the way across the U.S. These are exciting and definitive times for the media literacy movement, the field itself, and the educational approaches that media literacy offers.

In this issue, we bring you interviews with two individuals who have – and are – playing pivotal roles in this effort: Marilyn Cohen, who has helped lead the Washington State effort through her role as a top media literacy researcher and advocate; and Jennifer Howeter, who organized the first Media Literacy Summit for the State of California Department of Education in May 2018, and who will contribute to implementing California SB830 which was recently passed. These views from both the States, from the outside and the inside of the K-12 state education establishments, provide helpful insight into the process for both encouraging passage and for realizing the vision of the legislation itself. Both the States of Washington and California are in early stages of implementing the legislation passed, but these snapshots in time give a picture of the process at work.

At CML, we have been privileged to see the passage of the California bill after 30 years of advocacy, since CML's founding in Los Angeles by Elizabeth Thoman in 1989. Senator Dodd worked tirelessly to promote SB 830; his commitment to education is steady and reliable. Our work to help pass the California bills presented through Senators Bill Dodd and Hannah-Beth Jackson has been a two-year process, with our participation in outreach, letters of support, media interviews, the Media Literacy Summit and a Forum in September in Davis, California, sponsored through Senator Dodd and addressing fake news and media literacy. We worked closely with Common Sense Kids Action in California, testifying in Sacramento at a moments' notice and working with the many organizations who have worked so hard to see media literacy extended to all citizens. Library associations, education organizations, and NAMLE have all expended tireless efforts to advance this vital cause.

For those who may be interested in speaking to policy makers regarding media literacy, CML and Media Literacy Now co-produced a short video called "What is Media Literacy?" This video is being presented as part of a Film Festival at the American Public Health Association conference in San Diego on November 12, 2018. Media Literacy Now also provides a helpful round-up of legislative initiatives; this organization's focus on media literacy legislation has helped galvanize nation-wide attention and efforts.

We encourage all members of the media literacy community to participate and to activate! These recent legislative achievements provide a path to follow and an affirmation that yes, it is possible to make media literacy education available to one and all!

Interview Highlights

Interview with Marilyn Cohen, University of Washington



Marilyn Cohen, PhD, is Research Associate Professor and Director of NW Center for Excellence in Media Literacy in the College of Education at the University of Washington.

Center for Media Literacy (CML): Marilyn, I'd like to hear a bit about your work at the Northwest Center for Media Literacy. You are the director of that organization, correct?

Marilyn Cohen (MC): That's correct. We started here at University of Washington in 1989 as the Early Childhood Telecommunications Project, which was the forerunner of our current organization. It was a television project created to provide programming over all Washington's PBS stations to child care providers and parents across the state.

Over time, we morphed from a television project into a media literacy project. Our major focus has been on health issues—particularly teen health issues. In the early 90s, we found broad interest in the whole area of media literacy. When it came to issues of health, people expressed concern about the impact of media on a range of teen health issues. So, for years, we've focused on teen health issues of all different kinds. We held the first teen health and media conference in this country focusing on media literacy in 1997. Some of the issues that we've addressed over the years include nutrition, physical activity, teen pregnancy, school violence, alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

CML: Can you tell me about your role in passing media literacy legislation in Washington?

MC: Two media literacy bills have passed in Washington State, one in 2016 and one in 2017. The nonprofit we formed here in Washington, Action for Media Education (AME), was very involved in promoting policy change in our state. Members of AME worked with local legislators to pass the first ever media literacy education bill in the country in 2016. We are very proud of that. Our bill has been used as a model for other bills that are now being passed across the United States. I'd like to give a special shout-out to Senator Marko Liias who led the effort to pass this bill in our state legislature. I'd also like to acknowledge Media Literacy Now for all their support.

CML: The media literacy education community has a lot of reason to thank you.

MC: Well, I think a lot of hard work is happening in every state now. People at the grassroots level have to work to make this happen.

