EDCP 481
Media Studies (Across the Curriculum)
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Media Literacies

Following the 1999 "Educating for the Media and the Digital Age" conference, in 2008 UNESCO hosted a group of experts to address the challenges of media literacy. The decided emphasis was on teacher training for media education and literacy. Since then, UNESCO has sustained its commitment to media literacy: "UNESCO's action to provide critical knowledge and analytical tools, empowering media consumers to function as autonomous and rational citizens, and enabling them to critically make use of the media." The UNESCO portal for Media Literacy is an excellent source of ideas and resources, including the Media Education: A Kit for Teachers, Students, Parents and Professionals.

Researchers, for-profit and non-profit agencies, and educators have provided a range of resources for media literacy, albeit with a range of definitions and orientations to literacy. The European Centre for Media Literacy (2004-2005) defines the construct as:

- the ability to understand and interpret visual images, static and moving, how the meanings of images are organized and constructed to make meaning, and to understand their impact on viewers;
- the ability to understand how mass media, such as TV, film, radio and magazines, work, produce meanings, and are organized and used wisely and
- the ability to understand how all speakers, writers, and producers of different kinds of messages are situated in particular contexts with significant personal, social and cultural aspects and values.

Media literacy consists of three dimensions:

- Technical competencies: This means that one has to have access to different sorts of media and the ability to use media as a prerequisite for the other two dimensions.
- Critical reception practices: This dimension consists of critical thinking skills. Students will develop an understanding of how media work. Rather than being passive consumers of media – TV shows, news information, the internet etc. – students learn that realities are constructed – to reflect ideas or values, to sell a product or to produce excitement. Students also learn how to spot a stereotype and to distinguish facts from opinions.
- Content production: A third aspect of media literacy is the ability to produce and distribute content of media. Students cannot only use media but actively create media messages.

Literacies for M&T Students:

- **Dispositions** toward the ecological, cognitive, and cultural contexts of new media technologies as well as their personal and social effects.
- **Understandings** of the digital aesthetic, cyberculture, and media studies.
- **Skills** for computing, creating, and innovating with digital media (image, text, and sound), including animation and virtual environments.