



Critical Media Literacy: Enhance Democratization and Participation

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Abstract

Internationally, the advancement of media literacy is discussed in relation to the insufficiency of traditional literacy in preparing students for participation in 21st century world and economy. The growing consensus is that to become a successful student, productive employee, and responsible citizen, individuals need to develop proficiency with the increasingly complex information and entertainment media that bombard us on a multi-sensory level, affecting the way we think, feel, and act. However, the way in which educational institutions chose to teach digital and media literacy are inherently reflective of present forms of authority. The authors argue that it is socially irresponsible to teach media literacy separate from the concept of critical media literacy, anchoring their work in the ethnically and linguistically diverse San Francisco Bay Area. Critical media literacy, with its roots in critical theory and critical race theory, are concerned about students developing skills that will enhance democratization and participation [1].

This paper acknowledges the risk of digital and media literacy becoming the privilege of middle-class and upper-class students, resulting in a widening achievement gaps negatively affecting low socioeconomic and minority students. Given this very real risk, the importance of considering processes of social inclusion and exclusion, particularly with respect to class, race, gender, and language and the possibility of increased marginalization as an unintended consequence of school digital and media literacy programs cannot be ignored [2]. In this paper, the authors push for an understanding of media literacy that includes various forms of mass communication and popular culture, providing the context for students to critically analyze relationships between media and audience, information, influence, and dominance. The authors argue that with the recent adoption of the Common Core State Standards in 2010 and the upcoming implementation of the new Smarter Balanced Assessments and Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career in 2014, there is a window of opportunity to shift the conversation around media literacy to include critical media literacy given the current policy environment in the United States.

References

- [1] Reference 1 [Kellner, D. and Share, J. (2005). Toward Critical Media Literacy: Core concepts, debates, organizations, and policy. *Discourse: studies in the cultural politics of education*, Vol. 26, No. 3, September 2005, pp. 369-386.]
- [2] Reference 2 [Erstad, O., J. Sefton-Green, & H. Nixon (2009) 'Digital literacy in retrospect – a multidimensional approach', *Pedagogies: An International Journal*, Vol. 3 No. 2.]