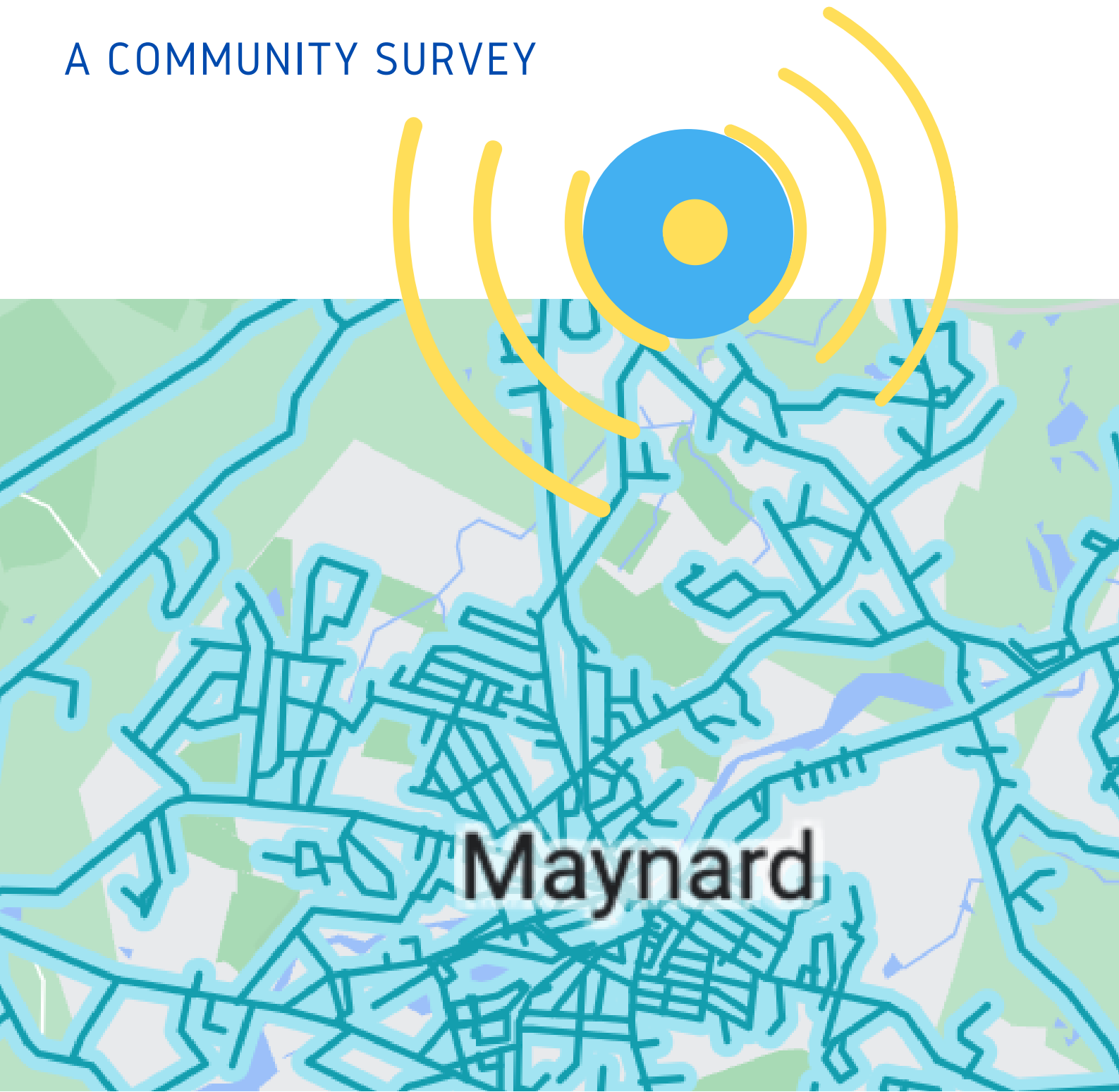


MEDIA LITERACY IN MAYNARD MASSACHUSETTS

A COMMUNITY SURVEY





media education lab



Media Literacy in Maynard MA: A Community Survey

By Renee Hobbs, Media Education Lab
& Erin McNeill, Media Literacy Now

SUGGESTED CITATION:

Media Education Lab (2023, August). Media Literacy in Maynard
Massachusetts: A Community Survey.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Maynard's elementary and secondary students have some opportunities to receive media literacy education, according to findings from a survey of over 500 students and 70 educators, parents, and community leaders

Although Maynard students in Grades 4 -12 report that they have had opportunities for media literacy education at school, educators, school leaders, librarians, parents and community members see the need for more robust media literacy learning experiences for students in Grades 4- 12. Some key findings from the report include:



Most students at all grade levels have opportunities to engage in research projects where they generate questions, gather information from multiple sources, and then summarize their learning in print, oral, or multimedia forms.



