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## Learning and Thinking Skills: Information and Media Literacy

By: Eva Efron and Laura Benin

Media messages are ubiquitous—so much so that we barely notice their existence. Consider how much visual information, in the form of advertisements alone, that we are exposed to each day. In order to make sense of this dizzying array of sights and sounds, we should become educated consumers of media messages. The National Association for Media Literacy Education has developed Core Principles of Media Literacy Education to help educators get started teaching our students critical thinking skills.

([www.justthink.org](http://www.justthink.org))

Media literacy encompasses the entire media environment (print and electronic media, mass media, and user-generated content) and evolves as technology changes. The 21st Century learners, equipped with media literacy skills, will then be able to navigate the complexity of

their world. To help students learn to critically evaluate media, teachers (and librarians) should engage students in active inquiry to learn how media messages are

*constructions*, created for a specific purpose. Every word and image is constructed using techniques to achieve a desired effect by influencing attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors. Students should ask, "Who made this message? How and why was it made?" Media literacy recognizes that meaning is not fixed, but varies according to how each individual perceives the message. The emphasis is on exploring how these messages are representations, as well as misrepresentations of life. This will allow students to gain a deeper understanding of the world they live in, allowing them to be more informed citizens in a democratic society.



**For information on any of CIT's programs,**

including back issues of CIT Response, up-to-date education news, NCLB, special reports, new services and more, visit the Curriculum, Instruction and Technology Web site at:

[www.nassauboces.org/cit](http://www.nassauboces.org/cit)

# Cyber Sources

## Using the Internet to Teach Library Skills

This site has the tools for teaching the skills necessary to successfully solve information problems.

<http://academic.wsc.edu/redl/classes/tami/infolit.html>

## Teaching Info Lit & Library Skills

These are resources for those who are teaching information literacy, bibliographic instruction, and library skills.

[www.librarysupportstaff.com/teachlib.html](http://www.librarysupportstaff.com/teachlib.html)

## Springfield Township HS Virtual Library

This site has search tools, online tutorials, an in-depth research guide, and pathfinder guides to common research topics.

[www.sdast.org/shs/library/](http://www.sdast.org/shs/library/)

## Resources for School Librarians

This is a directory of Web sites which will assist the K-12 school librarian with the operation of the library and the instruction of students.

[www.sldirectory.com/](http://www.sldirectory.com/)

## Media/Information Literacy @Web English Teacher

Resources for working with media/information literacy in the classroom are on this site.

[www.webenglishteacher.com/media.html](http://www.webenglishteacher.com/media.html)

## Media Literacy Clearinghouse

This site is filled with resources for K-12 educators as well as workshops for K-12 educators which promotes critical thinking, helping students read media messages. [www.frankwbaker.com/](http://www.frankwbaker.com/)

## Center for Media Literacy

This site provides you with a wide selection of teaching tools, carefully evaluated for their quality and importance to the field. [www.medialit.org/](http://www.medialit.org/)

## MediaChannel.org- WHY MEDIA LITERACY MATTERS

This is a resource center for K-12 educators and other media tips.

[www.mediachannel.org/classroom](http://www.mediachannel.org/classroom)

## Don't Buy It

"The Don't Buy It" Web site encourages grade 4-8 students to think critically about media television, radio, magazines, and the Web.

<http://pbskids.org/dontbuyit/>

# Tech Toys

This offshoot of **FactCheck.org** helps students become savvy media

consumers. The nonpartisan site turns a critical eye toward political statements of all stripes, scrutinizes misleading advertising claims, and gives kids pointers on evaluating information found online.

It also provides a dictionary.

For educators, the site offers lesson plans and guides for teaching critical thinking, the proper use of sources, and how to recognize deceptive arguments. [www.factchecked.org](http://www.factchecked.org)



**Tag School Reading System** An easy and entertaining way to jump-start young readers, the Tag School Reading System comes with a pocket-size combination pen/stylus (it looks like an oversized pen) that interacts with the specially printed words in the Tag stories. Students can follow along individually or as a class, listening to the characters talk and then responding to questions they pose. The reader is connected to the teacher's computer, allowing for individualized monitoring of progress.

[www.leapfrogschoolhouse.com/do\\_findpage?pageKey=tag\\_home](http://www.leapfrogschoolhouse.com/do_findpage?pageKey=tag_home)

**A new Web camera by Plustek** allows users to plug the cable into the computer USB socket and instantly add live video and audio to IM sessions. The Plustek OptiCam M1 also allows the user to move and control its lens. It covers about a 150°, horizontal view and a 110°, vertical view. Moreover, a remote user may control the Web camera upon request.

Microshooting capability is another feature of the camera. The camera is capable of offering high-quality images, up to 30 frames per second on recommended systems. It is equipped with a USB connection and built-in microphone. [www.plustek.com/product/m1.asp](http://www.plustek.com/product/m1.asp)



# February Spotlight

## Patriotism Abounds at Parkway Elementary School in East Meadow!

**P**arkway Elementary used the E-instruction/CPS clickers to hold our 2008 Student Election. Teachers brought their students to Mrs. Crayne-Leftwich's computer lab to fulfill their civic duty voting for the next president! They had two choices with pictures and names of the candidates. They had to select 'A' for Obama and a 'B' for McCain. Students received stickers telling all of their participation in Parkway's 2008 Student Vote! Jean Stanziale, our Nassau BOCES trainer, helped out with setting up the CPS program and tallying the votes! *Thanks Jean!!*

The Parkway Students were excited to hear the results of our Parkway Student Election which were posted for all to see!

