# CONNECT!ONS Med!aLit moments

## In This Issue…

## Theme: Education and The Creative Economy

Why would CML publish an issue on the creative economy?  Because the economies of contemporary post-industrial societies are relying less on goods and services, and more on ideas and intellectual property. The ability to communicate and collaborate is the new way of doing business, and media literacy education provides a path to acquiring and applying these skills.

As Daniel Pink, author of *A Whole New Mind* argues, we are no longer living in an information age, but in the Conceptual Age.  If we are to remain literate citizens, we need to understand that the Internet isn't just a fire hose of information and that the kind of knowledge packaged for us by Amazon is becoming less and less the currency on which we live.  We're coming to rely on an economy in which knowledge is shared, synthesized, and transformed.  While *Connections* readers may be aware of these changes, not everyone is aware of the stakes.  What happens when academic publications are becoming outdated almost as soon as they are published?  It's the process skills of media literacy that keep us up to date.  Media literate citizens understand that they, too, are being transformed by the conceptual economy.  As Heraclitus famously said, "No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it is not the same river, and he is not the same man."

In the creative economy, collaboration—and even community—are increasingly becoming the norm.  Dave Cormier, cofounder of Edtechtalk, writes, "Knowledge is a rhizome, a snapshot of interconnected ties in constant flux that is evaluated by its success in context.  We need a move towards a practical, sustainable learning model that is less based on market-driven accreditation and more on the inevitable give and take that happens among people who engage in similar activities and share similar forms of literacy and worldviews" (Cormier, "Community as Curriculum", p. 514).

So how is media literacy education tied to the creative economy?  One of the answers is obvious--the 4 C's of creativity, collaboration, communication and critical thinking.  Creativity applies to many fields and endeavors – from science and technology to publishing, design and the arts, but in addition to this, learning must be as dynamic as the creative economy. If students are going to be working in fields where current knowledge evolves rapidly, ideas of learning and knowledge need to become more flexible, and should involve the "development and integration of several different sets of tools and approaches, appearing in diverse forms under separate settings, using all the multidimensional networking information technology tools," including the social web (Cormier, p.515).

Apprenticeship takes on new meaning in such contexts for learning.  What was once thought of as 'vocational' learning becomes learning for the creative economy as well.  Echoing John Dewey, MacArthur Foundation Trustee John Seely Brown asserts that students, rather than learning *about* something, should be inducted into a studio-based model that focuses on directly

acculturating students into sociocultural practices. In particular, Brown emphasizes multimedia literacy in the context of the many distributed learning communities found on the Web.  Much as Open Source Software production has been catalyzed by open collaboration, Brown argues that education can be catalyzed by social learning communities.  Where the industrial age relied on a *supply-push* mode of learning, social learning networks enable a *demand-pull* mode of learning that leverages learning through participation.  The focus shifts from building up stocks of knowledge to enabling participation in flows of cultural production—that is, learning through experience (Araya, "Educational Policy in the Creative Economy," p. 20-21).

There are some connections which aren't so visible at first glance.  For example: forward-thinking educators have been advancing the cause of relevant, authentic, customizable, just-in-time information and learning.  Something similar happens in creative regions. Demographer and urban geographer Richard Florida, author of *The Rise of the Creative Classes*, distills the indicators of regions with healthy creative economies with his mnemonic of the three T's: talent, tolerance and technology (usually associated with innovation).  What attracts the creative classes to certain cities, according to Florida? Night life, parks, walkable pathways in the city, a healthy street life with plenty of diversity, and entertainment and shopping venues that convey authenticity.  Florida's argument is certainly debatable, but the connections with developing models of education are a little uncanny: authentic instruction and authentic interactions in commerce; choice, serendipity and variety in instruction; a diverse street scene and many literal opportunities to get off the beaten path.

In this issue of *Connections*, we spend some time with Richard Florida's pathbreaking book *The Rise of the Creative Classes*, and show how workers in the creative industries have shaped the nature of work for many in the U.S. In our second research article, we offer a short introduction to teaching for creativity in the K-12 classroom, followed by an article with two particularly vivid and well-conceived examples.  And in our Resources section, we offer highlights from Yong Zhao's *World Class Learners:  Educating Creative and Entrepreneurial Students*.  Zhao is one of the authors for the book *Never Send a Human to Do a Machine's Job: Correcting the Top 5 EdTech Mistakes,* that we led with for our issue on "A Day in the Life of Media Literacy Educator."  Our MediaLit Moment offers students a look at makerspaces.