When students are asked if they have ever had media literacy learning experiences, most report in the affirmative. **But when community stakeholders are asked** if such activities occurred in classrooms at various grade levels during the 2022 - 2023 school year, they report much lower levels of exposure to 16 core instructional practices of media literacy education.



Although 3 out of 4 Maynard HS students can remember engaging in **discussions about how media can be beneficial or harmful to health, identity, and relationships**, community stakeholders say only 12% of students are learning how to identify the many different choices that creators make and consider how the design of media messages may influence people's thoughts, feelings, and beliefs



By high school, 4 out of 5 students say that have **learned about First Amendment freedoms and the social responsibilities of communication for self-governance**. But community stakeholders report that only 1 in 3 students learned about these topics.



Both students and community stakeholders agree that **students do not get sufficient opportunities to analyze persuasive or entertainment media** (like advertising, music, movies, and social media) that conveys social values or perpetuate stereotypes. Students get few opportunities to critically analyze advertising even though it plays a significant role in nutrition, identity, and health. Also, there is **little focus on supporting opportunities for reflection on media choices**, as only 1 in 3 students have learned how to keep track of their media use.

OVERVIEW

“Media literacy” means the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, create and communicate using a variety of forms, including print, visual, audio, interactive, and digital texts.

In this report, we present two sources of evidence (collected over 2 years) about the state of media literacy education in the Maynard public schools. First, we summarize evidence from a survey of more than 500 Maynard students who self-report their lifetime exposure to media literacy instruction in school. Then we report results from a survey of 86 teachers, librarians, school leaders, community members, and elected public officials, who estimate the likelihood that students get exposure to media literacy instructional practices.

Most students in Maynard public schools are receiving media literacy learning experiences that are integrated into instruction

MASSACHUSETTS STATE STANDARDS

Media literacy is integrated into Massachusetts State Standards to emphasize the importance of media literacy as a means to foster informed, engaged, and active citizens. Media literacy is seen as a vital tool to help students develop a deeper understanding of media messages, biases, and the impact of media on society.

Health and Wellness

- Access, evaluate, and use valid and reliable health information, products, services, and related resources.
- Examine how emotions, thoughts, needs, values, beliefs, and other factors (both internal and external) influence behaviors and articulate how these influences impact health behavior and outcomes.

History and Social Studies.

- Identify the purpose of various primary sources.
- Gather relevant information from multiple sources representing a wide range of views while using the origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources to guide selection.
- Explain the different functions of news articles, editorials, editorial cartoons, and “op-ed” commentaries.
- Analyze the purpose and point of view of each source and distinguish opinion from fact, taking into consideration multiple points of view represented in the sources, the types of sources available, and the potential uses of the sources.
- Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

MASSACHUSETTS STATE STANDARDS

Language Arts

- Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.
- Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
- Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
- Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.
- Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.
- Speaking and Listening. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. Language. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.
- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- Use technology to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.
- Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

Digital Literacy and Computer Science

- Identify and explain the strengths, weaknesses, and capabilities of a variety of digital tools.
- Examine the historical rate of change in computing devices and discuss the implications for the future.
- Explain the importance of giving credit to media creators/owners when using their work.
- Create, evaluate, and revise data visualization for communication and knowledge.
- Collaboratively use digital tools and media resources to communicate key ideas and details in a way that informs, persuades, and/or entertains.
- Evaluate quality of digital sources for reliability, including currency, relevancy, authority, accuracy, and purpose of digital information.
- Evaluate how media and technology can be used to distort, exaggerate, and misrepresent information.
- Gather, organize, and analyze information from digital sources by quoting, paraphrasing, and/or summarizing.
- Communicate and publish key ideas and details to a variety of audiences using digital tools and media-rich resources.
- Collaborate on a substantial project with outside experts or others through online digital tools.

