



Teacher Training, Lesson Plan Development and Classroom Integration: Notes on the process of building a media literacy curriculum

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Abstract

This essay explores questions about the goals of including media literacy into classrooms, how teachers can best be trained to include media literacy in their classrooms and what is learned when media literacy is integrated across a curriculum. These questions are tackled through discussion of findings from a pilot year of research and application implementing teacher training, lesson plan development, and classroom integration of media literacy across the curriculum at a Massachusetts high school, conducted by scholar-practitioners of Mass Media Literacy (MML), a grassroots, Massachusetts-based organisation that builds curriculum and supports policy to include media literacy training as part of teacher training.

Introduction

In 2002, Scharrer observed, ‘there is surprisingly little discussion of the goals or “outcomes” ideally associated with participation in a media literacy program’ (354). Thirteen years hence, this approach to media literacy remains roughly the same in the United States. Much of American media literacy work focuses on single-lesson classroom inclusion and revolves around representation; as such, it can stay largely superficial, focused on content at the expense of teaching the ‘behind the scenes’ work of ownership, production, and distribution – where the source of media industries’ power resides.

What is needed now is greater intentionality: What are the goals of including media literacy into classrooms? How can teachers be best trained to accomplish these goals in



their classrooms? What is learned when media literacy is integrated across a curriculum instead of being taught as an isolated subject? This essay explores these questions through discussion of findings from a pilot year of research and application on teacher training, lesson plan development, and classroom integration of media literacy across the curriculum at a Central Massachusetts high school, conducted by scholar-practitioners of Mass Media Literacy (MML), a grassroots, Massachusetts-based organisation that builds curriculum and supports policy to include media literacy training as part of teacher training. Mass Media Literacy is a grassroots organisation. It works to develop curriculum and support legislation that will require teacher training in media literacy and include media literacy in public school classrooms across the state. MML is governed by scholars and advocates of media literacy, two of whom are the primary researchers on this project and the authors of this essay. MML espouses comprehensive media literacy and, as such, is grounded in a social justice framework. It addresses content and representation of mainstream media, including analyses of race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, and violence as well as the structural/institutional components of ownership, production, and distribution (“Why comprehensive media literacy?”). MML is critical of mainstream mass media while also recognising the pleasure and enjoyment audiences can get from media.

MML developed a set of Concepts and Understandings through which all curriculum pieces are organised, including critical inquiry into construction and deconstruction; the audience; industry and context; as well as production and distribution. The concepts and understandings are indebted to Buckingham’s (2003) media literacy concepts and pay particular attention to the ownership, production, and distribution of mainstream media. In addition, MML developed a set of standards which highlights what students will be taught and by what grade, with the long-term goal that by high school graduation a Massachusetts public school student will be versed in media literacy concepts and practice across his/her curriculum of study. A goal of this method of organisation is for media literacy to be seamlessly included in the regular curriculum, thereby saving teachers time, while also illustrating to students that media literacy is *part of*, not *separate from*, their learning environment.

Working collaboratively with teachers, scholar-practitioners and advanced university students enrolled in media literacy and education courses, MML builds media literacy lesson plans for specific courses and grades across elementary, middle and high schools. The lesson plans adhere to Massachusetts state standards, are flexible to the Common Core, and are designed to work into the subjects and topics teachers are already teaching.

The lessons learned from this pilot study in no way generalise across schools or teachers' experience; this essay illuminates one particular experience as a way to begin to make better sense of the larger environment in which media literacy operates. While we are concerned with what students learn from media literacy inclusion, the focus of our attention in this essay is the teachers' experience.

Current State of Media Literacy

As social media increases in popularity, especially among youth, and media access becomes easier for many – but certainly not all – comprehension and implementation of media literacy changes as well.

