

Education for media literacy media essay



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Media literacy is an approach to education which provides a framework to analyze, evaluate and access messages in various forms and thereby building an understanding of the role of media in the society as well as self-expressions required for citizens of a democracy.

Media literacy is the ability to know and understand how the mass media works. This includes how they are organized, how they produce their meanings and how they use them wisely. A person who is media literate can clearly describe the role of media in their lives. He or she understands the basics of various media and enjoys using them deliberately in a conscious way. He or she has full recognition that protects them from being unnecessarily frightened and therefore has a full control of his or her media experiences. Often, the media is lumped together as a single entity but in reality it is actually many forms of communication like the newspapers, billboards, television, radio, magazines, video games, computer games and videocassettes.

Education for media literacy uses the inquiry-based pedagogic, model which encourages the people to ask questions in relation to what they read, hear and watch. Media literacy provides tools which help people analyze messages and offer them opportunities to broaden their experience of media. It assists them develop creative skills in coming up with their own media messages. Critical analysis includes identifying the author, his purpose and point of view, examining the construction techniques and genres, patterns of media presentation and detecting any bias, censorship and propaganda available in the news and public programming. Media

literacy explores how structural features like the media ownership and funding model affects the information presented.

Media literate people are skillful in creating and producing media messages to facilitate understanding of specific qualities of each medium and at the same time create independent media and participate as active citizens.

Media literacy has contributed to an expanded conceptualization of literacy which treats mass media, popular culture and digital media as types of texts that require critical evaluation and analysis. Due to the transformation process of media consumption into an active and a critical process, people have gained a bigger awareness of the potential for manipulation and misrepresentation through public relations techniques and get to know the role of mass media in constructing the views of reality. Sometimes, media literacy is viewed as a channel to address the negative side of mass media, digital media and popular culture which includes gender, media violence and racial stereotypes, concerns about loss of privacy, internet predators, the sexualization of children and cyber bullying. Media literacy provides a type of protection for children and helps them make good decisions in their consumption habits and the patterns of their use. Learning abilities linked to media literacy can be used to create learning and teaching methods for example through mobile phones, internet based learning and interactive whitboard.

Media interprets the past and shows us what has made us into being the way we are. Like geography, it defines for us our place in the world. Media literacy also helps us understand the workings of our immediate world and also our places individually in it. The media is also a major source of modern

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culture and entertainment and also requires us to learn and use the critical thinking skills. Media literacy helps us define how we communicate with others and also helps us to adopt the edge of modern technological innovations. Media literacy also helps us determine much of the cultural diet and weave part of the fabric part of our lives. Media literacy also helps us to understand ourselves as well as misunderstand ourselves and others. It helps us interpret our world, its ideas to us and its values. Media literacy helps us understand how things work, because it has carefully planned constructed and designed products.

By helping kids and teens to become media literate, we can help them protecting them against pressures from advertising and several others media forms to drink, use drugs, eat unhealthy foods and have sex. We also help them build good communication skills , put portrayals of others as well as themselves, encourage them to look into multiple interpretations of media messages and also improve their media usage habits like changing the ritualistic viewing behaviors.

The goal of media literacy is not bashing or to ridicule the media because it is a dominant force in our culture and therefore should be evaluated fairly and not denigrated. Media literacy is also not a magic wand or a silver bullet to solve all our problems but rather our best defense to resist manipulation and to keep a perspective of the images and messages that are a part of the youth culture and the media.

Media literacy is therefore about helping students to become competent and critical in the various media forms so that they are well equipped to control

the interpretation of what they observe and hear instead of letting the interpretation to control them. To be media literate is not about memorizing or taking statistics about the media but rather learning to raise the appropriate questions about what is seen, heard or read, in other words it is the ability to think for oneself. Without this ability, an individual cannot have the full dignity to exercise citizenship in a society which is democratic.