CML: Do you work with other groups?

MC: Yes. AME and our group have contacts all across our state. AME just celebrated its 27th anniversary. We've been around so long that many groups know us for our media literacy education work. We were able to garner support in various parts of the state, which was important to bring to the legislature. Our nonprofit educated people about what they could do to help their legislators understand what the bill was about, and that played a key role in passing it. You can't just hope that a bill is going to pass. Getting a legislator or a group of legislators to agree to take on a bill and believe in it is just a first step. I think media literacy educators across the country have learned that there is a lot of work to do to get a bill to pass.

CML: When you talk about that work, are you referring to creating partnerships, undertaking advocacy efforts, getting people involved and communicating with the legislators?

MC: Yes, it's all of that. There's a lot of education and awareness building that needs to take place. That's where groups such as ours (as well as groups in other states) play a key role. People need to know that they have options and can make things happen on a legislative level.

CML: The legislation here in California basically says that, by July 1, 2019, there will be a website with media literacy education and professional development resources available. Is that similar to what you have in Washington?

MC: Yes. The Washington Superintendent of Public Instruction has been working on putting a resource hub together.

The State of Washington passed SSB 6273 in 2016, and ESSB 5449 in 2017. The 2016 bill formed an advisory committee to look at best media literacy education practices in our state and recommendations for strategies that could be used. The 2017 bill picks up on the recommendations from the 2016 bill, so that there is follow through with next steps. One of the recommendations from the advisory committee formed by the first bill was to have a group of experts to work with the Superintendent's office to upgrade our educational technology standards, which hadn't been upgraded since about 2008. A lot has happened in technology since that time.

As a result of the 2017 bill, the Superintendent's office has worked with a team of experts to upgrade our state's technology standards. In addition, the Superintendent's Office conducted the first statewide survey to find out what exactly is happening in terms of policies and procedures around digital citizenship, internet safety and media literacy, which are all in the same basket, as far as those of us who work in media literacy are concerned. But, it's very helpful to have them broken out in this way to get a bill passed. The survey went out in May, and of the 295 school districts surveyed, 249 of them submitted results. That is an incredible return, because it was an optional survey – there was no penalty for not returning it. That shows an incredible interest level.

But, what happens next? A bill can pass, but how do you carry out its requirements? That is where we are now. We need funding to follow through – especially when it comes to educator training and resources.

CML: Passing a bill is no easy feat, much less two of them. What were some of the challenges that you faced during the process?

MC: Politics are always difficult to deal with. In my position, I cannot get involved with that. I keep my focus on education. But, when you're asked to testify in support of a bill before legislators, you encounter some interesting feedback. For example, one legislator said that the media literacy bill was proposed by a group of Democrats and, because he wasn't a Democrat, he and others wouldn't vote for it. But, we also have a very eloquent senator – Marko Liias – who was the first legislator anywhere to stand up in a legislative body and talk knowledgably about the need for media literacy. He did an incredible job. He was able to sway a lot of his colleagues and, along with support from other policy makers who educated their colleagues, the bills passed with very little resistance.

CML: Well done!

MC: Yes, I think we've done well in educating about media literacy on both sides of the aisle. It's an issue for everyone. So far, that message has resonated here. That's important when you are trying to pass a bill – educating the legislature on why media literacy is not a partisan issue.

CML: That is to the benefit of everybody.

MC: Yes, it definitely is.

CML: We just passed our first media literacy education bill in California, and in 2016 and 2017 Washington had its own legislative successes. Why do you think that these bills are passing now? Advocacy for media literacy legislation has been going on for a long time.

MC: Our kids live in a media-driven world. There's no doubt about that. The media itself talks a lot about this, and when working with children, it's hard to escape the media's influence on their lives. We live in an incredible age where technology is changing constantly. It's difficult to ignore that and say that things are still the same as they always were. Because of that, the message about what media literacy is has a different meaning to people today. It resonates much more now than it ever did before. Parents and educators are much more interested in knowing how we can help children understand the media that's all around them, and how we learn to sort out all the different types of information that bombards us all the time. Where do we find truth?