Vocational and Technical Education

- Explain concepts fundamental to cinema/video design and composition.
- List criteria used to analyze and critique aspects of a television broadcast.
- Explain the difference between news, feature, opinion, sports, and other forms of news writing and reporting.
- Demonstrate appropriate methods for developing an idea or concept for a cinema or video production.

CONTEXT

The school district has offered a variety of programs for parents on topics that raise awareness of the risks and opportunities of media use for children and adolescents. These program may help to advance media literacy in the home. Some examples include:

Healthy Balance: Screen Time

Exposing youth to time in front of screens (TV, computer, tablet, or smartphone) can have negative effects on physical and mental development including issues with memory, attention, and language skills. This workshop is designed to provide the tools and vocabulary needed for children and adolescents to make wise choices about balancing daily screen use, while focusing more attention on exercise and nutrition.

Navigating the Cyber World

Learn about the challenges and dangerous situations that may arise through the use of the internet, social media, and smartphones. It is important for school staff and parents to be aware of the popular apps, social media sites, and programs used by youth online. This workshop explains the issues and possible consequences of cyberbullying, sexting, and revealing identifying information to strangers.

Parents of students in the Maynard public schools have had opportunities to learn about the dangers, but not the benefits, of media and technology in the lives of their children

MASSACHUSETTS STATE STANDARDS

Media Arts

- Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
- Relate artistic ideas and works to societal, cultural and historical contexts to deepen understanding.
- Select, analyze and interpret artistic work for presentation.
- Create a work that expresses, evokes, or communicates a directed idea (e.g., students create a work that delivers a message to a specified audience).

Foreign Languages

- Students will distinguish among knowledge, informed opinions, uninformed opinions, stereotypes, prejudices, biases, open mindedness, narrow mindedness, and closed mindedness in literature, primary and secondary source documents, mass media, and multimedia presentations about and/or from culture; and discuss how these presentations reflect cultural and individual perspectives.

Technology Literacy

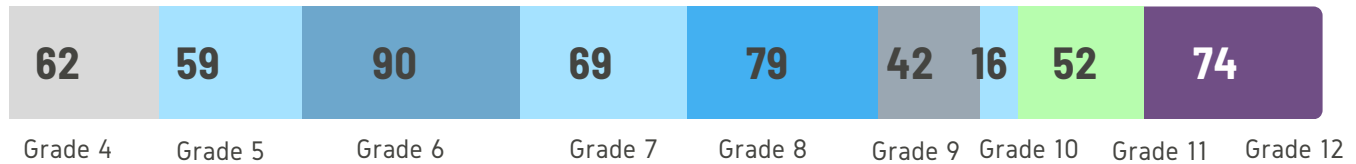
- Demonstrate the responsible use of technology and an understanding of ethics and safety issues in using electronic media at home, in school, and in society.
- Analyze the values and points of view that are presented in media messages.
- Demonstrate the ability to use technology for research, critical thinking, problem solving, decision making, communication, collaboration, creativity, and innovation.

STUDENTS MATTER

SELF-REPORT SURVEY OF STUDENTS IN GRADES 4 - 12



In the 2021 - 2022 school year, Maynard high school student Gracie Gilligan adapted the Media Education Lab's survey for students in the Maynard Public Schools as her Senior Project to learn more about how media literacy education is implemented in elementary and secondary schools



The Maynard Public Schools enrolled 1,195 students with 75% of students who identify as White, 16% Hispanic, 3% African American, 2% Asian, and 4% multiracial or non-Hispanic. 28% of students are low-income. In this student survey, students responded to questions that asked them if they had ever done a variety of media literacy learning activities. Percentages indicate the proportion of students who respond "yes."

IN SCHOOL, HAVE YOU EVER?

	GRADES 4 - 5	GRADES 6, 7, 8	GRADES 9 - 12
Learned to spot the differences between a news story and an opinion story	69%	65%	74%
Discussed how media can be beneficial or harmful to your health, identity, or relationships	54%	66%	73%
Looked at similarities and differences between different types of media? (For example, comparing content on the internet with film, television or books)	54%	61%	71%
Made a video, script, or storyboard in school showing the plot of a book	39%	53%	76%
Discussed how the choices made by people who create media influence people's thoughts, feelings, and beliefs	48%	51%	70%
Analyzed an advertisement	21%	45%	60%
Kept track of your media use	25%	39%	35%
	N = 110	N = 220	N = 169

STUDENTS MATTER

SELF-REPORT SURVEY OF STUDENTS IN GRADES 4 - 12

Students in Grades 4 - 12 were asked if they had ever participated in 18 activities that are typical instructional practices of media literacy education in elementary and secondary schools

IN SCHOOL, HAVE YOU EVER?

