CONNECT!ONS Med!aLit moments

In This Issue…

Theme: Media Literacy and Media Construction

With the advent of new media technologies, students can effortlessly shift between the roles of media producer and consumer. The crucial question is: do educational institutions provide students with a curricular framework to help them recognize and take advantage of those opportunities in any systematic way? And are the process skills of media literacy being taught in an explicit way? The answer, in most cases, is no. Even afterschool youth media production programs which have garnered a reputation for student empowerment typically lack such a framework. And since many organizations expressly devoted to media education operate from differing definitions of media literacy, they often fail to observe the critical distinction between teaching ABOUT media as opposed to teaching WITH media, and may focus on one or two media literacy concepts while neglecting others. CEO Tessa Jolls argues in a presentation published by the UNESCO Conference on Media and Information Literacy for Knowledge Societies, "If media literacy is to be an effective education strategy, then it must be consistent, measurable, replicable, and scalable."

In 2007, CML developed and published the second edition of *Literacy for the 21*st *Century*, in which CML's framework with its Five Key Questions and Core Concepts for deconstruction were expanded to include five corresponding key questions for media construction. This innovative and more comprehensive framework, called Questions/TIPS (Q/TIPS), was the first curricular framework linking directly the teaching of media production skills to the core concepts of media literacy.   (The Q/TIPS chart appears at the end of this article.)

This year, CML has introduced a new curricular guide to ensure even greater consistency in the teaching of critical viewing and construction. In the Tools for Construction Part 3 of [Media Literacy: A System for Learning *AnyTime, AnyWhere*](), the innovations embodied in the Q/TIPS Questions for Producers are directly applied to the process of media production. The Toolkit prepares teachers and students for the responsibilities of publishing globally through the internet, and for making explicit the linkages between media literacy concepts and the tasks which literate producers must fulfill, and the issues which they need to address. For example, items based on Key Questions 3 and 4 lead them to explore the many issues of identity and audience which media producers inevitably encounter. Items based on Key Questions 2 and 5 facilitate the planning process. What purposes do they wish to accomplish, and what are the best technologies and techniques with which to accomplish them? By the same token, the tools provide teachers with a framework by which they can manage projects, target instruction and assess student work, while curriculum based on this framework can be programmatically evaluated by teachers, administrators and researchers alike.

With the Core Concepts and the Construction Tools, directors of media production programs in K-12 and afterschool settings have the means to help students thoroughly explore the connections between critical reading and critical production. When students have had practice with these Concepts and Tools, the combination of critical thinking skills and production experience lays the groundwork for production projects sustained by a student-centered

process of inquiry, as well as for student-involved assessment.

Furthermore, such production projects embody the best aspects of project-based learning. Not only do students participate in a process of inquiry driven by their interests and needs, that inquiry extends beyond the walls of the classroom as students seek to engage "real world" audiences of peers, teachers, experts--and an entire global audience--in the issues and questions raised by their work with the Core Concepts and Tools for Construction (To learn more about project-based learning, you may wish to read the newsletter on "The New Curriculum" in our archive).

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills has been promoting the "4Cs" as a primary driver of instruction: critical thinking and problem solving, creativity, collaboration, and communication. Media production embodies the teaching and learning of the 4Cs, especially when such production is tied to a sound framework that promotes critical thinking and problem solving that can be internalized and used anytime, anywhere. Q/TIPS is a metaframe that provides a shortcut to the 4Cs, that can provide a backbone for curricula that spans across various disciplines.

This issue of *Connections* focuses on existing programs which encourage students to critically examine the roles they play as media audiences and producers. In our research section, we profile KIDS FIRST!, an afterschool program which trains children to become critical viewers, exposes them to a wide range of films and film audiences, and helps them craft their own written and videotaped reviews. In our resources section, an interview with Dain Olsen, a media arts educator at LA Unified School District, demonstrates how a secondary-level program devoted to critical thinking and production can be implemented in the classroom.