With Jean's support, the E-instruction/CPS clickers are also being used by all the elementary schools in East Meadow.

Tony Fosso, computer teacher, assisted Charlie Angeli and Lynn Caiozzo, math lab teachers, of McVey to implement the clickers for preparation of the math assessment. Last year they had the students take a math sample assessment in their classroom, then the class came into the math lab where they used the CPS system with SmartBoard for students to enter their answers. Once the students did so, summary reports were created and printed using CPS. These reports included:

- Instructor's Summary—which gives the raw score and percentage answered correctly
- Item Analysis Report with Standards which gives the percentages of students who chose each answer choice and the state standard it corresponds to.
- Standards Analysis Report which gives each state standard tested, along with the percentage of students who answered the question with that standard correctly.

These reports helped the classroom teachers as well as the math lab teachers to plan their curriculum leading up to the NY State Assessments. By using the item analysis for each class, an



**Mrs. Maria Crayne-Leftwich, computer teacher, with Mrs. Walker and her fifth-grade class.**

individual plan was created for each classroom focusing on the areas where the students didn't do well on the sample assessment. After taking a *second* sample assessment, the scores went up across the board, so it looks like using the technology to improve instruction worked out nicely! They are looking forward to doing the same this year.

Meadowbrook's assistant principal, Jamie Mack, arranged training for her 5th-grade teachers to set up their databases. They are using the past Social Studies NY State tests provided by E-instruction for review for the upcoming Social Studies test as well as creating their own content to target areas that need reinforcement.

Bowling Green's 4th- and 5th-grade teachers spent Superintendents Conference Day with the guidance of Frank Fortney, computer teacher, and Jean Stanziale, setting up their databases to prepare to review the ELA and Math Assessments. Copies of the past assessments were on hand for the teachers, enabling them to give their students the test in hard copy first, and then have them use the clickers to put in their answers. The CPS reports of these assessments will help guide the teachers in targeting the students in the areas where they need additional remediation.

Kelly O'Brien, computer teacher, set up the training, and Jean reviewed the CPS procedure for the Barnum Woods 4th-grade teachers to set up their databases for review of the ELA and Math assessments. They are also creating their own content for CPS for additional related remediation and review of Specific NY State standards.

# Free & Inexpensive Teacher Resources

Building a School Web Site is a free online guide for a “learn-as-you-go” hands-on project for teachers and students. Just follow the hyperlinks in the table of contents for a step-by-step recipe for building a Web site. The tutorial provides HTML instruction for the five simple elements of a Web page: files, words, pictures, colors, and links. [www.wigglebits.com/](http://www.wigglebits.com/)

Introduce K–5 students to basic physical science with this free online version of the Building Big Educators’ Guide created for the Building Big television series on PBS. The guide supports fun, simple hands-on activities about bridges, domes, skyscrapers, dams, and tunnels using inquiry learning. Each activity includes a Handout and Educator Ideas plan. Four interactive labs help students investigate forces, loads, materials and shapes. A Glossary and searchable Wonders of the World Databank provide detailed information about structures throughout the world. [http://pbs.org/wgbh/buildingbig/educator/how\\_index.html](http://pbs.org/wgbh/buildingbig/educator/how_index.html)

Build an instructional library of Flash games using free templates to create educational games, activities, and diagrams. Teachers and students can select a template from the drop-down menu, input curriculum

content with up to 25 questions and answers, and save as a data file or Web page to publish on a class or school Web site. There are currently 16 game/diagram templates to choose from, including a Time Line, Arcade Game format, Hamburger and Venn Diagrams, and a Word/Name Picker. <http://classtools.net>

The Design Squad is a television series on PBS Kids. Its companion Web site targets children aged 8–12 and features magazine articles, interactive games, activities, and projects that tie engineering to everyday life. The Design Squad’s free online Educators Guide, Event Guide, Activity Guide, and Activities pages make it easy to tie the content to the classroom. These are great cooperative learning activities for back-to-school teambuilding. <http://pbskids.org/designsquad/>

Educators Publishing Service (EPS) publishes research-based reading intervention resources that focus on differentiated instruction for special education programs and today’s diverse classrooms. EPS provides free, downloadable ready-to-use sample pages and complete lessons from dozens of its 800 titles. New math titles are also available with sample pages. [www.epsbooks.com/](http://www.epsbooks.com/)

## Lunch & Learn

### Skills Tutor

**When:** January 22, 2009

### Green IT–Eco Sustainability

**When:** January 27, 2009

### Integration Solutions

**When:** January 28, 2009

### SmartBoard

**When:** February 3, 2009



### SPARK

**When:** February 5, 2009

### TechSteps

**When:** February 9, 2009

**Where:** All Lunch & Learn Workshops are held at the Duffy Avenue Center, Hicksville from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m.

**For more information, visit:**

[www.nassauboces.org/cit/it/mcs](http://www.nassauboces.org/cit/it/mcs)