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Voices from the Field

## The Core Concepts: Fundamental to Media Literacy Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

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### Abstract

“New media” does not change the essence of what media literacy is, nor does it affect its ongoing importance in society. Len Masterman, a UK-based professor, published his ground-breaking books in the 1980’s and laid the foundation for media literacy to be taught to elementary and secondary students in a systematic way that is consistent, replicable, measurable and scalable on a global basis – and thus, timeless. Masterman’s key insight was that the central unifying concept of media education is that of representation: media are symbolic sign systems that must be encoded and decoded. This paper explores the development and the application of the Core Concepts of media literacy, based on Masterman’s groundbreaking work, in Canada and in the U.S.

**Keywords:** core concepts, media literacy, construction, deconstruction, history

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Media literacy has survived through the years largely as a grass-roots movement which, slowly but surely, has developed around the world (Walkosz, Jolls and Sund 2008). While it has often been present on the “margins” of school curriculum, thanks to the steadfast support of global organizations such as UNESCO, media literacy continues to gain recognition and legitimacy worldwide. Yet because media literacy is rarely institutionalized in education systems and not taught consistently, there is often little understanding of the foundation and basic concepts of media literacy and how these concepts evolved.

The words "media literacy" are not new, nor does the notion of "new media" affect the essence of what media literacy is, since all media—new and traditional—benefit from a critical approach to analysis and production. What is timeless and unique about media literacy? It is a discipline that provides a distinct framework for critically examining and producing media.

The foundations of the discipline have primarily been developed through the work of Len Masterman in England and Barry Duncan in Canada, acknowledged by many educators as the founders of media literacy as we know it today. This foundation includes the basic principles for media literacy introduced by Len Masterman in 1989 and the ways in which these were taken up by Barry Duncan and his Canadian colleagues in their Key Concepts. The Key Concepts, first introduced in the 1989, remain central to media literacy education in Canada today. Building on the work of their Canadian colleagues, the American version of the concepts was introduced in 1993 and continues to underpin the work of educators across the U.S. The development of media literacy in both of these countries reinforces the importance of a fundamental paradigm and conceptual framework for media literacy education today.

In the U. S., the origins of media literacy education--providing support for teachers, parents, children and adults to critically analyze and produce

media—can be traced back to the days when radio was the latest communication technology. The “Wisconsin Association for Better Radio Listening Bibliography Helpful to Teachers” lists and describes booklets with titles such as “Skill in Listening” (published by the National Council of Teachers of English) and details 22 articles about “good listening” dating back to 1935 (Spence 1950). Dr. Leslie Spence, Ph.D., Chairman of Education for the Wisconsin Association for Better Radio and Television, also addressed the new technology of television with her 1952 booklet titled “Let’s Learn to Look and Listen,” featuring a slogan on the front cover which said “Radio-TV: Everyone’s Responsibility” (Spence 1952). In a 1955 issue of the Better Broadcasts Newsletter, a publication of the American Council for Better Broadcasts (a predecessor of today’s National Telemedia Council), Louis Forsdale (1955) discussed seven specific in-school activities and then said, “Through activities like these (and many more), we may hasten the inevitable maturation of the newer media and help our students gain necessary multi-media literacy. Is there an educational job to be done which has a higher priority?”

These notions weren’t confined to the United States. Internationally, concerned adults, inside and outside the classroom, became increasingly committed to helping youth negotiate their lifelong relationship with media (Walkosz, Jolls & Sund 2008). Jean Pierre Golay, for example, experienced Nazi propaganda in Switzerland in the 1930’s, and as a Swiss teacher in the 1950’s, he became determined to help his students learn “to look around, listen, question, discuss, take time to think... More and more, we shifted from ‘talk about media’ to ‘experience production’ with tape recorders, printers, varied tools. We bought a television studio, then a second, with a console for mixing, some special effects, a blue box, three cameras, sound and proper lighting equipment” (Golay 2011).

In Canada, the pioneering work of communications expert Marshall McLuhan in the 1940s through the 1960s created a foundation upon which many of our current ideas about media literacy are built. McLuhan was aware of the profound impact of communications technologies on our lives, our societies and our future. His famous idea, that the “medium is the message” taught us to recognize that the form through which a message is conveyed is as important as the content of the message (McLuhan 1967, 63). McLuhan’s theory was based on the idea that each medium has its own technological “grammar” or bias that shapes and creates a message in a unique way. Different media may report the same event, but each medium will create different impressions and convey different messages. While

McLuhan was developing his theories long before the use of the Internet and social media, he also coined the phrase “the global village” to suggest the ways in which technological change would connect audiences and users of media and technology. Indeed, he believed that the technology would come to act as extensions of ourselves, shaping and influencing our attitudes, beliefs and behaviours (McLuhan 1967).