Also in this issue, you'll find a resources article on the engaging discussions about living and learning online which took place at a recent Google "Big Tent" event. In our MediaLit Moment, elementary and middle school students will learn how to produce 'old school' written media which reflect the importance of written documents to our media culture today. Finally, in our news section, we pay tribute to pioneering media literacy teacher and advocate Barry Duncan, who passed away in June.

MediaLit KIT™

CML's FIVE KEY QUESTIONS AND CORE CONCEPTS(Q/TIPS)FOR CONSUMERS AND PRODUCERS

Media Deconstruction/Construction Framework

#	Key Words	Deconstruction: CML's 5 Key Questions (Consumer)	CML's 5 Core Concepts	Construction: CML's 5 Key Questions (Producer)
1	**Authorship**	Who created this message?	All media messages are constructed.	What am I **authoring**?
2	**Format**	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 **format**, creativity and technology?
3	**Audience**	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 **audience**?
4	**Content**	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 **content**?
5	**Purpose**	Why is this message being sent?	Most media messages are organized to gain profit and/or power.	Have I communicated my **purpose** effectively?

CML
Mission: Media Literacy

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KIDS FIRST!: Empowering Children to Bridge the Gap Between Audience and Producer

As the introduction to our theme article argues, media production programs guided by media literacy principles help students become aware of the need to actively and critically examine the roles they play as media audiences and media producers. The story of one very successful children's media organization illustrates how a program premised on the ability of youth to evaluate media texts for themselves can lead to heightened awareness of the complex interactions involved in 'reading' and 'writing' media.

Twenty years ago, Ranny Levy was a manager of One West Media, a media company which distributed films to educational institutions. During her tenure there, she participated as a judge at events such as the National Educational Film Festival and the Ollie Awards. Levy recalls, "It was mostly adults evaluating the programming. In almost every one of our evaluation sessions, we wondered aloud 'what would kids think of it?' So one day I suggested that we bring in younger viewers to evaluate some of the films we were judging, and the whole group asked, 'why would we do that'?"

Dissatisfied with this response, Levy consulted with her network of friends and colleagues and learned about the growing media literacy movement. Says Levy, "I thought it was really important to have kids involved in making their own good choices, rather than having adults tell them about a white list they could choose from." In 1991, Levy founded the Coalition for Quality Children's Media, whose mission is to teach children critical viewing skills and to increase the visibility and availability of quality children's media.

From its inception, the Coalition for Quality Children's Media involved children in writing reviews of films. Today, through KIDS FIRST!, a project of the Coalition, community-based juries of adults and children from the ages of 7 to 15 evaluate, rate and endorse children's media products, and many Kid Jurors post their reviews on the organization's website. Through KIDS FIRST!, children who were once passive viewers of media learn how to become active, critical viewers, then learn how to produce their own thought-provoking reviews.

A working knowledge of media audiences is also needed for media producers to succeed at their craft. At KIDS FIRST!, young reviewers perform their own audience research to improve the quality of their reviews. According to Levy, "We send them to a lot of premiere screenings. . . When they go to advance screenings, there are plenty of other people in the audience, and they have the opportunity to observe other people's responses. When they review DVDs, they view them with siblings, friends and families. Kids ask, 'What do I do if I don't like the film?', and I tell them not to anticipate that they'll like every one—I don't. That's when they have to analyze what the content is, and who the audience is. It might be good for

a younger or older sibling, and they can comment on how that other person responded to the film. When they go to an advance screening, I tell them, don't let others influence you, but observe them. If they're laughing when you find something offensive, that's fine. You don't have to buy into someone else's reaction."