CML: In a way, they were always big issues, but they're magnified now.

MC: Right. They were always important issues, and we always talked about them. There's nothing new here for people who've been around media literacy for a long time. But, to the general public, it's never been more important to know how to dissect the news, or why it might be important to do that.

CML: Yes, and to not always take things at face value – to think critically and be inquisitive about what you hear and what you read and what you find in any kind of media landscape.

MC: Absolutely.

CML: What are your thoughts about media literacy education's role in supporting democracy?

MC: It's absolutely critical. If we're not going to be critical consumers and producers of media – well – we see the ramifications of that right now. Democracy itself is threatened. We need to focus on educating our future voters to become critical consumers and producers of their own media messages as they try to sort through the wealth of information that is now readily available at their fingertips. That is really an issue today. If you look back over history, it's been a tremendous contributing issue when democracies change into something very different. It's really of great importance.

CML: It's always been important. But with more access to information and more content producers, it becomes critical.

MC: Yes, and so do issues of privacy. We need to help young people understand what privacy means, and that how they portray themselves online has ramifications.

CML: That knowledge is important for adults, too.

MC: Absolutely. Media literacy education should really continue throughout our lifespan, considering that we all are impacted throughout our lives, and the media landscape keeps changing. In fact, we were just approached by a senior citizen's center that wanted to work with us. Their seniors are using smartphones and other devices, and they need help. The director of the center pointed out that the seniors they work with might be able to bring some media literacy information back to their grandchildren.

CML: Grandparents helping their grandchildren to navigate technology is the opposite of the stereotype.

MC: Maybe most grandparents don't have the tech savvy. But some digital natives may not have what their grandparents have – a sense of responsibility. So, there's opportunity for sharing there, where a young person can show a grandparent how to navigate, and the grandparent can share wisdom about making decisions. All generations have something to share when it comes to media literacy.

CML: Media literacy is for all generations, it can be integrated into all subjects, and it crosses intercultural boundaries. Knowing that, what would you like to see happen with media literacy education in the future?

MC: On the legislative side, we really need funding that is directed towards training educators. Teachers are all over the map when it comes to using technology, teaching media literacy, integrating media literacy into the subjects they are currently teaching and even recognizing that parts of what they already do might be considered media literacy. There is much work to be done.

I'd also like to see schools pay more attention to technology, in terms of knowing what kids actually do in our media-driven world, and how that relates to the subject matter that is taught. We really need to consider that, when kids come to class, they are already impacted by so many media images and messages. They bring that with them as they are learning school subjects, and we have to consider how the two mesh. For example, we had a group of teenagers that we were working with, and one of them told me that she was taking an advanced history class. She said, "Well, I don't have to listen to the teacher; I just go home and listen to a crash course on the topic, and I've had no problem on tests." So, she's basically just zoning out in class, and getting what she needs online to pass the test. So, what are we teaching that student? We have to address this disconnect. Students of all ages are impacted by what they're finding online and what they are doing with screens every single hour that they're not sitting in a seat in their classrooms. We have to be realistic about that.

CML: We do. Especially since there is no quality control on what young people can find online. Media literacy education can really help a new generation to be better prepared.

MC: Yes – we need a generation that is discriminating about the meaning technology has in their lives. Is the technology driving their lives, or are they using technology to drive what they hope to make of their lives? Technology provides us with a growing list of exciting tools. The question is: how are we going to make use of this ever-growing list of options? Right now, so many of the developments are on the tech side. Meanwhile, the education side is lagging. It's time to close the gap. Educators, community members and legislators are starting to see that and take action.