Other pioneers active prior to the 1960’s – Harold Innis, Bee Sullivan, Father John Culkin, and Herb Ostrach, and later, Neil Postman, explored the new media world of their time, and began describing the impact of media on society (Duncan 2010). But it wasn’t until Len Masterman, a UK-based professor, published his ground-breaking books, *Teaching About Television* (1980) and *Teaching the Media* (1985), that the foundation was laid for media literacy to be taught to elementary and secondary students in a systematic way that is consistent, replicable, measurable and scalable on a global basis – and thus, timeless.

Masterman brought a key new insight to the worlds of media, culture and education:

The problem was this: if you are studying TV, then in successive weeks you might be looking at news, documentary, sport, advertising, soap opera, etc. How is it possible to study such a diverse range of topics in a way that would be focused and disciplined?... I suppose the big step forward was to recognize a truism: that what we were actually studying was television and *not* its subject contents. That is, we were not actually studying sport or music or news or documentary. We were studying *representations* of these things. We were studying the ways in which these subjects were being represented and symbolized and packaged by the medium...(Masterman 2010)

This insight led to Masterman's concise statement about what distinguishes media education from other disciplines: “The central unifying concept of Media Education is that of representation. The media mediate. They do not reflect but re-present the world. The media, that is, are symbolic sign systems that must be decoded. Without this principle, no media education is possible. From it, all else flows” (Masterman 1989).

Looking back on his work in a 2010 interview for the Voices of Media Literacy Project, Masterman addressed the changed perspective that he had introduced to teaching and learning, and the enduring nature of that change: “...you can teach about the media most effectively, not through a content-centered

approach, but through the application of a conceptual framework which can help pupils to make sense of *any* media text. And that applies every bit as much to the new digitized technologies as it did to the old mass media... The acid test of whether a media course has been successful resides in the students' ability to respond critically to media texts they will encounter in the future. Media education is nothing if it is not an education for life" (Masterman 2010).

As Masterman identified new tenets for media education, he continued his quest to describe—through a process of inquiry—how media operate:

‘...if we are looking at TV as a representational system, then the questions inevitably arise as to who is creating these representations. Who is doing the representing? Who is telling us that this is the way the world is? That their way of seeing is simply natural? Other questions emerge. What is the nature of the world that is being represented? What are its values and dominant assumptions? What are the techniques that are used to create the ‘authenticity’ of TV? How are TV’s representations read and how are they understood by its audiences? How are we as an audience positioned by the text? What divergent interpretations exist within the class?’ (Masterman 2010)

It was out of such questions that Masterman articulated, in a systematic way, how media operate as symbolic “sign systems.” In his second book, *Teaching the Media*, Masterman applies the systematic framework he developed to all media (Masterman 1985), exploring ideas such as the constructed nature of media, media techniques used to attract attention, purpose, authorship, bias, values, lifestyles, points of view, omissions, power. Through examining these ideas, it is possible to see how media presents itself *to* us in a ubiquitous way; it is also used *by* us and it can be *about* us. But whether it is *for* us is a matter of values and opinion, and personal judgment (Golay 2011).

Masterman recognized that media education addresses both the consumption and production of media texts, regardless of technology: “Developing a conceptual understanding of the media will involve both critical reception of, and active production through, the media. At all ages, it will develop through the choice of content material appropriate to, and of interest to, the student group concerned. It should go without saying that these concepts should be made explicit, in an appropriate form, to pupils and students, and not simply

exist within the heads of the teachers” (Masterman 1985).

To be able to apply the media literacy concepts, students must have the relevant vocabulary and ongoing critical practice. Masterman identified principles for classroom teaching and learning that can be considered current today. His 18 Basic Principles for media awareness education, written in 1989, read like a manifesto for 21<sup>st</sup> Century education (Masterman 1989). Highlights of these principles include:

- Content, in Media Education, is a means to an end. That end is the development of transferable analytical tools rather than alternative content.
- Ideally, evaluation in Media Education means student self-evaluation, both formative and summative.
- Indeed, Media Education attempts to change the relationship between teacher and student by offering both objects for reflection and dialogue.
- Media Education is essentially active and participatory, fostering the development of more open and democratic pedagogies. It encourages students to take more responsibility for and control over their own learning, to engage in joint planning of the syllabus, and to take longer-term perspectives on their own learning.
- Media Education involves collaborative learning. It is group focused. It assumes that individual learning is enhanced not through competition but through access to the insights and resources of the whole group.
- Media Education is a holistic process. Ideally it means forging relationships with parents, media professionals and teacher-colleagues.
- Media Education is committed to the principle of continuous change. It must develop in tandem with a continuously changing reality.
- Underlying Media Education is a distinctive epistemology. Existing knowledge is not simply transmitted by teachers or ‘discovered’ by students. It is not an end but a beginning. It is the subject of critical investigations and dialogue out of which new knowledge is actively created by students and teachers.

