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## *Media Literacy in The English Language Classroom*

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Media education today is one of the fastest developing trends in the field of education around the world. Why I think media education is important in teaching English as a foreign language. What are the main sources of the English language for our students? Where do we obtain our knowledge about foreign cultures and foreign countries? Direct or indirect influence of media on our lives is growing constantly, and traditional literacy skills- the ability to read and to write print texts, must be supplemented with media literacy skills- the ability to “read” and “write” audiovisual materials along with print media texts (television programs, films, web sites, advertisements). Teaching about the media, we can assist our students’ learning process of the English language and cultures of the English-speaking countries. We can also motivate our students, enhance our lessons, and develop students’ critical thinking, encourage them to become active viewers, listeners, thus becoming producers of their own messages.

The following topics are suggested to include in English language curriculum along with traditional topics:

### **1. Photography** (“A picture is worth a thousand words”?)

1. Does photography reflect reality?
2. How the photography reflects intentions of the author?
3. What means are used to accomplish the desired effect?
4. Do different people see different things at the same photo?

The teacher can assist students in interpreting photography, developing their critical thinking skills

### **2. Film**

1. Do we always pay attention to the interconnection of shape and content of the film?
2. Do we understand codes and the conventionalities of different genres?

### **3. Television**

1. Does the television create a realistic picture of the world?
2. What television characters and real people have in common and what is their difference?

Television is the main source of information, entertainment, a world arena for propaganda and advertisement, and almost a member of a family.

Adults and children spend watching television, and norms and values, models of social behavior and stereotypes presented from tele-screen, directly or indirectly influence our world view. Television is frequently blamed for disinformation and creation of false ideals and myths, for having impact on aggression growth, for reducing interest towards reading and psychological manipulations.

#### **4. Advertisement**

1. What is the role of advertisement in our lives?
2. Who makes the choice what to buy, do we really choose or we are manipulated?

Close connection, implicit or explicit, can be frequently noticed between our decisions and advertisements. We are advised what to wear, how to look, what to eat and drink. Advertising agencies use different technologies to persuade us to buy goods or services, they play on our fears and desires. But they also affect our self-esteem. The purpose of the lessons is to teach students to recognize advertisement technologies, analyze them and make rational decisions in their everyday life.

#### **5. News**

1. Where do we get the information in our city, country?
2. Who are the owners of this or that program, news-papers or Internet web-site?
3. How the news is created? How objectively does the news reflect the reality?

#### **6. Pop Music**

Pop music is an authentic source of information not only about the language, but also time, and the culture of the young generation. Perhaps, it is the most widespread and accessible authentic media, which is not translated to other languages.

1. Do American and Armenian audiences perceive pop music in the same way?
2. What is the role of music in the life of young people: does music reflect modern culture or form it?

#### **5. Internet**

One of the most positive effects of integration of information technologies into foreign language curriculum is the access to a huge amount of authentic materials. However, students very often get lost in the ocean of different web-sites, hyperlinks, and cannot distinguish the important information from minor data, authentic data from questionable facts and propaganda. Therefore, we should assist our students to become active viewers and listeners. Instead of being passive consumers of constructed messages they should become creative individuals able to find, analyze and communicate their own messages.