KIDS FIRST! reviewers learn to exercise their powers of discrimination: "What we try to instill in them is a consciousness about the types of films they want to become involved with." Through the development of that awareness, and the desire for involvement that comes with it, some students will pursue media production as both a passion and a possible career path. One avenue by which KIDS FIRST! reviewers refine their awareness is through exposure to an extremely wide variety of films, an experience which alerts them to the contexts in which media are produced. Many short films were on the menu for the annual KIDS FIRST! Film Festival Awards last year, and, at the encouragement of Levy and her staff, Kid Jurors evaluated short films from the list of candidates for the award. Levy recalls, "They had no idea that films like that were out there. It's surprising for them, given the kind of programming that they normally have access to. If they've seen any at all, they've been interstitial pieces on television to make up an hour. But kids don't pay attention to them. Once they started reviewing them, they were surprised and delighted. In addition to learning about short films, they have a chance to learn about independent films. Sometimes they'll find one with a great message and great performances that would have never made it to the big screen—one that didn't have money or box office talent behind it. They learn about film economics that way. They learn through what they're doing."

KIDS FIRST! Film Critics, who are selected through a competitive process and receive additional training, contribute video reviews to the KIDS FIRST! site, and in doing so they learn a number of skills which are shared by critical media audiences and effective media producers alike. Levy observes, "Learning how to appear on camera brings with it a whole set of circumstances. They build confidence and self-esteem. They learn how to present their reviews for an audience, and to grab and hold their attention." Volunteer instructors are also at the ready to assist them with building the final product: "We're aiming for an informal, made-at-home look, but we have to have consistency and quality. The fact that everyone can do that is really amazing."

To learn more about KIDS FIRST, visit www.kidsfirst.org

Barry Duncan: An Appreciation

Barry Duncan, a Canadian media literacy leader, teacher and advocate died on June 6th of this year following a long struggle with Parkinson's Disease. Duncan was an award-winning teacher, author, media consultant, and co-founder and past president of the Ontario-based Association for Media Literacy.

Duncan was the lead author of the best-selling textbook *Mass Media and Popular Culture.* He wrote articles for *Telemedium* and other publications, and addressed over 10,000 teachers through workshops and keynote presentations in Canada, the U.S., and 13 other countries including Japan, Korea, China, Argentina, the United Kingdom, and Brazil (Baker et al., "Barry Duncan, A 21st Century Man for All Seasons, www.frankwbaker.com)

In a personal tribute, Len Masterman writes, "Barry was an educational pioneer. The genuine article. A progressive teacher whose starting point was always the issues and experiences which students were encountering outside of class. His concept of the 'teachable moment'—scrapping your pre-planned ideas, going with the issues and stories which were capturing the imagination and energy of your students, and thereby utilizing all of the resources which the media bring to contemporary events—still strikes me as being at the heart of what media education is all about—topicality, vitality, creativity, with teacher and students working together to research an issue's wider contexts and implications. Nobody explicated that vision with greater authority or clarity than Barry."

"Barry was highly instrumental in bringing media literacy to the United States as well as to Canada," said Tessa Jolls, CML's director. "He advocated for a cultural studies model of media literacy, which provides critical rigor for understanding media and teaching about media. As a student of Marshall McLuhan and a colleague of Len Masterman, Barry planted the seeds for media literacy as a discipline to be grown and implemented in North America. He never lost sight of his mission, and his innovation and his generosity in sharing his knowledge and his methods provided a base for media literacy to take root."

"With the death of Canadian media literacy pioneer Barry Duncan, the world has lost not only a talented and creative educator but an extraordinary human being whose gentle humor and down to earth presence made him hundreds of friends and admirers everywhere around the world," expressed CML Founder Elizabeth Thoman. "I first met Barry in 1987 when I invited him to Los Angeles to speak at our first media literacy training workshop. I was so impressed with his willingness, even eagerness, to share his experience and vision of media literacy in the classroom. His generosity never waned in all the years I knew him and I credit him with generating many of the "aha" insights that transformed my own understanding of and appreciation for inquiry-based teaching and media rich instructional practices. Indeed, without Barry's influence and leadership over three decades, the field of media literacy education, both in Canada and in the U.S. would not be where it is today. His gifts were many; but his life was a gift to us all. Thank you for your vision, dear Barry. Now rest in peace."