Masterman’s approach to education supports the types of learning environments currently being called for by many students, parents, teachers and employers. It also is consistent with brain research which has revealed that, unlike Jean Piaget’s linear model for child development which postulates that intelligence develops in a series of

stages that are related to age and are progressive, because one stage must be accomplished before the next can occur (Cherry 2010), children have “social” brains which acquire knowledge incrementally through cultural experiences and social context (Barbey, Colom and Grafman 2012, 265). Some models for addressing new media, such as that outlined in Henry Jenkins “Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture,” (Jenkins 2006) call for youth to develop skills such as

simulation, appropriation, and transmedia navigation. These skills often call for social participation as well as individual use. Masterman’s approach, however, not only calls for a collaborative effort and social participation, but also provides both a conceptual framework and a pedagogy which teachers can readily use in their classrooms.

**Table 1 : AML’s Eight Key Concepts for Media Literacy**

1	All media are constructions.
2	The media construct reality.
3	Audiences negotiate meaning in media.
4	Media have commercial implications.
5	Media contain ideological and value messages.
6	Media have social and political implications.
7	Form and content are closely related in the media.
8	Each medium has a unique aesthetic form.

When Masterman’s initial book, *Teaching about Television*, was published, it became an international sensation which sold out twice on its print run in the first six months of publication, and ultimately sold 100,000 copies worldwide, primarily in Britain, Australia, Canada and Europe. In North America, Masterman’s Concepts first took root in Canada, where media literacy pioneer and venerated teacher Barry Duncan, as well as other leaders, including John Pungente, Cam Macpherson, Rick Shepherd, Dede Sinclair, Bill Smart, and Neil Andersen began experimenting with both McLuhan’s and Masterman’s ideas. In 1987, Duncan and the Association for Media Literacy (AML) in Ontario, articulated these ideas, based primarily on Masterman’s work, as Eight Key Concepts of media literacy. These Eight Key Concepts, shown in Table 1, continue to provide a theoretical base for all media literacy in Canada and to give teachers a common language and framework for discussion (Wilson and Duncan 2008, 129). Duncan said:

...looking at not just the content but the form of the media was Marshall McLuhan’s unique contribution...and I had the good fortune of being his graduate student at the University of Toronto, along with five or six others, just as he was hammering out his ideas...But the notion of representation – that is the central concept of media literacy—that notion was propelled through the decades, through the ‘60’s to today. It is central that how well we talk about representation largely determines the nature of how GOOD our media literacy is. So, representation, and the core principles—what we in Canada call the Key Concepts—by having these key notions, which often are turned into questions, that has kept us on track...(Duncan 2011).

From the time that Duncan founded the Association for Media Literacy (AML) in 1978, educators and media literacy activists worked to ensure that media education became a mandatory component in the Ontario curriculum from grade 6 to grade 12. Duncan and members of the AML developed the *Media Literacy Resource Guide* (1989), which explored ways of implementing the Key Concepts across the curriculum at both the elementary and secondary levels. AML Executive members travelled across the province of Ontario to help teachers implement the guide, and following the success of the AML's work in Ontario, educators across Canada came to embrace the Resource Guide and worked to include media literacy in their curriculum documents (Duncan 2010). The popularity of the resource guide spread to the United States and around the world: the landmark *Media Literacy Resource Guide* has been translated into French, Italian, Japanese and Spanish.

