

Micro-Paper 46: *Critical Media Literacy*

Melanie Mollan-Moscoso

MA Candidate in Learning and Teaching Processes in Second Languages
Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana, Sede Central Medellín
English Instructor, Colegio El Triángulo (Rionegro, Antioquia) | LSLP Teacher – Researcher
melanie.mollan@gmail.com

Defining the Term

The [21st century](#) is a media-saturated, technology-dependent, and globally-connected world. Today's students are surrounded with all kinds of [media](#) and technology. These media and technologies heavily influence children's and adolescents' interactions. That is why one of the main aims for educators today is to develop the necessary competences to be active, analytic, and involved citizens in a democratic society.

We live in a multimedia age where people's main source of information includes highly constructed visual images, sound and [multimodal](#) formats. This requires that students and citizens develop Critical Media Literacy (CML), understood as the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create messages across a variety of contexts to adequately interpret media messages and produce media themselves.

CML draws from [Critical Literacy](#)'s concern with people's interactions with writing and reading in social practices. CML, in particular, focuses on helping people to interpret and evaluate media content (Internet, television, radio, [social networks](#), newspapers, magazines). As a result, it helps to critically dissect media forms, to investigate media effects and uses, to use media intelligently, and to construct alternative media for today's learners. Most importantly, CML intends to empower students to create their own meanings and identities to shape and transform the socio-cultural conditions that their society provides them.

Connecting it to LSLP

At LSLP, we are interested in CML as part of our [School Literacies](#) research line. Some of our teacher researchers are currently developing frameworks and activities where students have the opportunity to analyze the implicit messages of media that surround them, by asking questions that dovetail with the images and text implemented both from pedagogical and ideological perspectives.

Two recent examples provide salient experiences with CML. [One of our researchers](#) is developing a CML framework to introduce elementary students to the basic tenets of critically reading media. Another researcher is implementing critical media literacy with eighth-grade students. In this specific case, after watching a movie on the implicit messages of media in society, her students had to observe, interpret and create a text conducive to Critical Media Literacy.

In both cases, we have discovered that implementing CML in their classrooms encouraged critical autonomy and empowered students' critical consciousness and independence. It also challenged them to "think outside the box" and acquire media awareness on the advent of digital technologies surrounding them.

Expanding Second Language Research

As [media](#) takes an important place in second language research, it also becomes an obligation to educators to start developing a critical awareness of the social, political, cultural and economic messages emanating from media, as a bridge to develop critical consciousness and build knowledge with today's students. In conclusion, Critical Media Literacy offers the tools and framework to help students become subjects in the process of transformation, expressing their own voices, and contribute to create a better society.

References

- Alvermann, D., & Hagood, M. (2000). Critical Media Literacy: Research, Theory, and Practice in "New Times". *The Journal of Educational Research*, 93(3), 193-205.
- Kellner, D., & Share, J. (2007). Critical media literacy, democracy, and the reconstruction of education. In D. Macedo & S. R. Steinberg (Eds.), *Media literacy: A reader* (pp. 3-23). New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Livingstone, S. (2004). Media Literacy and the challenges of New Information and Communication Technologies. *The Communication Review*, 7(1), 3-14.

L

S

L

P