

Center for Media Literacy Educational Philosophy- Empowerment through Education¹

A philosophy of empowerment through media literacy education

The Center for Media Literacy (CML) suggests this philosophy that incorporates three intertwining concepts:

1. Media literacy is education for life in a global media world.

For 500 years, since the invention of moveable type, we have valued the ability to read and write as the primary means of communicating and understanding history, cultural traditions, political and social philosophy and the news of the day. In more recent times, traditional literacy skills ensured that individuals could participate fully as engaged citizens and functioning adults in society. Today families, schools and all community institutions share the responsibility for preparing young people for living and learning in a global culture that is increasingly connected through multi-media and influenced by powerful images, words, and sounds.

2. The heart of media literacy is informed inquiry.

Through a four-step ‘inquiry’ process of *Access . . . Analysis . . . Evaluate . . . Action*, media literacy helps young people acquire an empowering set of “navigational” skills which include the ability to

- *Access* information from a variety of sources.
- *Analyze* and *explore* how messages are “constructed” whether print, verbal, visual or multi-media.
- *Evaluate* media’s explicit and implicit messages against one’s own ethical, moral, and/or democratic principles.
- *Action* or *creation* their own messages using a variety of media tools.

3. Media literacy is an alternative to censoring, boycotting or blaming “the media.”

Deeply committed to freedom of expression, media literacy does not promote partisan agendas or political points of view. The power of media literacy is its ability to inspire independent thinking and foster critical analysis. The ultimate goal of media education is to make wise choices possible.

¹ Adapted from “CML Educational Philosophy” Center for Media Literacy <http://www.medialit.org>