The publication of the *Media Literacy Resource Guide* marked a pivotal time in the development of media literacy in Canada:

...it led to...the mandatory (media literacy) component, in English. (Media literacy) has always been tied in with the subject (of English), from coast to coast in Canada, now mandated from grades 1-12. Everything was generated with reference to the Key Concepts. To a certain extent there were lesson plans but we didn't have a detailed set. People would adapt them [the key concepts] to what we called 'teachable moments.' The teachable moments are the things like the War in Vietnam, and more recently, 9/11, the [Asian] Tsunami, [Hurricane] Katrina. All of those things are mediated by the media and [illustrate the] need to have the structure of media literacy, and an understanding of the ideological implications of the media, in order to clarify what is happening... (Duncan 2010)

In 1986, Ontario was the first English-speaking jurisdiction in the world to mandate media literacy in its curriculum (Wilson and Duncan 2008, 131). In an effort to support teachers trying to implement the new media literacy expectations from the curriculum, after the *Media Literacy Resource Guide* was developed, two international media education conferences followed in 1990 and 1992. Organized and hosted by the AML, *The New Literacy* (1990) and *Constructing Culture* (1992)—remembered as the “Guelph conferences” since they took place at Guelph University in Ontario—each attracted over 500 participants from around the world. It

was clear that media literacy had far-reaching appeal, and that an international movement was taking root in Canada.

Throughout the 90s and for the next two decades, the AML continued to support the work of teachers at home and around the world. To help teachers develop pedagogical approaches for implementing the media literacy curriculum and the Key Concepts, summer institutes were offered in Canada, in the cities of Toronto and London, Ontario, and Vancouver, B.C. Additional Qualifications courses for teachers were offered through the University of Toronto and York University. Also in the 1990s, the AML originated the concept and purpose of the national Media Awareness Network, today known as Media Smarts (Wilson and Duncan, 2008, 128). Best practices and resources were generously shared with colleagues near and far, through newsletters, publications and video conferences.

International recognition for the work of the AML occurred in 1998, when Barry Duncan and Carolyn Wilson (then past and current AML presidents, respectively) accepted an award from the World Council on Media Education which recognized the AML as “the most influential media education organization in North America”.

Not interested in resting on its laurels, the AML was a main organizer and co-host of Summit 2000, the largest media education conference in the world, with 1500 delegates from 54 countries. The AML continued to develop other resources and curriculum for the Ministry of Education in Ontario, always keeping the Key Concepts at the core. These documents included *Think Literacy* for Grades 7 to 10 (2005), and the media strand in the elementary *Language* document for grades 1-8 (2005), and in the secondary *English* document for grades 9 – 12 (2006). These documents emphasize the importance of providing students with the opportunity to become involved in media analysis and production, through curriculum expectations that focus on purpose and audience, media conventions and techniques, media forms, and representation. In recent years, members of the AML Executive have developed resources on such topics as digital storytelling, Internet safety, digital citizenship, and media violence.

In 2005, the achievements of Carolyn Wilson, then the president of the AML, were recognized nationally when she received the Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence. The Prime Minister's Award Committee recognized Carolyn as a tireless pioneer and advocate for media literacy and global education on the local, national and global levels.

In 2006, another significant milestone occurred as the AML worked with the Media Awareness Network

and the Canadian Teachers' Federation to develop the first Canadian National Media Literacy week (Wilson and Duncan 2008, 132). The annual week continues to be held to celebrate the work of teachers and students in digital and media literacy education, and to promote the integration of media literacy across the curriculum. Now in its ninth year, Media Literacy Week has become an international event, with participants from such countries as Brazil, Burkina Faso, Nepal, Singapore, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

With the AML's interest in supporting teachers, students and media users across Canada and beyond, it was natural that the possibilities offered by distance education would be embraced. Working with the Jesuit Communication Project and Face to Face Media, members of the AML Executive Board developed the first online course in Media Literacy for teachers and for the general public. The course, "Understanding Media Literacy: Inside Plato's Cave", has been offered through Athabasca University since 2009. Underpinned by the Key Concepts, the course includes an introduction to media literacy, examples of media education curriculum from across Canada, and modules based on a number of key themes, including Ideology and Representation, Media Language, and New(er) Technologies. (<http://sals.lms.athabascau.ca/course/view.php?id=76>)

Research and resource development continues with the work of the national organization Media Smarts (formerly the Media Awareness Network). Since 2000, Media Smarts has conducted the most comprehensive study of its kind, exploring the role of the Internet in the lives of young Canadians today. The most recent 2014 study, "Young Canadians in a Wired World Phase III: *Life Online*" focuses young peoples' attitudes and behaviors regarding the Internet, specifically examining "what youth are doing online, what sites they're going to, their attitudes towards online safety, household rules on Internet use and unplugging from digital technologies" (Johnson 2014). On its website, Media Smarts offers a plethora of media literacy resources, on topics ranging from gender representation in the media, to cyberbullying, to marketing and consumerism, for parents, teachers and students, in both English and French.