For many years, Duncan taught at the Toronto School for Experiential Education, an alternative school. In response to the obituary notice posted in the *Toronto Star* on June 7th, one former student wrote, "I was privileged to be a student of Barry's at SEE in the early 70s. He cultivated a love of language and creativity through his enthusiasm and gentle humor. Yet, infuriatingly, he never let me off with less than my best effort, for which I am forever grateful"—Grant McIntyre, Toronto.

Barry will be sorely missed by all of us at CML. We are grateful we had the opportunity to record an interview with him in 2010 for our Voices of Media Literacy project which featured 20 pioneers in the media literacy field. This interview may be accessed at: http://www.medialit.org/voices-media-literacy-international-pioneers-speak

Want to know more about critical construction?

[Read the e-book for Deconstruction/Critical Construction](). This e-book is part of CML's Trilogy *Media Literacy: A System for Learning AnyTime, AnyWhere…* Part 3 includes *Tools for Critical Construction.* For more information, please access [www.medialit.org]()

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.

[www.consortiumformedialiteracy.org]()

CONSORTIUM for MEDIA LITERACY

Uniting for Development

Resources for Media Literacy

Teaching Tip: Constructing media involves understanding one's roles as an author, the ability to utilize creative techniques, knowledge of the audience, establishment of a point of view, and the responsibility associated with sending the message – the 5 Core Concepts for Media Literacy!

Interview with Dain Olsen, LA Unified School District

Dain Olsen is a media artist who has worked in a variety of positions within the LA Unified School district in the last 20 years. Olsen has been a key player in the effort to establish K-12 media arts standards for the entire district, and chairs a team of writers who are drafting media arts standards for the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards. Olsen was instrumental in the founding of ArtLAB, a high school within LAUSD dedicated to media arts instruction. He has been serving as an instructor at the school since its opening in fall 2011.

Since Olsen has had so much experience as a media artist and educator, and served in so many roles within the district, we asked him questions on a wide array of topics, from the theory of media arts education to 21st century skills to the progress of media arts standards within the district.

CML: How did you get started with teaching media arts at LAUSD?

Olsen: I started teaching filmmaking and special education at Fremont High School in South LA. Verdugo Hills High School was interested in developing a multimedia program and hired me as a filmmaking teacher. This was in 1999. They had a basic jerry-rigged lab of computers, but I managed to get a very small grant, and was able to buy 5 Blueberry Macs with iMovie. Bam, we were immediately into filmmaking. In the past I had been challenged by linear editing decks and bays. It was fairly difficult for 20-25 students to complete the work. Now the kids were becoming imaginative and empowered, almost immediately. It was not only a great vehicle for producing film, but pedagogically a very powerful tool as well. Students were doing all sorts of accelerated and progressive learning—and project-based learning as well. They were learning skills of organization, synthesis, research, writing, and speaking; they were developing multi-modal facilities in combination with student-centered product and process.

Through this experience I saw an opportunity for media arts as a class subject area, as much as I saw opportunities for art education. I've always described media arts as something to integrate across all subjects. I see it as an empowerment for student voice, for learning across all modalities, and for acquiring content mastery. If a student can make a documentary about a scientific concept, he's teaching it to others, and he can grasp it at a deeper level. . . The program was interdisciplinary in intent, and became a multimedia communications magnet. There was a lot of interest for that within the parent community. Then I was hired by the arts administration branch to do the same work across the district through development of K-12

standards, curriculum and model programs. That led to an investigation of what other programs were doing across the country. How did they delineate and describe media arts? Unfortunately, the Arts Branch has been decimated over the last four years with cutback after cutbacks.

CML: So where are the media arts standards at this point?

Olsen: The Arts Branch had established them early on within the department. At the time that my position was eliminated they had stalled at the level of the Office of Curriculum and Instruction. They were embraced at upper levels within the district administration, but were not a priority. And the whole district was being leveled. The standards came for proposition at a very bad time. Everything was in total flux. People were being laid off almost in total, and re-applying for their jobs. There was nobody to specifically drive the process at that point. I followed up with it, and was trying to re-invigorate it from my new teaching position.