Read the Washington bills:

2016 <http://apps2.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=6273&Year=2015>

2017 <http://apps2.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=5449&Year=2017&BillNumber=5449&Year=2017>

Interview with Jennifer Howeter, CA Department of Education



Jennifer Howeter is the Education Programs Consultant for the California Department of Education in Sacramento, California.

Center for Media Literacy (CML): Jennifer, you are a consultant in the Educator Excellence and Equity Division for the California Department of Education. Can you tell me about your role as it relates to literacy?

Jennifer Howeter (JH): Yes, I work in an office called Professional Learning Innovations within the Educator Excellence and Equity Division. My specialty is literacy, which crosses all content areas. Our division and office supports educators so that they can best understand and implement California standards, frameworks and policy documents. We also interact with a variety of stakeholder partners to provide professional learning opportunities to educators, with the final goal of increasing student achievement statewide.

CML: Can you tell me a little bit about the recent media literacy education bill, SB 830?

JH: SB 830 requires the California Education Department to post online a list of resources, instructional materials and professional development programs for teachers that focus specifically on media literacy education.

CML: That is a step in the right direction. Do you have any details about what those resources will be and what links you will provide to help teachers find professional development programs?

JH: That is currently being developed. At this point, we provide a media and information literacy toolkit, which was developed at the Media and Information Literacy Summit in May by a large group of collaborators – the California County Educational Technology Consortium, the California School Library Association, Common Sense Education, Encinitas Union School District, KQED Education, Madera County Superintendent of Schools and the San Diego County Office of Education. Together, we created the toolkit to offer resources related to professional learning for teachers. But at this point, nothing is officially endorsed by the department. The department will make resources available on its website by the July 1, 2019 deadline to implement the SB 830 legislation.

CML: Is there a website address where people can access this platform?

JH: Yes. It's www.collaborationincommon.org. Once an account is created, users can search

for media and information literacy. It's the first hit that comes up. Users can download resources, as well as submit their own for inclusion on the site. The site includes lesson plans and other tools that contributors wish to share with their fellow educators. As of now, there are more than 50 resources on the platform, and they're organized by the major standards within the Model School Library Standards -- accessing information, using information, evaluating information and connecting information literacy to all aspects of learning. The platform also includes information for parents, professional development, research and more. The idea is, we start the toolkit, then others in the field contribute their expertise, and the resource grows organically.

CML: That seems like a great way to involve the whole media literacy education community, as well as parents, and even students.

JH: Media literacy is a quickly evolving field, and things are changing. We want to make sure that we are constantly asking for input from the field: people who are actually doing this work and intimately involved in it. That's how you get the "latest and the greatest."

CML: Thank you for sharing that resource. As for the legislation -- SB 830 -- why do you think that passed now? There have been efforts to implement media literacy education legislation for years.

JH: As the Stanford study suggests, we are at a critical point regarding media literacy skills. Every single day we're able to access more and more information at our fingertips. So, it's vital for us to be able to think critically about what we read and see, and come to valid and informed conclusions. More people are recognizing this, which I believe really helped in passing the bill now.

CML: I completely agree with you there. We have fewer gatekeepers, information can come from anywhere, and it's not even always transparent where it is coming from these days. Are there any specific things that may have sparked the impetus to pass the bill?

JH: We received support from our state superintendent for the media and information literacy summit. He sent out a letter promoting it and encouraging people to attend. He recognizes the importance of media literacy education and making sure that our students have the skills that they need to think critically about the information they come across.

You're right that, today, it can be really difficult to discern the source and validity of information. Of course, propaganda has existed since the dawn of time, so this has always been true. Students and adults have always needed critical thinking skills to evaluate information and come to informed and valid conclusions. But, as you said, the ever increasing availability of information, increasing difficulty of determining what information is valid, and more sophisticated ways of clouding sources make the reasons for media literacy education clearer than ever. We need to pass legislation and ensure that our kids have the skills that

they need to be active and civically engaged within their communities and beyond.