## Research Highlights

### How the Creative Classes Shaped the Landscape of Work

In the late 1990s, Richard Florida, author of *The Rise of the Creative Classes*, served on the board of Team Pennsylvania, an economic development advisory group convened by governor Tom Ridge. At one of the meetings, the state secretary of labor and industry "banged his fist on the table in frustration when the topic turned to the shortage of welders and machine-tool operators." Why? "We're turning out too many hair-dressers and cosmetologists, and not enough skilled factory workers. What's going on??!"(65). The problem had already spread beyond the borders of Pennsylvania. Acute shortages of skilled factory workers were already common across the U.S. But why the shortage of workers when these jobs offered such good wages and benefits?

Florida, who was teaching public policy courses at Carnegie Mellon University at the time, decided to conduct an informal survey of his students. He asked, if you had just two career choices open to you, where would you work—in a machine shop, with high pay and a job for life, or in a hair salon, with less pay and where you were subject to the whims of the economy? According to Florida, virtually every student chose the hair salon, and largely for the same reasons. Even though the pay at a salon was not as good, they saw the work as more stimulating and more flexible. They could meet clients and be left alone with them, instead of working to meet a quota. They would get to work with interesting people, and would always be learning new things and the latest styles. They could add their own touches and make creative decisions, because every customer would be a new challenge, and they would be the one in charge. When they did good work, they would see the results right away; people look good, and they're happy. And if a stylist was really talented, he or she could start their own salon. "In almost every case, the content of the job and the nature of the work environment mattered much more than the compensation" (p. 66).

Around the same time, economist Todd Gabe mapped the twenty most creative industries in the United States based upon the share of workers in high-creativity jobs. He came to a surprising conclusion. What was the single most creative occupation of all, more so than artist, computer scientist, designer, and scores of others? Work in beauty salons, where nearly eight in ten jobs—for hairdressers, stylists, and cosmetologists—required high levels of creativity. The creativity "index" for other creative occupations? 76 percent for specialized designers, 60 percent for computer system designers, and 58 percent for independent artists (p. 67).

With the rest of his chapter "The Machine Shop and the Hair Salon," (pps. 65-99, 2010 edition), Florida sketches a general profile of the creative employee with a variety of surveys, interviews and studies. While creative workers ranked base pay relatively highly as a motivating factor, the challenge of their jobs and their ability to take on responsibility were ranked much more highly. As one interviewee reflected, "For me and for an increasing number of people of my generation, you have to show the impact of your work in the commercial market. You have to show that your

technology can make a real difference in the market and in people's lives" (p. 72). In many cases, the desire to take on challenge and responsibility were closely followed by the desire for flexibility and job stability.

Flexibility often involved employer recognition of employee interests. In an ethnographic study of high-tech design firms in Chicago, one employee told sociologist Richard Lloyd, "The place where I'd want to work would support my creative endeavors and the kinds of creative things that I did on the side, and would recognize the fact that if I was continually building my skills with my own stuff, it would also benefit the company" (p.73). For some, peer recognition was a strong motivating factor, especially for thinkers and scientists. Other key aspects of flexibility for creative employees included having input into the design of their workspaces, as well as input into their organizational roles.

Finally, while some geographers have argued that globalization and technology are making community and location irrelevant, Florida's work on creative economy occupations shows that creative workers are indeed concerned with place. "Virtually all of the creative workers I talked to when I was first writing this book, those I have interviewed since, and my empirical studies underline the fact that location and community are more important than ever. My interview subjects continually recounted their desire and *need* to live in places that offer stimulating, creative environments" (p.75).

So why focus on the personal drives of creative economy workers? Florida writes, "Most creative workers are already on the upper rungs of the ladder of Abraham Maslow's classic hierarchy of needs, in which physiological and social needs have largely been met and intrinsic rewards, such as a sense of accomplishment, are sought. Having satisfied their basic needs for safety and security, they can and do move laterally, trying out first one form of esteem and self-actualization and then another" (p.81). If these are the needs of men and women already in the creative workforce, should we not plan accordingly for students who are about to enter it?