It was then adopted through a district board resolution as part of a new10 year plan, but the unprecedented nature of it raised the question, how do you adopt new standards? They've been established de facto within the Arts Branch, and stated everywhere in department materials, and on the Arts Branch website. A new job has been posted for one person to direct all arts administration, and that person will also be governing media arts. The standards were formally established within the Office of Instruction and Curriculum—done, established and formally adopted.

CML: How are media literacy skills embedded in the media arts curriculum?

Olsen: The first step is to orient students to the process of analysis. We want to engage students in the production process first, get them playing, moving stuff around, tinkering with software and hardware. Then we get them engaged with questions. How does one looks at this? How do we think about it? How do we read what's going on? We help them learn how to navigate media. We'll take particular images, and compare and contrast them, which can be very powerful. I like to use very different images next to each other—a Renaissance painting and a contemporary photograph—which also have some similarities. As we spend some time looking at the similarities and differences, the discussion moves to very deep levels very quickly. They've had instant access to media, but they've never taken an active role in media consumption. Activities like this awaken them to the possibility that, yeah, I can do this, I can actually break things apart. They gain the visual literacy needed to read an image. They learn how to approach it, and learn how to ask, how and what does it mean, and who was behind it? From there they can go into commercials, into media production versus fine arts, and immediately see the messages in advertising. . . .

The kids get involved in all sorts of interpersonal processes, too—group, collaborative, pair and share, specialized roles, etc. Right now the kids are becoming increasingly interested in the use of technology for those processes. We have a Lion OS iMac lab, and they allow us to

"air drop" files for submission to the teacher. Just by dragging and dropping, students not only turn their work into me, they can see all the work that pops up immediately on the classroom screen. It's not a secret process at all. It's a total public display every time they turn something in—and it's so common, it's not even intimidating to them. They all glance at it. I give feedback immediately, and we often clap and exclaim over the work. It's overt, in public, and rigorous. And it's sort of group vetted. Kids sometimes can critique what they see. It's pretty amazing. It's accelerated the learning process dramatically. Students can't get away with doing nothing, or with cutting corners on their work. They can already produce a wide range of media styles and genres pretty quickly.

CML: The Partnership for 21st Century Skills has been promoting the use of the 4C's in the classroom: creativity, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking. How do you see that happening in your school?

Olsen: I think the Partnership has done a great job in focusing the conversation, and defining these skills. . . .I don't see any division between the 4C's and other instructional objectives in the media arts classroom. They're absolutely integrated. The students are totally collaborative. They start working with others from the very beginning—getting opinions for any complex project within each team. Collaboration is almost impossible to avoid unless I'm teaching Photoshop. But even there, they're getting assistance from other kids. They will ask other people when they have problems. People have expertise to share, they take leadership roles. In a multimedia classroom, it's the sort of thing that happens immediately because the process is so complex, authentic and real-world. It's a student-centered classroom, and it's beyond the power of any single teacher to control. There's no lengthy lecture. It's all action, activity, learning by doing. Information is not centered in the teacher, it's centered in the world, directly referenced and acquired by the student. But they must be engaged and initiate engagement. Other teachers come in and say, 'You don't do anything, you're just there.' That's project-based learning. I do have a fairly effortless job.

CML: What kind of criteria do you give for media arts projects?

Olsen: They're analyzing media products based on criteria such as organization, sequencing, storytelling, and visual communication. I'll use rubrics when there is a specific structured component of a project, such as a visual composition. But in the complexity of multimedia production there isn't a rubric for every object, every motion, every point in the process. Scoring becomes very natural and fluid. It ends up as a less formal process, because it is intrinsic to an everyday culture of critical considerations. We'll constantly be discussing what works and what doesn't work in a relaxed and friendly fashion. It's more of an iterative, design studio process. They need to do it again, and get used to making mistakes. This is a core arts concept. There are no mistakes, just opportunities. Today the fine arts process is being lost in the drive toward pure product and vocation. My students have gone in a very creative direction with the work they've produced as a result.