In 2006, Merrin published a blog piece on the changing nature of media and stated that while he knew more about *media studies*, his students knew more about the media than he did. Merrin, a regular contributor to this journal, called for an 'upgrade' of media studies, naming it 'media studies 2.0.' In the intervening years, various scholars have embraced (Berger & McDougall, 2012; Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012) or rejected (Buckingham, 2014; Laughey, 2012) this label in the teaching of media in the classroom. Those who embrace '2.0' argue that the broadcast model of media, where audiences received texts, is over, replaced by a more interactive model. Those who reject '2.0' demur that the current model is indeed more interactive, but as such, it hides (in plain sight) the corporate conglomerates who own social media and that ignoring these forces of production will leave young people further in the dark about their media knowledge. Laughey writes:

'Media Studies 2.0 claims to live in the post broadcast era of wise crowd, mass collaboration and unfiltered creativeness. In this *whole new* era anyone can tweet, blog, tag, poke, upload videos to YouTube or photos to Flickr. But the question rarely asked is: Who cares? ... What the post broadcasting era amounts to, in quantifiable terms, is one huge and collective exercise in vanity publishing'. (2012: 58-59)

While one's personal media use and activities may be changing, it does not follow that education and the teaching of media is changing as well.

It is well established that there is precious little research that shows whether media literacy interventions, workshops, or courses *work* or not (Bikham & Slaby, 2012; Fingar & Jolls, 2013; Jeong, Cho & Hwang, 2012; Tyner, 2015). Most scholars invested in media literacy will defend its teaching and say that yes, it does work – but there is minimal empirical



evidence that proves or supports this in any viable, quantifiable way. Much American media literacy work still debates the definitions and questions the field of study's successes and struggles in classroom inclusion (Hobbs, 2011; Potter, 2010). There is little discussion or agreement about what effective media literacy *looks like*: Do young people 'turn off' the media? Do they make 'better' media choices? Furthermore, do young people demand higher quality media from mainstream sources? That is, do they put pressure on producers to improve the quality of mass media? Are youth less violent, less obese, healthier, more physically active or more inclined towards activism after they have participated in media literacy training? If young people alter their thinking about media, how can this be known? Scharer observes, 'it is necessary to move beyond implicit assumptions about the benefits such efforts can achieve and toward their explicit definition and measurement' (2002: 355). 'Explicit definition and measurement' is altered with the entry of social media, which irrevocably alters our media landscape as well as how media should be taught.

What remains missing from both of these larger debates is *how* media literacy can be taught: Who teaches the teachers to teach media literacy? There are limited opportunities for interested teachers to get training in media literacy and much of it must happen via their own volition. As a general rule, graduate programs in teacher training do not have a media literacy requirement. Jacobs (2014), Levin (2013) and Share (2015) provide text-based training, including analyses of lessons, suggestions for lessons, and "how to" incorporate media literacy into classrooms. This is valuable, but leaves teachers isolated and alone. Self-training in media literacy becomes something teachers do alone and with little to no systemic support. Even when there is institutional support, as will be discussed, there is little to no formal application or standard procedure for teaching teachers, so what little training is offered can get lost in the shuffle of other priorities.

Planning for Implementation

In the Spring of 2014, after a one-day teacher training workshop and a half-day assembly and workshop on media literacy for 10th graders, MML was invited to implement a 1-year pilot study that would train teachers in media literacy and provide standards-based lesson plans in media literacy to be included in classes. The goals of the training were to support teachers in expanding their knowledge of media literacy concepts and understandings and to provide materials for them to integrate the concepts and understandings into their curricula.

