

INTRODUCTORY MEDIA LITERACY LESSONS FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Lesson 1 – Communication

Time: 20-30 minutes

Objective: Students will be able to identify the different modes of communication

Into: Ask the students, “If I wanted _____ to come here, what would I do?”
Give students situations where it might not be possible to use a specific mode(s) of communication, i.e. “If I couldn’t talk, how could I say please come here.”

Beyond: Students will come up with different ideas and then the teacher will list the ideas on the board. Concepts students don’t volunteer, teacher will model the mode.

Speaking
Sign Language
Gesturing
Body language
Pictures
Writing

Discuss the definition of communication as a means of conveying an idea or message.

Beyond: Separate students into group.

Assign each group a mode of communication.

Each group will convey the same message, i.e. “Come here.” “Sit down.” “I’m hungry.” “I’m tired.” “I’m sad.” using their assigned mode of communication.

Assessment: Informally observe students.

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Lesson 2 – Media

Media Literacy Key Question #1: Who created this message? What is this?
How is this put together?

Time: 20-30 minutes

Objective: Students will be able to identify different media – forms of communication

Vocabulary: Media

Materials: magazines, newspapers, 1 communication medium – i.e. telephone, radio, computer, walkie talkie – per group, glue, scissors, chart paper

Into: Give each group a communication medium, i.e. telephone, radio, computer, walkie talkie.

Ask each group to do a quick talk about everything they know about that object.

Each group will then share what was said.

Then ask class what these items have in common.

Through: List the items and then brainstorm other media

Identify the items on the list as Media. Then, define and discuss what is “Media.”

Beyond: Give students newspapers and magazines and ask them to cut out different media to glue onto a mural.

Assessment: Teacher will check what items students cut up and place on the mural.

Assessment: Informally observe students.

Lesson 3 – Symbols

Media Literacy Key Question #3: How might different people understand this message differently from me? What do I think and feel about this? What might other people think and feel about this?

Into: Bring in or show students different images of familiar symbols – McDonald’s arches, stop sign, bathroom, coke can, etc.

Before showing images, tell students, “We are going to read some very difficult words.”

Through: Show images and have students read them.
After, ask, “How did you know that that picture said _____?”

Explain that a symbol is a picture or a word that sends a message.

Beyond: Go on a school or community scavenger hunt looking for symbols.

Give students a notebook, paper to record notes.
Stop intermittently, and have students record their symbol findings using pictures or words.

Extension: Students will find symbols at home and/or in their neighborhood.

Assessment: Review student journals.

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Lesson 4 – Distinguishing between Programming and Advertising

Media Literacy Key Question #5: Why was this message sent? Is this trying to tell me something? Is this trying to sell me something?

Time: 20-30 minutes

Objective: Students will be able to distinguish between programs and advertising

Vocabulary: programming, advertisement, commercial, movie and TV promotions

Materials: 15 minutes of children programming with commercials, pencils, crayons, TV frame handout

Into: Read aloud a poem with the students. Then stop halfway through unbeknownst to the children and interject with a mock commercial advertising something students can buy at recess. Then immediately return to the lesson.

Ask students, “Did anyone notice something strange about how I read the poem?”

Discuss the difference between commercials and advertising. Ask students “What makes a commercial a commercial? What’s different about it?”

Through: Show students 15 minutes of commercials and programming.

Students will identify commercials and programming and give reasons for their answers.

Beyond: Using two TV Picture frames, students will draw a commercial in one and a program on the other.

Students can either share in pairs or in whole group what they drew.

Assessment: Teacher will check illustrations.

Assessment: Informally observe students.

Lesson 5 – Fantasy v. Reality

Media Literacy Key Question #2: What techniques are used to attract my attention? What do I see, hear, smell, touch or taste? What do I like or dislike about this?

Intro: In groups, students will sort books into two groups –things that could really happen and things that can happen in your imagination.

Ask them why they sorted the books the way they did.
List those definitions and put them in two categories, and then give the terms fantasy and reality.

Through: First, divide the class in half, and have them one commercials. Have one group identify the real elements and the other group identify the fantasy elements.

After, students will share and give reasons for what they found.

Ask, " Why do you think the person who made the commercial decided to use fantasy and/ or real elements?" (Answers will vary and accept all.)

Beyond: Give each student a piece of folded construction paper and magazines. Students will cut out magazine pictures and create a collage separating fantasy and reality.

Students will present their collages in pairs, groups or whole class.

Assessment: Teacher will review collages.