You can't have media literacy that stops young people from wanting to participate in media

culture by building a shield of guardedness around them. Students are already skeptical, and a bit jaded. It's kind of built into our culture. Kids in the inner city don't have a strong sense of opportunity in the offer of media production. They don't see themselves in the media produced by the market. It's hard to find media that I want to show them. The kids need to be creatively empowered through positive exchanges and grow that way. The focus should be on what's beautiful and wonderful about what *they've* said. These kids are making incredibly beautiful stuff that could be displayed in any gallery. Their work is competitive. I tell them that. I encourage them to start their own businesses and to become producers. You can do graphics. I work to give them entrepreneurial confidence.

CML: How do students learn about the fine arts process you mentioned?

Olsen: I start with fine arts principles. It's extremely open-ended, and based in play. They're messing around with processes, to see what comes out of very basic, very simply structured assignments—copy, paste, layers, letters, throw a picture in there, reverse it, chop it up, reduce the opacity. They learn from the beginning that they can't steal someone else's work. Basic kinds of rules. Then they just enjoy what comes out of it. They get a few more simple composition-oriented assignments. They need to evaluate the operation of formal composition in images that have been produced without a commercial purpose. Have you ever seen Surrealist, Cubist, other historical approaches? . . .They're naturally adapting and evolving as artists first. And with media arts, everyone can do it. It's totally accessible. . . Then they're asked to create a message in which they emphasize an emotion by combining a word with an image which expresses that emotion. It's called a mood image. They learn how to write Anger. Mad. Bold. They make it into a descriptive poem. They get into graphic construction. Then when they get into commercial images, they're able to retain their originality, their ability to think outside the box. The only negative tendency is for students to take short cuts and steal other people's stuff. But as they keep going through this process, the ethical approach to copyright becomes intrinsic, even automatic.

CML: How do students learn about media audiences?

Olsen: They're going to be peer audiences initially. At the beginning they're scaffolding and building the complexity of their projection. They already absolutely know the teacher audience. It's institutionalized, and that's their assumption. They're not used to a peer audience. That's not as uncomfortable as a global audience, however. Pretty quickly, I'm letting them know that they have a global audience, too. It's possible to work with that awareness at pretty early ages, too. At very young ages children are posting videos on YouTube. In terms of narrowcasting students have to have a more sophisticated, complicated skills set. Teasing out those audiences can be an interesting project in itself. They might target sub groups with PSA's or advertisements. How do they get the attention of skate boarders? They take an anthropological approach to audiences. What are these kids really into, and what does that look like? They get into that with video magazine production. What rare new stories will appeal to this crowd? It requires investigation. What are these different

crowds? Media arts lends itself to this social analysis. Traditional arts instruction tends not have that sort of facility. It's not for an audience out there, and the audience is more assumed. Media arts students need to be able to direct to that audience in pre-production stages.

In graphic design projects, students have real-world assignments to produce for different audiences. If it's for the student body, this is something that will go out on the quad. It will have some positive message, and a PSA graphic, or an announcement for an event. . . Most recently they submitted posters for an event organized by a community group devoted to spreading a peace, unity and anti-violence message. Their posters had to get peers and families to want to come. One of my students actually won this contest. It was something real, published, something anyone could see on the street. At the beginning students don't even think of audiences, but we get very specific. They look at examples. They talk about what they appear to do from the perspective of a particular audience, then give it their best shot. When the winner for the contest was announced, some of the kids said, 'That won? Mine was way better.' But there was a client who made the decision of what they needed. They may have an opinion aesthetically, but choices are made in a marketed way. Even if a particular submission is selected, the client may still want to modify the work.

CML: It sounds like negotiation is an important part of media arts instruction.