In the 2014-2015 school year, MML was invited to bring media literacy training and lesson plans to the 10th grade team at Apricot Community High School (ACHS), a large, comprehensive high school in Central Massachusetts. This part of Massachusetts has



just under 200,000 residents, the majority of whom are white, nearly double the Latino and African American populations. Less than 20% of the population has college degrees and unemployment in this area is higher than in the rest of the state (“Worcester-Overview”). According to *US News and World Report* and the Massachusetts Department of Education school profiles, ACHS has a student population of just over 1300, taught by 89 teachers, a 14 to one ratio. Minorities (primarily Latino and African American with a small Asian population) make up 75% of the students and 77% of the student population is economically disadvantaged. ACHS is one of seven high schools in the district and has a college readiness index of 29.1%, slightly higher than the district average of 22.6%. About 48% of the students participate in AP testing. Of 10th graders, 76% are proficient in English Language Arts and 25% are advanced; 56% are proficient in Math, with 33% advanced; and 48% are proficient in Science and Technology, with 21% advanced.

Starting in the late summer of 2014, when teachers had returned to their classrooms to prepare for the year, MML began monthly trainings in media literacy, using the four categories outlined in MML’s Concepts and Understandings. The 10th grade team of teachers, specialising in Mathematics, History, and English, were provided with lesson plans for their individual classes. Each lesson plan included an analysis and production portion with the intent that students would learn the material and then practice their application of it. The ‘production’ portion involved students directly in ‘hands-on’ work, but did not necessarily include any electronic or video production. ACHS has wifi and limited access to computers via their computer lab, but does not have audio, video, or photography equipment for student use in core courses. Each lesson plan included a pre- and post-survey designed to measure what students knew before the lesson and what they learned from it. The lessons were all drawn from the Massachusetts state standards and fit into what was presumed to be taught, at grade level, in the 10th grade.

Lessons were provided for the following courses/topics:

Mathematics: Budgeting: Students learn the basics of budgeting and create a budget based on average incomes/expenses in their community. Students analyse mass-market magazines to see what readers are encouraged to purchase and whether these purchases fit into the constructed budget. Through this lesson, students learn the disconnect between consumption encouraged by the media and the constraints of one’s own budget.

Mathematics: Perspective: Using principles of geometry, students analyse how perspective is constructed and how it can be manipulated. Students analyse popular



action-adventure films, especially chase scenes and/or “attack” scenes to learn how perspective is used to establish mood. Students take their own pictures where they manipulate perspective through camera angles and distance. Through this lesson, students learn how images are created and manipulated and then create their own manipulated images.

Language Arts: Branding: Students gain a deeper understanding of the content, production, and industry behind branding. Students practice deconstruction of an advertisement and enhance their critical thinking skills. Students also explore their relationship with the brand and gain more self-awareness about this relationship.

Language Arts: Healthy relationships: Students define and celebrate healthy relationships, identify controlling behavior, and understand how problematic behavior can escalate to violence. Students learn how to identify an unhealthy balance of power in a relationship using media examples as the framework and be aware of the consequences. Through analysis of media, students see how “ideal” relationships are regularly constructed by the media.

History: Iconic image: Students explore how images can construct our understanding of history and draw on images from current events to create stories. Through analysis, students learn how history is constructed and through production, students participate in narrative construction.

History: Civil rights, marriage law and images: Students learn how people’s experiences are shaped, in part, by their membership in groups defined by race, gender, socioeconomic status, culture, ethnicity and ability. They explore how people’s experiences are shaped, in part, by the historical moment, the society, and the culture in which they live. Students will understand the importance of the context in which media are produced and shared. This provides the foundation for exploring how images can affect people, society and culture.

Implementing the Work

The goal of this discussion is to share the outcomes and highlight the systemic problems and struggles of integrating media literacy as a way to explore opportunities and options to move forward with more productivity.



Teacher training and implementation

A total of eight teachers, with a range of 2-19 years of teaching experience at ACHS in Math, History, and English, participated in five training days and one day of reflection and evaluation over the course of the 2014-2015 school year. Of the eight teachers, five implemented the provided lesson plans and shared their students' work and responses to the pre- and post-survey. Two teachers did not implement the provided lessons at all and one teacher did implement the lessons but did not share the student work. The teachers who did not implement the lesson plans attended four training workshops but chose not to take class time away from test preparation. Three teachers missed at least one of the training sessions.