All of these accomplishments, projects and events, one could argue, stem from the pioneering work of Barry Duncan, the founding of the Association for Media Literacy in Ontario, the development of the Key Concepts and the *Media Literacy Resource Guide*, and those important Guelph conferences. It was the conferences that provided the first international gathering for like-minded teachers, activists and media producers to come together to debate, to strategize and to

envision the goal of advancing the media literacy movement.

Inspired by the Canadian media literacy work, Americans from the U.S. attended the AML Conference in Guelph in 1990, and conducted their own special session on "How do we get going?" U.S. pioneers such as Marilyn Cohen, David Considine, Renee Hobbs, Douglas Kellner, Robert Kubey, Kathryn (Kate) Moody, Jim Potter, Renee Cherow-O'Leary, Marieli Rowe, Elizabeth Thoman and Kathleen Tyner, among other early media literacy advocates, were all active during that time, and they were to devote the coming years of their careers to spreading media literacy (Center for Media Literacy 2011).

The development of the Concepts that Masterman and Duncan originally articulated continued, however. J. Francis Davis (1989) wrote an article that first cited five ideas to teach children about media, based on the Key Concepts from the Association for Media Literacy. In 1993, Elizabeth Thoman, who founded the Center for Media Literacy in 1989 and published *Media & Values*, expanded on these ideas in a widely-distributed article for the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD). Thoman stated that "At the heart of media literacy is the principle of inquiry," and she articulated Five Concepts (Thoman 1993):

1. All media messages are 'constructed.'
2. Media messages are constructing using a creative language with its own rules.
3. Different people experience the same media message differently.
4. Media are primarily businesses driven by a profit motive.
5. Media have embedded values and points of view.

Borrowing from Masterman and Duncan, Thoman also emphasized the idea of asking questions related to the concepts, to begin opening up deeper questions. Thoman went on to describe a process of close analysis, through which a media text can be analyzed in a group setting. She also described an Action Learning Model, based on the work of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (Freire Institute 2014), summarized as a four-step 'empowerment' process of Awareness, Analysis, Reflection and Action. Through these four steps, individuals or groups may "formulate constructive action ideas, actions that will lead to personal changes in their own media choices and viewing habits as well as working for change locally, nationally or globally" (Thoman 1993).

CML published its curriculum, *Beyond Blame: Challenging Violence in the Media* in 1995, and used the Five Concepts and the Action Learning Model (later called the Empowerment Spiral) as a structural backbone for *Beyond Blame*. As Thoman wrote in an email to Ryan R. Goble on Sept. 16, 2010:

Because thousands of copies were sold, it served to distribute the Concepts widely through the lessons and handouts. Then, about 2000, Tessa Jolls (who joined CML as executive director in 1998), came in to the office one day and said, 'It's too difficult for kids to deal with *concepts*, what they need is a series of *questions*.' It revolutionized all of our thinking to date. So we set about creating questions out of the concepts...we continued to undergo word-smithing until we published the first edition of *Literacy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* in 2002. That was part of a larger publishing effort known as the CML MediaLit Kit™.

In the MediaLit Kit™, CML brought together elements such as a basic definition of media literacy, the Empowerment Spiral of Awareness, Analysis, Reflection and Action, and question sets for young children as well as for experienced media literacy practitioners. For the first time, CML displayed the Concepts visually by connecting the Five Core Concepts to Five Key Questions for Deconstruction (Thoman, Jolls and Share 2002).

But, as technology rapidly advanced—allowing for instant video production, social media sharing and a host of other possibilities—it became clear that the Concepts needed to be tied closely with construction/production, so that students would learn not just to “press buttons,” but to critically analyze their work as they produced it. “What has changed today...with the low costs of media production and the easy access and capacity for distribution, is that media education has become much more production-centered...the media educator thus needs to bring strategies, concepts and frames to the teaching context, but with an open mind towards media production practice that may be better known by young learners” (Hoechsmann 2011).

CML's latest version of the Core Concepts and Key Questions, called Questions/TIPS (Q/TIPS), features the addition of Five Key Questions for Construction, and was published as a component of CML's media literacy framework in the second edition of *Literacy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Jolls 2007). CML developed the visual display (Jolls and Sund 2007) of the Concepts and Questions.

Figure 1 shows the Concepts in the middle of the chart, relating to both Deconstruction and Construction (Jolls and Sund 2007). This graphic display provides a quick and clear framework for analysis of any media text, addressing any subject in any medium. With practice over time, students can apply the framework to their roles as media consumers and producers, and establish habits of mind that can last a lifetime.