Olsen: We're constantly negotiating balances in processes of production. Students have to ask who the audience is, who I am, who am I communicating to, where we are in time and space. It's a very complex array of negotiations that doesn't figure much in a lot of other content areas. . . .It's a critical skill of great value in a culture that is contextually complex. . . Organizing a film is incredibly difficult, but very valuable, totally like real life. Of course, there is negotiation of presentation. How much force do I put into it? And there's also my negotiation with technology. To what degree am I in the lead, how is the technology, or the situation making choices for me, and am I following my own formula? Do I even value or know that I have a voice? Media arts is a pre-eminent discipline for learning negotiation. It's about relational meaning—what I think is meaningful as opposed to a world that is ready to throw meaning at me.

With peer-to-peer negotiations powered by social media, you have multiple views of the sequence of media production. That's why digital literacy is coming into education, too. Students need to be cognitive of their media environment. It won't happen without media arts as a core subject. Otherwise the technologies are just a delivery system, a passive conveyance. Yes, to a certain degree it's interactive. Yes, it's enriched by multimedia. But in terms of empowerment of the individual?. . .I see media arts as a grand synthesizer for learning which is totally under-recognized and under-utilized. Even though we live in this media environment, we don't realize that this should be a core basis for learning and instruction. We have always been on the delivery side, and we come from a passive perspective. Everyone is trained to be a content receiver. Everyone needs to be trained in multiple years to become a content producer.

Google "Big Tent Event" Asks Big Questions

On March 29th, Google convened a "Big Tent Event" in Mountain View, California, to bring together senior figures from the worlds of education, business and the non-profit sector for a series of public discussions on key challenges and opportunities for digital literacy and safety.

Primary issues on the agenda included:
- What social norms should we have online and how should we enforce them?
- How can citizens contribute to their communities through digital technologies?
- What are the implications of technology on lifelong learning and our culture as a whole?

One session in particular, "The Digital Playground," highlighted the challenges of enforcing social norms on the web. Panelists included Victoria Grand, Director of Communications and Policy for YouTube; Del Harvey, Director of Trust and Safety at Twitter; and Amanda Lenhart, Senior Research Specialist at the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project. Grand asked questions about policy. Should a private company like YouTube remove content which shows adults in the act of smoking cigarettes? A group of State Attorneys General wrote to suggest that YouTube do so, and mentioned the co-operation between legal authorities and the MPAA to limit such content. Yet, as Grand observed, YouTube doesn't have the power to create or edit content in the way which the MPAA does.

Harvey pointed out the difficulty of enforcing social norms by taking sanctions against particular Twitter users. When accounts are suspended, former account holders frequently generate multiple e-mail addresses to create multiple accounts from which to publish even more objectionable content. For Harvey, communities of users—usually banding together to shame 'bad actors,' are often the most effective means of enforcement.

Harvey and Grand leaned heavily towards education as a means of encouraging acceptable behavior on their sites. Lenhart, on the other hand, challenged the notion of education as a one-size-fits-all solution, especially with respect to younger users: ". . .I want to problematize the reliance on adults and peers and parents. . . I think we need to remember that not every parent is capable of being the person to give advice to every child. Not every adult is a good role model for how to behave online. That oftentimes we have expectations for our children that we adults don't meet. And so I think we need to ask ourselves, what is a reasonable set of expectations to have and what kinds of trade-offs are we willing to make to get to that point?"

Perhaps the most intriguing discussion of digital citizenship took place in the "Fireside Chat" between Code for America founder Jennifer Pahlka and Google Chief Legal Officer David Drummond. In it, Pahlka discussed her conceptualization and implementation of a program in which young professionals from the tech sector volunteer a year of their time to design

solutions to streamline municipal government services. For example, in 2011, CFA fellows in Boston created a map-based application which helped parents determine which schools their children were eligible to attend within the city. The CFA team created their application within 2 ½ months. City officials estimated that, had the project gone through regular procurement channels, it might have required 2 years and $2 million to construct.

Game-like applications created by CFA fellows have also facilitated the direct involvement of residents in the upkeep of city assets. Residents are allowed to adopt and name a fire hydrant, or a tsunami siren, but may lose those privileges to other residents if they fail to dig the asset out after a snowstorm or miss maintenance deadlines.