The training sessions occurred mid-day on Fridays. ACHS originally agreed to give MML two hours for each session, but this was reduced on the second day of training to 90 minutes due to union rules about providing adequate time for a lunch break. Several teachers regularly arrived late to the sessions, oftentimes due to addressing student issues, and several had to leave early, making it challenging to find a rhythm.

Four out of five teachers implemented their lessons in April and all acknowledged they waited until 'the last minute' because they had forgotten about it and were reminded by the confirmation of the reflection and review meeting. Each teacher who implemented the lessons did not stay exclusively with the 10th grade students; lessons were provided to approximately 121 students in the 9th, 10th and 12th grades. There was some confusion over what courses were offered for what grades, so teachers implemented the lessons in the classes they thought most appropriate. The atmosphere at ACHS, like many public high schools, is hectic. The open concept physical structure means that student classrooms are partitioned with three-quarter height dividers, making the teaching space loud and prone to interruptions. Students were often watching the trainings from the classroom next door and at times their noise level made it challenging for training participants to hear each other or the media examples.

Various teachers wanted to do more or less work with the lessons provided. For example, the Budget lesson provided web links to average incomes and expenses in the Central Massachusetts area, but one teacher would have preferred if that information had already been built for her so that she did not have to search for it, while another teacher preferred that there was no fixed budget provided because she thought it would be more valuable for her students to do that research themselves. This lesson asked the class to look at magazines and discuss the advertisements and what a reader is expected to buy, but the teachers did not have access to a wide variety of magazines. One math teacher did not like the Perspective lesson because she found it challenging to fit in with her plan



for Geometry; she included part of the lesson, but was frustrated by doing so because it took valuable time away from her class. The lesson asked that students take pictures and manipulate the perspective of the image, but the teacher did not have access to cameras and does not allow her students to use their cell phones in class, so she did not include the production portion of the lesson. She also did not have access to the Internet or a way to project images in her classes, so she could not include the media analysis portion of the lesson.

The iconic image lesson, which focused on the 2013 Boston Marathon Bombings, was well received by the 10th grade honors History class, with comprehensive teacher notes on its implementation. This class deconstructed several images from history, including ones from 9/11 and Iwo Jima, as an adaptation of the lesson. The teacher's notes state:

The students responded very well to this lesson. They had thoughtful, meaningful discussions about framing, audience, intended reactions, and purpose. Several expressed that they aren't going to be able to look at media images the same way ever again.

This contributes to the anecdotal evidence that media literacy 'works', but it cannot be proven that behaviour will change for the long- or short-term. The pre- and post-surveys from this class were comprehensive and thoughtfully written. While some students got some basic facts wrong – how many bombers there were, their country of origin and faith, the charges brought against the bombers – they had a basic understanding of the event, why it was 'newsworthy', and how the images contributed to the story and its legacy. It may be noteworthy that the students in this class are part of an honors scholars program that separates students perceived to be academically talented into a specialised program.

A 12th grade statistics class completed the budgeting lesson and with comprehensive teacher notes, it was clear this was a rich experience for the class. The teacher implemented the lesson over the course of three days, including student homework that involved researching local budgets. While only 5 students filled out the pre- and post-survey, the teacher's notes share that this was a valuable lesson for seniors who were preparing to graduate and either go on to college or work. The maturity level of the students and the "real world" implications were valuable in the late spring of their last year of high school.

Teacher evaluation

For the most part, the teachers were receptive and appreciative of the media literacy training sessions and lesson plans. Prior to the sessions, the teachers shared their concerns





about their students, including rampant in-class cell phone use, an apparent lack of interest in research beyond what was easily available on Google, and a difficulty connecting with students' own media use. The teachers desired more effective ways to reach their students while also working to minimise inappropriate in-class media use. Most of the teachers found the MML trainers well-informed and highly competent in their facilitation and learned about media literacy:

Very valuable. I learned specific terminology that I incorporated into lessons with all my students. It was well-structured, organised, with a great underlying message.