CML: There is talk recently about media literacy's role in supporting democracy in modern times. Do you have any thoughts on that?

JH: Yes. I definitely agree with that. Media literacy helps us become informed citizens. Part of media literacy is cultivating not only the skills to analyze information, but also the desire to do so. Our California Model School Library Standards specifically call for students to be lifelong learners and to be self-motivated in reading, listening and viewing information. The Model School Library Standards also call for students to contribute actively to the learning community, and to participate in groups that pursue and generate information. In other words, media literacy, especially through the Model School Library Standards, helps students become active and engaged learners and thinkers that are attuned to their communities. That, in turn, supports civic engagement. When students are curious and engaged lifelong learners, they're more likely to be connected civically to their communities and beyond. That is central in promoting the tenets of democracy. In order to maintain a healthy and functioning democracy, we need engaged citizens. Media literacy is one of the ways to create them.

CML: Yes, and engaged, lifelong learners are better able to make wise and informed decisions.

JH: Yes, exactly. At the Media Literacy Summit, we had various content area experts discussing how media literacy intersects with many different disciplines. One presenter spoke about health and how it's critical for students to be informed on that topic, because they have to make decisions that affect their own lives, as well as the lives of others. Being able to discern the most accurate information by reading studies and articles, and sifting through to find what is really right for them and their families, is critically important.

CML: You mentioned Model School Library Standards. Can you tell me a little bit more about that?

JH: It's a set of standards that were developed in 2011 that includes four basic principles to help ensure that K-12 students are able to access information, evaluate information, use information, and integrate information literacy into all aspects of their education. It starts with basic ideas in kindergarten – simple information literacy skills like being able to identify basic facts in what they've read, heard, or seen. It continues through high school and includes sophisticated research techniques and more lifelong learning and civic engagement topics. It specifically serves as the model for school libraries, but really it is appropriate and necessary in more than just libraries. The standards apply to all research and work in the classroom. The Model School Library Standards underscore the importance of media literacy and teaching our students to be critical thinkers when it comes to all the information they take in.

CML: According to SB 830, the State Department of Education will be making a list of online

resources available to teachers by July 1st 2019. Any insight into what that will include?

JH: Our plan right now is to use the Collaboration in Common toolkit as a starting point. The included resources will be looked at more critically before it is finalized on July 1st because, as I mentioned, people can submit those resources from anywhere, as of now. We already have a nice collection of resources by many informed and engaged experts in media literacy. We also want to include our collection of statewide databases. The State Library received \$3 million to contract with three databases -- Pro quest, Britannica and TeachingBooks.net. Those databases are open and available to all public and charter schools within California, so they offer great cost-free ways to search for valid resources to teach students how to conduct research.

CML: Once they're up and in use, is there any plan for evaluation? Because, like you said, media literacy is an evolving field.

JH: Right now, we are concentrating on making the resources available by the July 1st deadline. But we don't want our resources going "stale." We will make sure that we always provide the most cutting edge information to accommodate this ever-evolving field.

CML: Will every educator be using the newly posted resources?

JH: Districts are not required to use them. It is ultimately a local decision. The resources will be promoted, and districts and educators will learn why they're so important. They will be encouraged to use them. But, it's ultimately up to the districts and educators to use the resources we will provide, decide how and if they will address media literacy in the classroom, and to what extent.

CML: So, it's an opt-in program?

JH: That is the context of education in California. Many things are a local decision. Districts annually complete what is called a Local Control Accountability Plan. In that, they can determine how to fund their own priorities and best address the needs of their communities. It's not something the department directs, but we provide resources to help them. Of course, they do have to follow applicable Education Code. But they decide how to do that best within their local context.

CML: Is there anything in place to ensure that teachers are well prepared to pass media literacy information on to their students?

JH: Districts can choose how to allocate funding for professional learning. We will list resources on our website, including links to professional development programs related to media literacy. Teachers will have access to those links, so they can choose to advocate to their districts how they wish those funds to be spent for their own professional growth.