In a recent evaluation of CML's framework for deconstruction and its updated *Beyond Blame* curriculum addressing media and violence, a longitudinal study confirmed that CML's approach to media literacy education has a positive impact on student knowledge, attitudes and behavior (Fingar and Jolls 2013; Webb and Martin 2012,430).

Although media literacy is a component of the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills framework for U.S. education, it is still not formally recognized in the Common Core Standards for Language Arts, nor is it typically included in teacher preparation programs. This is not only true in the U.S.; unfortunately, formal teacher preparation programs that include media literacy are also scarce in Canada (Andersen 2011). These omissions point to a foundation in media literacy that is missing in K-12 education and in universities in the U.S. Since the Concepts of media literacy provide the framework for understanding how media work as a representation system, a lack of teacher preparation not only robs students of the opportunity to understand the global village that McLuhan so aptly named, but also contributes to a diffuse understanding of media literacy that does not allow for consistent, replicable, measurable and scalable programs that lend themselves so well to digital technologies.

Instead, the education system is stuck in the era where information is valued because it is seen as being scarce, where citizens must physically retrieve information from “temples” of learning, and where pedagogy is focused on narrow content silos that often neglect to provide the problem-solving abilities for today's world. Today, information is plentiful, and the consistent inquiry skills of media literacy are well-suited for addressing the infinite variety of content knowledge available—yet these process skills are scarce, given the lack of media literacy training for teachers and students alike (Jolls 2012). There remains the danger of media literacy fundamentals being lost as they are passed over in favor of students learning media production alone, often in ways that serve only to “celebrate” young peoples' media practices, without encouraging a much-needed critical analysis.

Figure 1: CML's Questions / Tips

**CML's FIVE CORE CONCEPTS AND KEY QUESTIONS  
FOR CONSUMERS AND PRODUCERS  
Media Deconstruction/Construction Framework**

<b>CML's Questions/TIPS (Q/TIPS)</b> <small>© 2002-2007 Center for Media Literacy, www.medialit.org</small>				
#	Key Words	Deconstruction: CML's 5 Key Questions (Consumer)	CML's 5 Core Concepts	Construction: CML's 5 Key Questions (Producer)
1	<b>Authorship</b>	Who created this message?	All media messages are constructed.	What am I <b>authoring</b> ?
2	<b>Format</b>	What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?	Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules.	Does my message reflect understanding in <b>format</b> , creativity and technology?
3	<b>Audience</b>	How might different people understand this message differently?	Different people experience the same media message differently.	Is my message engaging and compelling for my target <b>audience</b> ?
4	<b>Content</b>	What values, lifestyles and points of view are represented in or omitted from this message?	Media have embedded values and points of view.	Have I clearly and consistently framed values, lifestyles and points of view in my <b>content</b> ?
5	<b>Purpose</b>	Why is this message being sent?	Most media messages are organized to gain profit and/or power.	Have I communicated my <b>purpose</b> effectively?

There is hope: Finland, long recognized for its educational excellence, has adopted a new national strategy for media education (Ministry of Education and Culture, Finland 2013). The European Union calls for every member country to report annually on media literacy programs and activities (Livingston and Wang 2013, 166). Australia continues to embed media literacy into its education system (Quin 2011). Global organizations such as UNESCO and others offer media literacy programs throughout the world. UNESCO describes media *and* information literacy as the focus of their current work: “Media and Information Literacy recognizes the primary role of information and media in our everyday lives. It lies at the core of freedom of expression and information—since it empowers citizens to understand the functions of media and other information providers, to critically evaluate their content, and to make informed decisions as users and producers of information and media content.” UNESCO has undertaken several initiatives in media and information literacy, with a particular focus on providing support for teachers and policy makers through a number of resources (Wilson and Grizzle

2011). The Aspen Institute has published a new policy report called “Learners at the Center of a Networked World,” that calls for media literacy and social/emotional literacies to serve as the heart of education (Aspen Institute 2014).

We can take inspiration from these new global developments in media literacy, and continue to build on the strength of the foundations that were laid by Masterman and Duncan many years ago. Barry Duncan (2010), before his death in 2012, issued a call that should be heeded: “I want to see critical pedagogy have a major role in bringing the key ideas both of traditional media and new media together, making literacy more meaningful in the curriculum. The so-called convergence [of technologies] and the culture of connectivity—all of the new directions—have to be reconciled with the traditional. If we do a good job at that, we will be successful.”

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