I think they were valuable. I didn't understand a lot about media literacy prior to the training.

Very valuable! I think this is important training, especially when trying to inform young adults how to be critical thinkers and aware of their surroundings.

I thought they were valuable. I didn't understand much about media literacy prior.

However, not all of the teachers found the trainings valuable or made use of them:

I didn't find them very valuable. They were informative and brought up good points about how to discuss media literacy bias, but I didn't feel that it brought up anything new or useful to implement in the classroom.

I feel that I learned the most about media literacy the first time we met before you did the module with students last year. After that, returns gradually diminished. I guess I feel like I was already largely aware, but didn't know I was aware of media literacy. On occasion, discussions ran long and session objectives were not completed.

The trainings were valuable; however, I needed to focus on the MCAS English test with my students. Although at times information seems repetitive, perhaps it needed to be because the training sessions were spread out throughout the year.

The 'gradually diminishing returns' and need to focus on testing were concerns throughout the process. MML's approach models a non-hierarchical approach to teaching,





asking for a consistent participation from participants, including a considerable amount of discussion. Participants are invited to assist in framing the context and practice making sense of the concepts. This may be incongruent with traditional trainings where facilitators present the data *at* participants rather than *with* them. In this vein, it may have felt like we were giving them more work, which, in turn, may have felt particularly arduous in the middle of the school day. Late arrivals and early departures certainly negatively impacted each session and made sustained conversation challenging. Heightening the awareness of media concepts to include media education into their curriculum was one of the goals of the training. Successfully engaging every participant in order for them to implement Media Literacy education in their classrooms is clearly challenging. The teacher feedback indicates that while valuable, there is an opportunity to consolidate some portions of the trainings.

Aside from individual response to the trainings, there were significant obstacles to getting the lesson plans into the classrooms as designed. Massachusetts experienced a particularly awful winter, with two full weeks of school cancelled due to snow, which put a great deal of pressure on completing the regular school work and test preparation. Most lesson plans were designed to be implemented over multiple days, and teachers felt they did not have this time in their schedules and with high student absenteeism, it was difficult to maintain consistency across multiple days. The teachers recognise and respect the energy and motivation of the principal, but she also changes her priorities and interests throughout the school year, so teachers are often asked to take on new projects before being able to finish projects in process, which disrupts the flow of lesson planning and implementation. Not all classrooms have access to technology, which made implementing certain aspects of the lessons difficult if not impossible. Most of all, mirroring the national teaching climate, teachers were clear that there was simply not enough time or resources to implement the work:

Do not have time to incorporate lessons into class.

Critical thinking and deconstruction takes time out of class, away from topic-specific work.

There is not enough time.

Guilt felt for not implementing media literacy – but pressures are so high with teacher responsibilities, testing, etc.



Despite teacher interest, it was difficult to get beyond the idea that this was ‘extra work’ – for which they were not being paid and which did not contribute to test preparation. It is a sad acknowledgement of the pressures in classrooms when teachers themselves comment that ‘critical thinking and deconstruction’ are extraneous. All workshops took place during their regularly scheduled day and there was no requirement to work beyond contracted hours, but the teachers agreed they would be more invested in the work if there were some form of financial incentive, stating they would be happy to stay after school and/or come in over the summer if they could get paid. There was not universal agreement about this; the administrator who organised the schedule disagreed and claimed that the amount teachers are paid for non-contract work – approximately \$33/hour – was not incentive enough. The training workshops were scheduled during the day when, it turns out, some of the teachers needed to find coverage for their classes (this was not made clear to MML facilitators ahead of time) and this became a source of frustration for those missing their classes. These teachers missed five days of the same course depending on their participation level, which was difficult on work momentum and student morale. Some teachers thought there was too much time between the monthly workshops, which may very well be true, but based on the strict schedules and the inability to pay them for non-contract work, this was the only option.