	GRADES 4 - 5	GRADES 6, 7, 8	GRADES 9 - 12
Analyzed media to identify stereotypes	16%	34%	36%
Worked with other students to make a video that was shown to other students, parents, or community members	35%	34%	72%
Done a research project where you had to think of questions, gather information from multiple sources, and then summarize what you learned in a paper, video, presentation, etc.	70%	73%	93%
Looked at music from different time periods and discussed how it reflects social values	30%	25%	36%
Looked at information and thought about how your opinions and beliefs influence what you think it means	50%	53%	53%
Learned about how the First Amendment and other laws give you freedom of speech, and how to use that freedom responsibly	46%	65%	82%
Learned about how to use conversation and active listening to reduce conflict	49%	53%	54%
Learned about how advertisements are targeted to make them more effective	27%	63%	65%
Learned how selling audience attention is the way media companies make money	26%	52%	49%
Written an article or made a presentation that advocated either for or against something using evidence and reasoning	40%	66%	75%
Chosen a topic and worked with others to create a campaign to raise awareness, promote an event, or motivate people to take action	44%	47%	50%

COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDER SURVEY

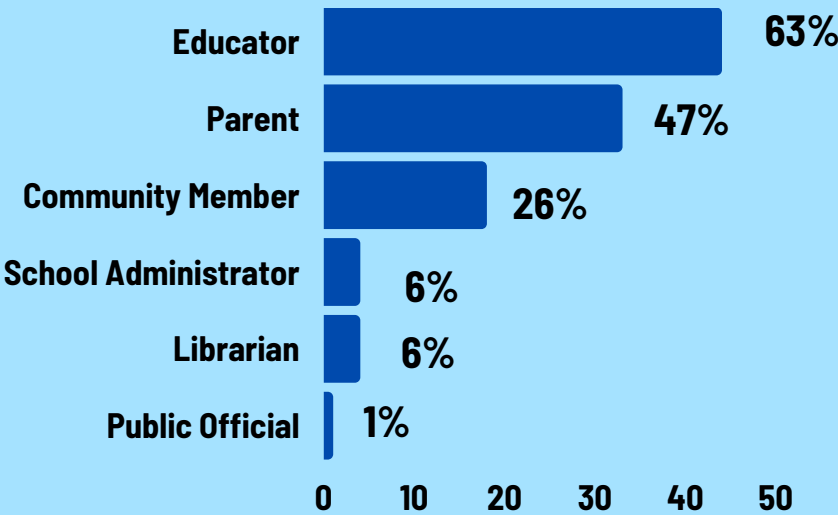
In the 2022 - 2023 school year, Media Literacy Now worked with Superintendent Brian Haas to collect data from 70 educators, parents, librarians, elected public officials and community members, using a survey developed by scholars at the University of Rhode Island's Media Education Lab.

Findings from this report can help educators and school leaders take steps to increase the use of 16 core instructional practices of media literacy. This report provides educators, school leaders, and community members a **baseline and a blueprint** upon which they can build transformative media literacy programs for all learners in the Maynard Public Schools.



Media Literacy Now was founded in 2013 by Erin McNeill as a response to her growing concern as a parent about the messages her children were receiving through cartoons and advertisements. Today, Media Literacy Now is leading the grassroots movement to create a public education system where all K-12 students can learn the 21st century literacy skills they need for health, well-being, economic participation, and citizenship. MLN informs and drives local, state, and national policy change by educating policymakers, developing model policies, disseminating research, and developing advocates.