### Creative Teaching, and Teaching for Creativity

So what kind of teaching is needed to prepare students for participation in the creative economy? Polish creativity researchers Magdalena Grohman and Krzysztof Szmidt (2013) observe that there is growing recognition among creativity researchers and educators that in order to enhance creativity in students and teachers, the emphasis should be on shaping *creative attitude*. To a certain extent, lines must be drawn between teaching creatively, as opposed to teaching for creativity in students. According to Bob Jeffrey and Anna Craft (2004), teaching creatively means applying imaginative approaches to make learning more interesting and effective, whereas teaching for creativity focuses on teaching attitudes towards creativity, and teaching students to develop creative thinking skills and behavior. Teaching for creativity focuses on encouraging young people to believe in their creative identity and creative abilities, and on fostering creativity by curiosity and 'learner inclusive' pedagogy, where the learner is

encouraged to identify and explore knowledge.  It's worth noting that development of identity as learners and creators, and exploration of knowledge are all aspects of the **Empowerment Spiral** for media literacy as well.

The most agreed upon definition of creativity includes the characteristics of a creative person, creative process, creative place, and creative product.  Plucker et al. (2004) propose that "Creativity is the interaction among aptitude, process, and environment by which an individual or group produces a perceptible product that is both novel and useful as defined within a social context" (90).  Creative attitude itself connotes a set of dynamic characteristics, such as openness, tolerance for ambiguity, flexibility in thinking, perseverance, motivation, need for self-expression, as well as abilities pertaining to creative process that can be shaped by experience, learning and training.

Through action research, Szmidt and his colleagues developed a Creativity Lessons Program, a systematic and usually yearlong effort to teach how to think, feel and act creatively. Each lesson includes goals related to creative cognition, motivation and affect, and behavior. The tasks that students tackle are typically ill-defined, authentic problems related to students' experiences at school, home, and their communities.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the Creativity Lessons are the rules for fostering creativity in the classroom.  These include the rule of humor and play; the rule of emphasizing creative process over creative product; the rule of removing/preventing barriers to creativity; the rule of intrinsic motivation, with emphasis on suspending grading and encouraging students to evaluate their progress on their own; the rule of facilitation, in which the teacher facilitates the learning process through empathy, authenticity, openness, assertiveness and acceptance of who students are.  Szmidt also suggests the rule of the contract—the ultimate regulator of the relationship between the students and the teacher—which allows students to decide how they will go about the problems and tasks, and how they will regulate interactions and communications between one another.

### Snapshots of Teaching for Creativity

In this article we present two snapshots of teaching for creativity culled from the academic literature.  In "Teaching for Creativity: from Sage to Guide to Meddler," (2009), Erica McWilliam sketches out pedagogical stances for teachers that are different from what one might expect. The Sage—the keeper of all knowledge, remains much the same.  But the Guide on the Side? "The difficulty with 'guiding or 'facilitating' is that it can become, at worst, an excuse for passivity on the part of the teacher after tasks have been allocated" (p.287) With Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in mind, McWilliam writes, "A Meddler-in-the-Middle likes the possibilities Shakespeare opens up for rigorous thinking (as a Sage may well do), but also shares the Guide's concerns about possible disengagement.  Meddlers are clear about the importance of 'low threat, high challenge' pedagogy, and will pursue this end in ways that make active student engagement the norm in their classrooms" (p.289).

McWilliam highlights a "Meddler in the Middle" approach to *Macbeth* in which students "are required to be actively processing information, co-theorizing, and solving puzzles, rather than being passive recipients of information, either from a teacher, or from a film"(289). The anonymous Meddling instructor for this unit reminisces: I began with nothing in their hands or mine—no books, no pens, no notes, no Shakespeare. 'OK,' I said, 'A king has been murdered. You are the detectives, and you have to solve the murder. That means you have to come up with the means, the motive, and the opportunity. You can interview anyone who was at the castle. . . Of course, the ones you can interview might tell you lies, but you are detectives, and your job is to see through all that". . .I gave them a list of names of who they would interview, and I went into whichever role they asked for" (ibid).