CML: When districts or teachers choose to include media literacy education, does the district recommend a grade level to begin offering it?

JH: Just like with our Model School Library Standards, media literacy education standards are explicitly offered at every single grade level. It should be something that is developed throughout our students' learning careers, starting in kindergarten going all the way through grade 12.

CML: The Center for Media Literacy believes that media literacy isn't a subject that is taught separately, but instead a way to teach all subjects. That way, media literacy and critical thinking skills can be integrated into anything throughout a young person's education. Health, like you mentioned, is one example. Another is US history – evaluating who wrote history books and their possible perspectives. Also, taking into consideration that different audiences may interpret history differently.

JH: One of the resources we include within the toolkit that is available now on Collaboration in Common is national content standards mapped with the Model School Library Standards and lesson plans for all of those content areas. It's exactly what you're talking about with history, as well as social science. We can see where history and social science standards cross over with Model School Library Standards. Those lessons are available for teachers to implement immediately. And, we are asking for experts in the fields to contribute more resources in this area, so we can really build out that section.

CML: It's great to hear that you are working on including perspective and point of view in that way. What about media literacy when it comes to production? Media literacy education is important for both content consumers and content producers. Will there be resources that apply to both on your website?

JH: Absolutely. We already have resources on becoming familiar with copyright laws and adhering to them, data privacy, creating information that is ethical and safe, adhering to principles of digital citizenship, and more. The Model School Library Standards will be reflected in the resources that we post on production.

CML: As July approaches, are there plans to communicate with teachers and school districts that the new media literacy education resources exist on your website?

JH: There is a preliminary timeline, and communication is included. When the resources are posted to the website, we want to make sure that we communicate about it as widely as possible. Other organizations will likely partner with us on that – including the California School Library Association. We are excited to get the word out through our department and all our wonderful partners.

CML: What about parents? Most adults did not have media literacy education when they were

in school. Parents who, for example, are helping their kids with their homework may be unfamiliar with what their children are learning about media literacy. Are there any resources for parents to learn more about it? Not to mention, media literacy education is beneficial for adults, too.

JH: It will be up to the districts to communicate with parents about what children are learning in school. But, the toolkit does include resources for parents. It's incredibly important for parents to be able to help kids with their homework, as well as to help them navigate online. How children interact with people, consume and produce information online is critically important for parents to understand. But, first parents must develop skills themselves. Common Sense Education updated their study in 2018 and showed a compelling graphic. They tracked minutes of media use for kids ages 0 through 8. It's increased exponentially over time – you see it just shoot up. Kids don't pop out of the womb with good digital and media literacy skills. They need to learn how to interact with and discern information. That's true for adults, too – including parents. So, we offer resources for parents in our toolkit, and it's something we want to build out even more.

CML: SB 830 is a step in the right direction in California. When you imagine what education may look like 10 years after this legislation is implemented, what would you like to see?

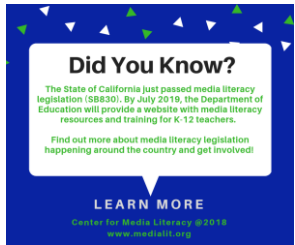
JH: I hope this is a starting point that inspires more attention to media literacy and underscores its importance. I would like to see media literacy be a vehicle to show students that education isn't something that's sliced into disparate parts. It's a holistic understanding and conception of ideas. Media literacy can be the link to achieve that.

CML: Yes, media literacy is more than just something new to learn, it's a new way to learn all things.

JH: Exactly. The ability to evaluate information, to be a critical thinker is something that's not relegated to a certain subject area, or even just to education. It's something that is included with every aspect of our lives. It's absolutely vital that we teach students to develop these skills so they are able to produce and consume content that has been researched and is based, not on conjecture or conspiracy, but fact.