SAMPLE & METHODOLOGY IN BRIEF



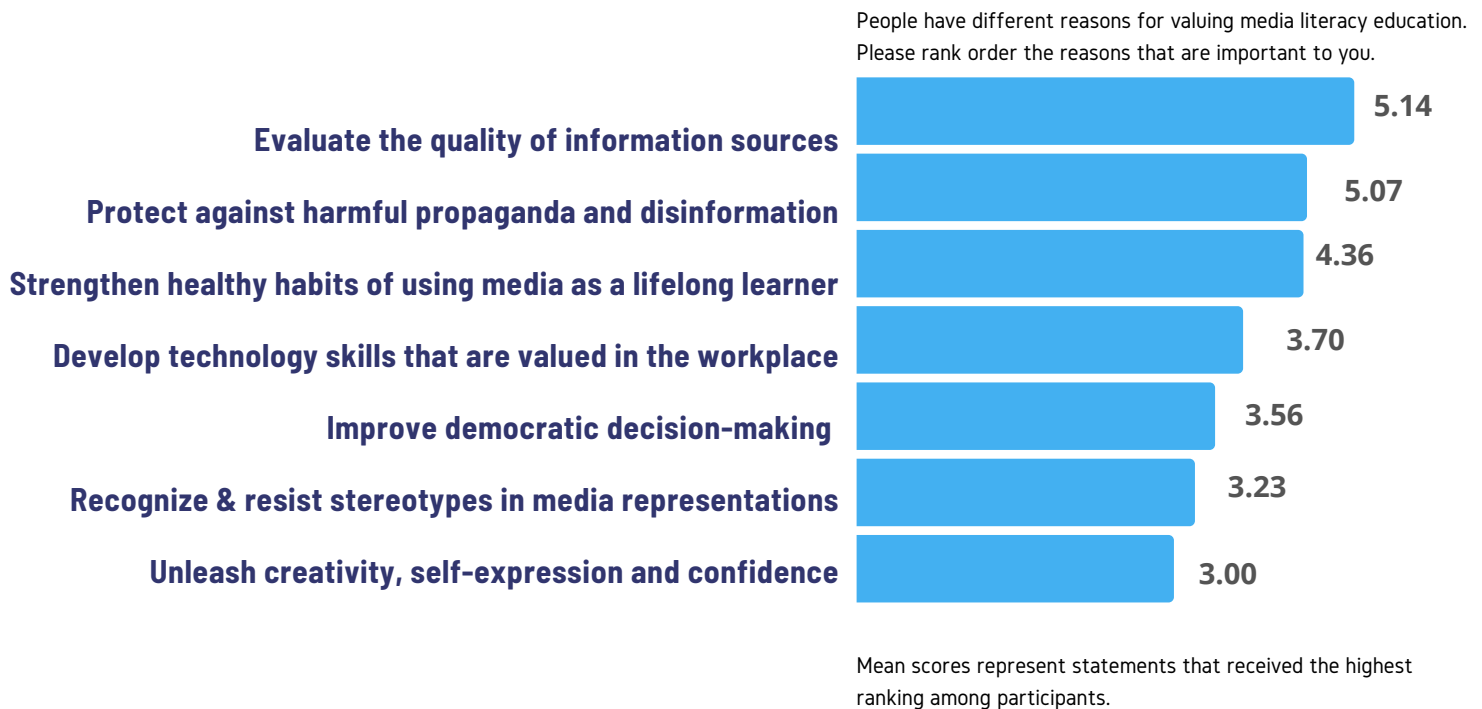
Participation in the survey was voluntary. The Maynard Public Schools includes 228 full-time employees, including 119 teachers and 72 paraprofessionals and other support staff. The response rate for teachers was 36%,

The school library and social studies teacher sent the survey to all parents in the middle school and high school, and she used professional development time to get teacher responses. Participants were also recruited through an appeal in the middle and high school newsletters.

N = 70 Results do not sum to 100% because participants could check more than 1 box

WHY MEDIA LITERACY MATTERS

Maynard stakeholders believe that improving people's ability to evaluate the quality of information sources and protecting against harmful propaganda and disinformation are top motivations for why media literacy matters.



Media Literacy Empowers & Protects Learners

Maynard educators, librarians, school leaders, parents, and community members want students to be able to evaluate the quality of information sources and protect themselves from harmful propaganda and false information intentionally spread online.

Media Literacy Life Skills are Distinct from the Development of Workforce Technology Skills

Participants want students to have healthy habits of using media as a lifelong learner, and this is far more valued than the mere provision of technology skills that are valued in the workplace.