"After that we moved on to riddles. If Macbeth will never lose his crown until the woods move to the castle, what does this mean? If no man born of women shall harm Macbeth, then how might he die? Once they'd cracked the murder and the riddles, they had the play." In this case the clues and riddles created an entry point for these students to engage fully in the play: The process was reminiscent of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's concept of flow, in which learners become fully engaged with the task at hand. And, in fact, the flow state may feel more like play than anything else. "After this, none of the boys appeared to struggle in any really negative way with Shakespearean prose—they enjoyed it all thoroughly. They were proud of themselves for learning so much about something they assumed was 'way above' them" (ibid).

Ronald Beghetto's essay "Expect the Unexpected: Teaching for Creativity in the Micromoments," demonstrates how to hone responses to students in discussion in order to stimulate creativity. In most classrooms, discussions follow an IRE algorithm. Teachers *Initiate* discussion, students provide a *Response* that they believe the teacher expects to hear, and the teacher *Evaluates* whether student responses actually meet expectations. When teachers encounter unexpected responses, their internal dialogue is likely to be something like this: "*Am I willing to embrace curricular uncertainty and explore this unexpected idea? Or should I redirect the class back to the safety of the known, pre-planned lesson?*" (p.135).

Scholarship published as early as 1977 indicates that teachers sometimes consider alternative courses of action, but typically choose not to explore them. Findings from subsequent research indicates that most teachers choose to gently dismiss or redirect the class back to the planned lesson. Some teachers might respond, "That's a creative way to think about it. . ."and in the same breath bring the discussion back on the expected curricular path. Beghetto reflects, "This is not to say that soft dismissals are never warranted. Rather, soft dismissals become problematic when they occur with regularity" (p.136).

To be kind to teachers, it's often difficult for them to assess the relevance or meaningfulness of unexpected ideas in real time. But, as Beghetto writes, "When teachers realize that creativity is the combination of novelty and task appropriateness, they can come to realize that when unexpected ideas manifest during class discussions, supporting creativity doesn't mean 'anything goes' but rather that teachers should briefly explore the idea and assess whether the

novel idea meaningfully fits or contributes to the discussion at hand. *This is a slight adjustment to what many teachers already do"* (p. 137, emphasis added).

In addition, Beghetto introduces a strategy called "Exploratory Talk." Several studies have validated Exploratory Talk strategies, and Beghetto notes that it can improve academic learning as well as creative reasoning (p.138). According to Beghetto, "Exploratory Talk is an instructional strategy that has the goal of helping teachers engage their students in the exploration and challenging of ideas while at the same time adhering to a set of social ground rules. These include a) students will be asked to make their reasoning explicit, and b) challenges and alternative perspectives will be encouraged and expected"(p.138-139). And, according to Beghetto, a key indicator that students have adopted an exploratory orientation is that they "are able to change their minds in response to good arguments" (p.139). It's worth noting that changing one's mind with the receipt of new evidence is a hallmark of cognitive flexibility.

Here's a transcript of a discussion from an elementary school math lesson which exemplifies the use of this strategy:

**Teacher:** [Writes 87 + 24 on chalkboard, waits 20 seconds, and then calls on a student] Celici?
**Celici:** Hundred and one
**Multiple Students:** *[loudly]* Disagree! Disagree!
**Teacher:** Brian, what did you get?
**Brian:** Hundred and ten.
**Multiple Students:** *[loudly]* Disagree! Disagree! Disagree!
**Teacher:** Jaycee?
**Jaycee:** Hundred and eleven.
**Multiple Students:** *[loudly]* Agree! Agree!
**Teacher:** Okay. Who wants to explain how to get the answer? Alright, Jacyee?
**Jaycee:** I know that eighty and twenty is one hundred. And then I knew that six and four was Ten. So took the seven and four and that made eleven. . .hundred and eleven.
**Multiple Students:** Agree. That's how I did it.
**Brian:** I disagree with myself.
**Teacher:** You disagree with yourself? Which do you think it is now, Brian?
**Brian:** Hundred eleven.
**Teacher:** Okay. Celici. What about you? Do you still think it's. . .
**Celici:** Hundred and eleven.
**Teacher:** Okay. Let's go on to another.
(p.139).

This strategy for encouraging students to challenge a text, to listen to each other and to learn from one another – as well as to themselves – is media literacy in action, and the Creative Economy depends upon such habits of mind.

