

The Association for Media Literacy

The Association for Media Literacy is made up of teachers, librarians, consultants, parents, cultural workers, and media professionals concerned about the impact of the mass media in the creation of contemporary culture.

Media literacy is an educational initiative that aims to increase students' understanding and enjoyment of how the media work, how they produce meaning, how they are organized, and how the media construct reality.

AML is concerned with helping students develop an informed and critical understanding of the nature of the mass media, the techniques used by the media industry, and the impact of these techniques. Media literacy also aims to provide students with the ability to create their own media products.

The AML currently has over a thousand members from across Canada, throughout the United States, and from around the world. Our international membership is particularly strong in those English-speaking countries where the educational system has given some priority to media literacy, notably England, Australia and Scotland as well as the U.S. Our members and guest speakers at AML events include internationally known media educators such as John Pungente, SJ, of Canada, Len Masterman of Great Britain and Robyn Quin and Barrie McMahon of Australia.

Founded in 1978, The Association for Media Literacy was the first comprehensive organization for media literacy teachers in Canada. While primarily Ontario-based, other provincial media literacy organizations have been established in British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia with AML support and guidance.

The AML serves the needs of its members through a variety of services:

1. AML provides a network for media literacy teachers throughout the world. Our founder, Barry Duncan, is an internationally recognized leader in the media literacy movement and has published several student textbooks in the field.
2. AML publishes the newsletter "Mediacy" three times a year. Several of our executive members have also published student textbooks widely used in Ontario and throughout Canada.
3. AML organizes workshops and conferences. Our most recent conference, Summit 2000: Children, Youth and the Media: Beyond the Millennium, was held in Toronto. It featured over 200 presentations from 35 countries, and attracted hundreds of delegates. Previously, two international conferences were held in Guelph, Ontario and we co-sponsored the Media Literacy Summer Institutes with Ryerson Polytechnic University in Toronto. Locally, we organize about a half dozen workshops a year in the Toronto area.
4. AML publishes curriculum anthologies and other support material for media teachers.
 - o The Ontario Education Ministry Media Literacy support document has attracted world-wide attention and the writing team was made up

- primarily of AML executive members. The document has been one of the best-selling publications available through the Ontario government bookstore.
- The AML Media Literacy Anthology, a collection of practical classroom teaching units, is currently being prepared for a 3rd edition.
5. AML lobbies and communicates with government, school boards and the media industry about mutual concerns.
- Ontario was the first educational jurisdiction in the world to mandate media literacy as part of the English curriculum, largely as a result of AML lobbying.
 - In the back to basics climate of educational reform in Ontario, the AML has successfully lobbied for a media studies component in the elementary language curriculum, as well as a media studies strand in every English course at the secondary level. Our president, Carolyn Wilson, chaired the team responsible for creating a new stand-alone Media Studies credit at the grade 11 level.
 - The AML has also been involved in lobbying against draconian copyright legislation being proposed by the federal government that would have a chilling effect on teacher and student access to media texts in the classroom.
 - The AML and its affiliates successfully marshalled public opinion against the "Youth News Network," a proposed Canadian version of the U.S.'s "Channel One."

Membership:

AML membership is C\$30/year. Make cheques or money orders for \$30 Canadian payable to: The Association for Media Literacy. In your subscription request please include your mailing address, postal code, e-mail, phone, and fax numbers.

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For further information on "Mediacy" and for sending letters and other submissions to the AML newsletter, contact: Carol Arcus, Co editor. E-mail: carcus@home.com

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