Media Literacy's Role in Promoting Creativity Is Largely Unrecognized

In Maynard, community stakeholders place less value on the many ways that media literacy activates creativity, self-expression, and confidence, as this item is lowest-rated among participants. It is likely that a focus on the perceived risks and harms of media and technologies are preventing full consideration of the important role of media in personal expression, creativity, and identity development.

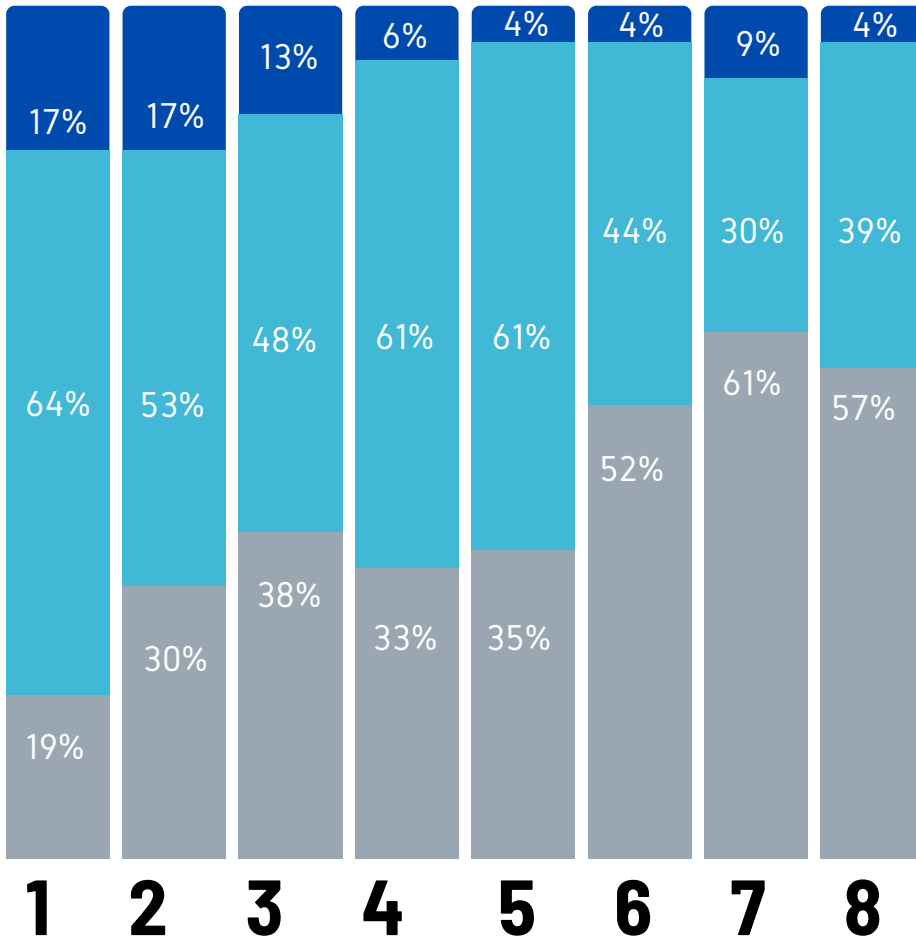
BRINGING MEDIA LITERACY INTO THE HOME

Although parents and children watch and discuss TV shows and movies together, 61% of participants say that parents and guardians do not read and discuss books, newspapers with their children at home and 57% do not discuss what makes media sources more or less trustworthy.



To build media literacy competencies at home, consider the 5 A's:

- Be Aware**
- Be Alert**
- Be Awake**
- Be Assertive**
- Be Affirming**



How likely is it that children and teens in your community do these activities with their parents or guardians?

- HIGH** 1. Discuss movies or videos together
- MED** 2. Comment on the pros and cons of life online
- LOW** 3. Discuss decisions about what to share online
- 4. Balance choices of both online and offline activities
- 5. Discuss potential risks and harms of false information online
- 6. Read and discuss books, newspapers or magazines
- 7. Create videos or other media together
- 8. Discuss what makes media sources more trustworthy

MEDIA LITERACY INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

Fundamental media literacy instructional practices for learners in Grades PK - 12 help learners develop cognitive, social, and emotional competencies to prepare them for college and careers

How often do students in Maynard elementary or secondary schools encounter media literacy through its core instructional practices? We identified 16 basic activities that are commonly used in elementary and secondary schools. These activities can be used in subject areas including English language arts/literacy, social studies, the sciences, visual arts & design and the performing arts, mathematics, engineering and technology, comprehensive health, and world languages. While each of these instructional practices can be implemented using digital technologies, they do not require it.