## CML News
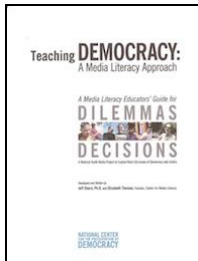
**Back-to-School and Election Reminder – Free Downloads Available**

CML offers free downloads to get you started with media literacy in the classroom. Follow this link to Global OnRamp Resources here. You will find materials like *Teaching Democracy: A Media Literacy Approach* as well as *MediaLit Moments* Activites, and charts of the 5 Key Questions for Media Literacy in a variety of languages.

Get started today!

**CML Presents at Screen Futures Summit**

CML's Tessa Jolls presented a case study – MediaLit Moments through Screens -- at the Screen Futures Summit & Media Youth Festival. About 150 people attended the conference, which provides an excellent overview of media literacy initiatives from throughout Australia.

**About Us…**

The Consortium for Media Literacy addresses the role of global media through the advocacy, research and design of media literacy education for youth, educators and parents.

The Consortium focuses on K-12 grade youth and their parents and communities. The research efforts include nutrition and health education, body image/sexuality, safety and responsibility in media by consumers and creators of products. The Consortium is building a body of research, interventions and communication that demonstrate scientifically that media literacy is an effective intervention strategy in addressing critical issues for youth.

## Resources for Media Literacy

### Yong Zhao's *World Class Learners*

In *World Class Learners:  Educating Creative and Entrepreneurial Students* (Sage Corwin, 2012), Yong Zhao, a professor of education at the University of Oregon, explores opportunities for creativity and entrepreneurship in secondary students. Perhaps what is most noteworthy about the first half of the book is that it offers little in the way of a plan for promoting these skills in the classroom.  Instead, he starts with a number of comparisons between American and Chinese school systems that lead to his central argument about education.

In 2009, students from Shanghai received the highest scores ever recorded for the PISA math test.  President Obama declared it a "Sputnik moment for the U.S. to catch up" (p. 120).  Zhao pairs this news with a chart prepared by the OECD which compares rankings of 2009 PISA math scores for students from 23 countries (not including China), and rankings for the same countries on the 2011 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Survey.  An inverse relationship between PISA scores and measures of entrepreneurial capacity became immediately apparent--as if test scores and ratings of entrepreneurial capacity were the matter and anti-matter of international education.

Zhao gently and not so gently skewers the Chinese educational system with tales of local education authorities in league with parents to evade state prohibitions on over-preparation of students for exams; a thought experiment about Steve Jobs, a boy born out of wedlock, attempting to make his way through Chinese schools; and the story of a Chinese journalist in the U.S. who was captivated by the fact that his son had written a research report on blue whales—because research reports in China were usually something left to experts.

According to Zhao, the thing that many Chinese educators find fascinating is that American authorities allow for a decentralized, autonomous system, multiple criteria for judging the value of talents, and celebrates differences.

Zhao counters the views of American school reformers by encapsulating them: They believe that U.S. schools are part of a broken and obsolete system responsible for a persistent achievement gap.  The lack of uniformity across textbooks, curriculum and assessment is considered the cause of uneven academic achievement among different ethnic and income groups. Some 15,000 locally elected school boards are considered discriminatory, inefficient and fragmented.  Attention to individual differences is viewed as a lack of rigor and low expectations of students.  And the professional autonomy of teachers and school leaders is often viewed as cover for poor teaching.

In response, Zhao quotes from President Obama's 2011 State of the Union Address: "America still has the largest, most prosperous economy in the world.  No workers—no workers are more productive than ours.  No country has more successful companies, or grants more patents to inventors and entrepreneurs.  We're home to the world's best colleges and universities, where

more students come to study than any place on Earth" (p.134).

Zhao wonders 'aloud': "How can a broken, obsolete, and inefficient system accomplish all of these?  Why does the United States remain the world's innovation hub despite its long history of poor standing in international education assessments?  Furthermore, American schools do not have courses to teach creativity or entrepreneurship.  American children do not attend creativity or entrepreneurship training camps, either.  Where did all the creative entrepreneurs come from?" (ibid).

The short answer? "American education has not been as good as the Chinese at killing creativity and the entrepreneurial spirit.  In the most fundamental ways, American education operates under the same paradigm as the Chinese. . .Both have the same apparatus—an adult teaches to a group of children grouped by age in a physical location.  Both have a formal curriculum that covers similar subjects…both American education and Chinese education are designed to turn a group of children into products with similar specifications. . . (135).