Read 2018 California SB 830:

http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180SB830



CONSORTIUM
for **MEDIA LITERACY**

Uniting for Development

Global MIL Website Launched for Media and Information Literacy Week

Just in time! The North America Chapter of Global Alliance for Partnerships on Media and Information Literacy ([gapmilkna.org](http://www.gapmilkna.org)) launched its website to provide resources and information on media and information literacy from around the world. Check the site regularly as it continues to grow!

Media literacy educators and advocates are gearing up for Media Literacy Weeks around the world. Get involved and spread the word about the importance of media literacy education.

Global MIL Week: *Media and Information Literate Cities: Voices, Powers, and Change Makers*, contact: [UNESCO](http://www.unesco.org)

US ML Week: *Respect in a Digital World*, contact [NAMLE](http://www.namle.org).

Media Literacy and Fake News Panel Organized by Sen. Dodd

California Senator Bill Dodd (Napa) invited a panel of experts to a public *Forum on Media Literacy and Fake News* September 24 at UC Davis. Dodd's media literacy legislation SB 830 was signed by the governor in September. CML's Tessa Jolls joined journalists and educators on the panel. Watch it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81Bki0-nEmE>

More Infographics...

Media Literacy infographics are available on the [CML website](http://www.cml.org). Spread the word.

About Us...

The Consortium for Media Literacy addresses the role of global media through the advocacy, research and design of media literacy education for youth, educators and parents. The Consortium focuses on K-12 grade youth and their parents and communities. The research efforts include nutrition and health education, body image/sexuality, safety and responsibility in media by consumers and creators of products. The Consortium is building a body of research, interventions and communication that demonstrate scientifically that media literacy is an effective intervention strategy in addressing critical issues for youth.

<http://www.consortiumformedia literacy.org>

Resources for Media Literacy

Legislation and Media Literacy Resources

NW Center for Media Literacy <http://depts.washington.edu/nwmedia/>

Action for Media Education <https://action4mediaeducation.org>

Media Literacy Now <https://medialiteracynow.org>

Stanford Study <https://ed.stanford.edu/news/stanford-researchers-find-students-have-trouble-judging-credibility-information-online>

California Department of Education <https://collaborationincommon.org>. Online media and information literacy toolkit community for California educators.

Model School Libraries <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/lb/schoollibstnds2017.asp>

Podcast by Gabriela Gonzalez, [Media Literacy Among Adolescents in Austin, TX](#). Student project audio documentary seeks to understand what opportunities Austin adolescents have to develop their media literacy skills.

[What is Media Literacy?](#) Video made in partnership with CML and Media Literacy Now.

MediaLit Moments

Scary Tactics

If you watched all of the horror films released in October, you would not sleep a wink. Have you thought about the ways filmmakers use creative techniques to make their audiences tremble with fright? Have some Halloween fun with this activity.

Deconstruct a clip of a scary movie trailer to identify creative techniques.

AHA! Suspensful music and creative photography make this movie seem really scary!

Grade Level: 5-8

Key Question #1: Who created this message?

Core Concept #1: Media messages are constructed.

Key Word: Author

Key Question #2: What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?

Core Concept #2: Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules.

Key Word: Format

Key Question #5: Why is this message being sent?

Core Concept #5: Most messages are organized to gain profit and/or power.

Key Word: Purpose

Materials: Movie trailer from an appropriately rated scary movie. This link is for the new Goosebumps Haunted Halloween movie <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6EbOqr4aTvM> rated PG. For younger audiences try [Coraline](#) rated G or visit [Common Sense Media](#) list of scary movies for children.

Activity: Show the trailer three times, in this order: Sound only (no video), Video only (no sound), and full video with sound. Do not comment between showings. At the end, ask students which version was scariest, why? Using Key Question #2, discuss the effects of sound, music, lighting, and camera angles. Reinforce that all media messages are constructed by someone (Key Question #1) for a specific purpose (Key Question #5).

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