

Micro-Paper 18: *Media Literacy Education and Second Language Learners*

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Defining the Term

Media literacy is a concept that has existed for approximately 30 years. It has moved from the support of protectionist stances against ill-media intentions to a more global presence, as understood today. In its infancy, it was defined as the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and produce both print and electronic media. At that time, electronic media referred to popular media, computers and some Internet technologies. For educators in the 21st century, media literacy is defined as the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and communicate information in a variety of forms, including print and non-print forms. The most recent definition recognizes the value for students to critically read and communicate via any type of text, no matter how new the format.

Oftentimes, media literacy is exemplified as a way for students to enact civic engagement and advocate for societal issues. In order to meet these goals, literacy educators use media literacy education or a related literacy method, such as critical literacy to explicitly teach the media literacy proficiencies mentioned. Typically, adolescents learn strategies for examining popular film and its nuances, such as how directors purposefully construct messages. Likewise, because students are expected to communicate information via print and non-print forms, they might also learn to produce their own short film, as well as numerous as print and non-print formats.

Connecting it to LSLP

No matter where students live in the world, they have reasons to access, analyze, evaluate, and communicate via print and non-print forms. English educators have long used a variety of media-based materials for supporting learners' understanding of language and culture. Magazines, television shows, news programs, films, online fiction, e-books, blogs, and advertising

are but a few. Apart from the informative and entertainment value of such resources, media texts can be used themselves as objects of study to scaffold students' acquisition of English language, academic content, and culture. Articles from local and national newspapers could be used to promote critical reading. In the case of English language learners of varying levels of proficiency, teachers may use different media to examine rhetorical concepts of tone, target, audience, and point of view. Finally, the genre of advertising may be explored to address the rhetorical function of persuasion. The use of popular culture materials such as comic books and selected television series may support language acquisition while improving critical thinking skills.

Expanding Second Language Research

Even though media is pervasive and global, research on the intersections of second language acquisition and media literacy is not prevalent. In order for us to understand the promises and challenges of media literacy with second language learners, empirical research is needed on ELLs' perceptions of media as well as the rates of language and literacy acquisition in classrooms where media is utilized.

References

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