One panel discussed the educational, entrepreneurial and cultural potential of online communities. Nancy Conrad, founder and chairwoman of the Conrad Foundation, discussed the foundation's Spirit of Innovation Challenge, which provides mentors to high school students as they create marketable products to address real world challenges in the 21st century. Jillian York, Director for International Freedom of Expression at the Electronic Frontier Foundation, discussed her early career as a blogger in North Africa in the years leading up to the Arab Spring. And filmmaker Tiffany Shlain discussed the overwhelming response to the invitation she issued for contributions of art work and video for her recent film "Connected," which explores the interdependence of cultures across the world. In response to one question, Shlain reflected, ". . .I feel like the ability to share our stories is creating a network for worldwide empathy that we've never had before."

The home page for the Big Tent Mountain View Event, is accessible at:
www.bigtentmtv.com

Full-length videos of panels are available at:
http://big-tent.appspot.com/en/view-events/310013

An educator's edition of "Connected," including curricular materials, is available at:
www.connectedthefilm.com

Med!aLit Moments

When a Scroll is Really a Scroll

Today, many of us scroll through tens or hundreds of pages of content each day. Scrolling is an activity or feature, and the pages themselves don't seem to be worthy of much attention. Yet we are often captivated by visual media in which scrolls or papers play a large part. We're right there with Charlie, gazing with rapt attention as he discovers the last Golden Ticket to Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory: "In your wildest dreams you can not imagine the marvelous SURPRISES which await YOU!"

In this MediaLit Moment, your students will learn why papers and scrolls attract the attention of media audiences. They'll learn about the media genres in which they appear and the purposes for which they are used; and they'll learn how to capture the attention of audiences with their own scrolled message.

Have students write and read aloud a scrolled message with attention to genre, purpose and intended effect on the audience.

AHA!: When I see a scroll used on screen, it means that the words are important, and a lot of people should hear them. If I create my own, I can make audiences think I'm important and powerful, too!

Key Question #2: What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?
Core Concept #2: Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules.
Key Question #2 for Producers: Does my message reflect understanding in format, creativity, and technology?

Key Question #5: Why is this message being sent?
Core Concept #5: Most media messages are organized to gain profit and/or power.
Key Question #5 for Producers: Have I communicated my purpose effectively?

Grade Level: 5-8

Materials: DVD, computer, data projector and screen; or computer with high speed internet connection, data projector, and screen. DVD of "Star Wars" or access to opening sequence from film on YouTube. Butcher paper and markers.

Activity: Play the opening "crawl" of the movie, and briefly pause the sequence when the words fill the screen. Ask, why do you think the director of this movie decided to use this format rather than a voiceover, or a "flat" paragraph, or even just action on the screen to make it clear who was fighting whom? What does it suggest about the message that is being

delivered? Direct their attention to Key Question #2. You may also want to work with one or more additional clips. Here are a few suggestions: a reading of the Declaration of Independence in which the written document figures prominently; the scene from "Amazing Grace" in which William Wilberforce unfurls a massive popular petition against slavery before Parliament; the scene from "Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory" (1971) or "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" (2005) mentioned above; a scene from a Harry Potter movie in which a proclamation from Hogwarts or the Ministry of Magic is read aloud.

Next, ask students, what kinds of messages tend to be delivered in this format? For what kinds of purposes? Direct their attention to Key Question #5. An extremely wide variety of documents could be included on this list, from jury verdicts to messages bestowing an award.

When a substantial list has been generated, it's time for students to demonstrate their understanding of purpose and format by producing their own scrolled messages with markers and butcher paper. Consider assigning students to teams. Do ask students to read their work aloud.

Extended Activity: If students are feeling confident in their understanding of this format, encourage them to experiment with genres, or use humor and satire. For example, students could write their personal declarations of independence.

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, © 2002-2011, Center for Media Literacy, http://www.medialit.com