Do the teachers understand media literacy?

Based on a post-survey of the participating teachers, it is evident that the teachers have learned a foundational understanding of media literacy based on their own descriptions of the field:

Teaching students and people in general to think critically about the media they are bombarded with on a daily basis. Being empowered enough to make important choices about what they will watch, listen to, read, etc. What they will buy. How all of this affects gender roles, racism, sexism, etc.

Analysing and understanding media (images, TV, social media, text).

The understanding of how media works from who is conducting the source, who is the intended audience, what the source is trying to pass.

Understanding what you’re being sold and by whom, and for what purpose. But first, understanding that you’re being marketed to in the first place.



Being informed, aware, and critical of all types of media and how they affect our views, beliefs, and values. Knowing how to analyse the messages they send/convey and making a conscious decision of how we let it affect us.

Understanding where media comes from and how it influences decisions. In addition, media literacy is an ability to look at media critically and be able to think of perspective.

Media literacy is the interpretation of media and its messages through thoughtful analysis of the product: Who, what, where, when, why.

This is a solid first step in the path of media literacy inclusion. When we met with the teachers a year prior, they did not have a vocabulary for a definition of media literacy, so we can see their learning. The next leap is to provide them with cohesive training so they can infuse their learning into lesson planning and implementation.

Next Steps

At ACHS, the administrators were very enthusiastic about the training and curriculum. The planning meetings with school leadership projected a commitment to the program both prior to and after implementation. Initially, adequate time was provided for each workshop, but the realities of the school day, scheduling and formal academic demands interfered with the plan. Without the institutional and 'insider' understanding of ACHS, MML was not aware that the training schedule impacted class time for some of the teachers. Trainings were regularly rescheduled throughout the year, sometimes due to snow days and other times due to testing requirements.

A goal of this pilot study was to test our program and methods of implementing it in a public high school environment and share the experience with the field to explore how the work can be most successfully included; in addition, we wanted teachers to have a better understanding of media literacy themselves and implement the provided lesson plans, with their own adaptations.

Greater communication with teachers and administrators before lesson plan development is needed. The reality of the day-to-day of a comprehensive school is that there is often an ever-shifting set of priorities; schedules shift and flexibility is of utmost importance. That being said, teachers and teacher-trainers need as much clarity of communication as possible. Teachers need to be asked specific questions that may initially seem trivial, such as what technologies are accessible and at what times; this can vary



from classroom to classroom. Creating lesson plans for specific grades was not helpful as students in high school are placed in classes with multiple grade representation. Instead, MML will modify existing lesson plans and develop new ones for specific courses rather than courses specifically matched with grade-level. There was also varied opinion from the teachers on whether the lesson plans should be more detailed or if the teacher should be able to include more of his/her own material into the work, so teachers should be worked with consistently throughout the process. In future, training time needs to be allotted for lessons to begin as frames and then get “filled in” in consultation with individual teachers. Overall, the teachers felt that multi-day lessons were harder to implement with success than single-day lesson plans. There is high absenteeism and it is hard to catch up students who miss classes that provided the framework for future learning. Plus, a one-day lesson plan offers flexibility, can be implemented anywhere and need not be scheduled far in advance.

At the end of the school year, we met with administrators and agreed to work exclusively with the mathematics department at ACHS for the 2015-2016 school year. Drawn from lessons learned about planning, organisation, and implementation in 2014-15, the vision was to work within their already-scheduled faculty meetings, therefore not asking the teachers to stay after school any longer than contractually obligated and no need to find class coverage. The training workshops were to be 90 minutes; 45 of which were going to be media literacy training and 45 of which were going to be focused on co-developing media literacy lesson plans, so that teachers could see immediately how the study of the media could be included in their courses and could receive desired levels of support in building media-infused lesson plans. Students seemed to resent the amount of writing required in the pre- and post-surveys, so they were streamlined in order to encourage greater student participation. Teachers were to be given “homework” between each workshop to develop their lessons and were going to report back to their colleagues at a full-school faculty meeting in February of 2016. This gave the teachers a deadline for development and implementation, while also providing enough time for inevitable delays and greater time for reflection before the close of the school year.

Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, priorities at ACHS have shifted again. Over the summer, the head of the mathematics department decided she was unable to commit her team of teachers to the training and the principal asked if we would work with the teacher who teaches a video production course. MML is certainly interested in supporting the production element of media literacy education, but leaders of the organisation feel strongly that the content needs to be integrated across the curriculum and not relegated to one department, specifically one that is considered an elective (and therefore has a



much greater chance of being cut from the curriculum when budgets are trimmed). Our pedagogical desire is to see media literacy infused across the curriculum both for the education of teachers and students as well as to build research that can be shared with the larger field.

Two mathematics teachers continued their involvement with MML over the summer by volunteering to enhance the budgeting and the geometry lesson plans. They agreed to continue work on media literacy and complete the pre- and post-assessments when they implement the lesson plans during the academic year of 2015-2016.

Conclusion: Lessons Learned, Goals Articulated

This project worked with multiple goals, including specific goals within ACHS that will serve the larger goals of MML and, buy extension, will speak to – and hopefully contribute to – the concerns of the larger media literacy community. A broad goal is to see the project become self-sustaining where teachers have the confidence to develop their own ideas on how to implement comprehensive media literacy into their classrooms.

A larger goal of MML is to see comprehensive media literacy included in Massachusetts public school classrooms across grades K-12. We work to develop lesson plans and engage with teachers to make those lesson plans pertinent to their course topics, engaging for their students, and easily accessible. To ensure this, teachers need to be trained in media literacy; to this end, MML supports policy that will include training in media literacy for all Massachusetts-licensed teachers. These are admittedly lofty goals and MML works on a day-to-day level to bring these goals to fruition in a cautious, carefully-thought out continuous process of collaboration and self-reflection. This pilot project helped us see the gaps in the work in order to better prepare for future work.

On a broader level, talking about implementing media literacy in classrooms will continue to be frustrating until teachers are more thoroughly trained and lessons can be built in an inclusive, rather than exclusive, manner, and until the creators of mandated school requirements recognise media literacy education's importance in these times. This is a place where our community of scholars can build networks that speak to the value of media literacy education to teachers, legislators, and policy makers, many of whom need media literacy training. Further, teachers and administrators interested in media literacy inclusion need support in these efforts. How can scholars of media literacy help move this conversation forward?

When media literacy is integrated across the curriculum, we know that students are getting information beyond the “mandated” expectations. While this piece does not discuss what students learned specifically from the lessons, there can be a larger



meta-conversation about what is learned when media literacy is integrated across the curriculum. When media literacy is integrated across the curriculum, the regular day-to-day classroom is disrupted; students and teachers are asking for a certain degree of trust in order to take a risk that is not generally supported in the current face of education reform. Students are asked to think, discuss, and write in a way that is dramatically different from 'the norm,' especially because there is no test for which to prepare. This makes the work potentially threatening because it does not follow 'standard' classroom expectations, especially in its inclusion of 'real-life' learning from pop culture. It will take a while for teachers to feel comfortable breaking the well-established hierarchy and undoing the well-established ideology. There are schools and educators interested in providing comprehensive media literacy education for their students. And while students may not be motivated by test preparation, it is familiar; comprehensive media literacy undoes the familiar, and that can be intimidating. If thoughtfully taught by thoroughly trained teachers, young people may be able to move beyond the intimidation and make greater connection among their in-school and out-of-school learning while also creating a stronger community within their classrooms. Students and teachers will learn together that they are *part of*, not *separate from* the communities in which they live, which may engender greater agency for change-making. .

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