What follows most surely qualifies as Swiftian satire: "It's not much different from sausage making.  Ingredients go in and sausage comes out.  While education in both China and America attempts to make sausage, compared to the Chinese sausage making machine, the American one is not as good.  So it does not make very good sausages, but somehow it also makes bacon by accident.  In other words, the creative and entrepreneurial talents America has enjoyed are like bacon from a sausage machine—not necessarily intended but a much appreciated byproduct.  And, of course, it comes at the cost of not so great sausages" (ibid).

Zhao continues with a kind of wistfulness about the American idea of the hobby: "American children aren't pressured to spend all their time studying a prescribed curriculum.  They have more access to and can spend more time on non-school activities—music, art, sports, carpentry, glass-blowing, debate, and many other activities of their choice—that may not have much to do with academics or college readiness.  As a result, American children have more opportunities to explore what they may be good at "(ibid).

Aside from celebrating the 'happy accidents' that allow the American educational system to produce creative and entrepreneurial students, Zhao emphasizes project-based learning that focuses on "product-oriented learning," which is much like the studio-based model of apprenticeship advanced by John Seely Brown. Zhao interviews Larry Rosenstock, founding principal of High Tech High in San Diego, and focuses some attention on the curriculum and leadership at the school.  Many readers may be familiar with the PBL format at High Tech High. If not, a search on Edutopia.org may be helpful.

In addition, Zhao adds additional specific elements to the entrepreneurial and product-oriented learning he envisions.  Zhao affirms, the focus is on the product, not the project.  He argues that students should propose and initiate the project, and, if needed, convince their peers to become partners.  They need to create a business plan, complete with documentation and analyses of a

target audience, along with feasibility analysis, and marketing strategies.  As with any media construction project, careful planning, analysis and documentation make it possible to forge authentic relationships with audiences. The teacher serves as the 'venture capitalist' who helps decide whether the project is needed and feasible.  Zhao also calls for a consultant who provides suggestions and resources on demand; a motivator, who encourages team members at times of disappointment; a focus group, which provides feedback and critique on prototypes; and the partner, who provides complementary expertise and skills.  The teacher or other adults could bring opportunities, help identify needs, make connections to potential customers, or make use of their own expertise and social capital to make suggestions for potential projects, but ultimately, students should decide what products to make.  In the final stage, students market and continue to maintain the product. (Stages/tasks are elaborated in full on pps. 202-208).

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# Med!aLit Moments

## Why Be a Maker?

"Makerspaces" are popping up all over the United States, sometimes in libraries, sometimes not.  Sometimes with 3D printers, sometimes with scissors and construction paper.  In this MediaLit Moment, your middle grade students will have the chance to explore the motivations of the people who come to makerspaces.  Why do they go to them?  What makes them want to share their projects online?

**Ask students why they think makers post on makerspace sites, and ask them to respond to posts as well.**

**AHA!**  Makers want to find an audience. They want to share, be recognized and discovered!

**Grade Level:** 6-8

**Key Question #5:  Why was this message sent?**
**Core Concept #5:  Most media messages are organized to gain profit and/or power.**

**Key Question #3:  How might people understand this message differently?**
**Core Concept #3:  Different people experience the same media message differently.**

**Materials:**  Access to computer lab with high speed Internet access, or permission to "Bring Your Own Device."

**Activity:**  Refresh students on the purposes, and perhaps the techniques of advertising.  Why do advertisers create ads?  How do they hope audiences will respond?

Display the Makerspace Resources page for Miami University in Ohio.
http://www.users.miamio.edu/burkejj/makerspaces.html

Ask students to find maker sites where users have commented, posted projects they've completed, or shared directions.  If you wish, direct students to a particular page with projects for them to browse.

Ask students:  Why are makers motivated to post their work?  How are you responding to it?  Why?  Would you consider posting your creative work? Why? Why not?

Assign students to small groups to discuss their responses.

The Five Core Concepts and Five Key Questions of media literacy were developed as part of the Center for Media Literacy's MediaLit Kit™ and Questions/TIPS (Q/TIPS)™ framework.  Used with permission, ©2002-2016, Center for Media Literacy, http://www.medialit.com