Access, Analyze & Evaluate

- Images and Advertising
- Compare and Contrast
- Stereotypes
- Examine the News
- Music & Cultural Values
- The Business of Media

Create & Collaborate

- Tell a Story
- Team-Based Production
- Research Project
- Present a Strong Point of View
- Create a Public Service Announcement

Reflect, Understand & Apply

- How Media Messages Influence
- Balancing Online and Offline Life
- Reflect on Your Interpretations
- The Social Responsibilities of the Communicator
- Media Law and Policy

Instructional practices (or methods) engage all students in meaningful learning. Methods are differentiated to meet student needs and interests, task demands, and the learning environment.

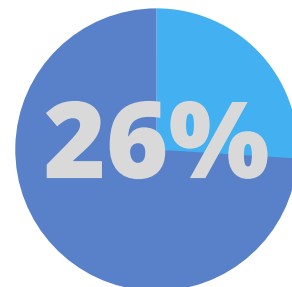
MEDIA LITERACY IN THE ELEMENTARY GRADES



Instructional practices of media literacy are used with elementary students in Grades 4 and 5 only occasionally

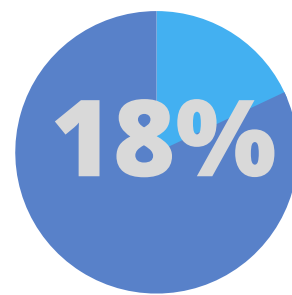
Tell a Story

Students adapt a book into a media genre, including animation, video game, or video, creating a storyboard or a script to depict an imaginary world with characters, conflict, and a sequence of events.



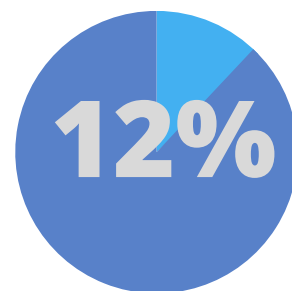
Compare and Contrast

Students compare and contrast two different forms of media to identify similarities and differences in content, format, target audience, and point of view.



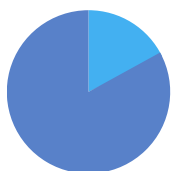
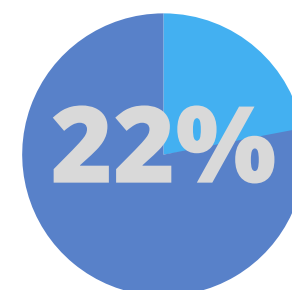
How Media Messages Influence

Students identify the many different choices that creators make and consider how the design of media messages may influence people's thoughts, feelings, and beliefs.



Images & Advertising

Students interpret different types of advertising to examine how images can be manipulated and then they reflect on how advertising affects attitudes and behaviors.



Participants were asked to estimate how many Maynard elementary students encountered any of these instructional practices during the academic year. Pie chart percentages represent those who indicated most or nearly all. N = 47

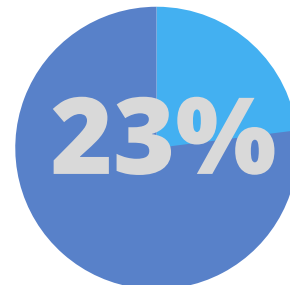
MEDIA LITERACY IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL



Fewer than 1 in 3 middle school students in Maynard are getting meaningful exposure to core instructional practices of media literacy

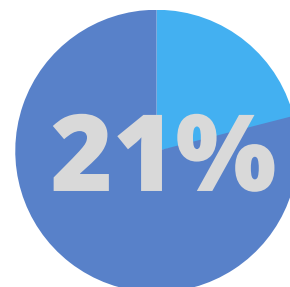
Examine the News

Students determine the difference between a news story and an opinion story in print and broadcast journalism.



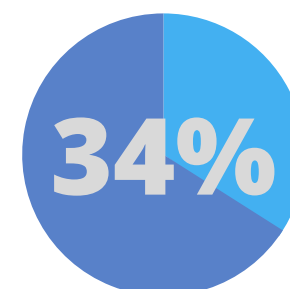
Stereotypes

Students analyze examples of different types of media to spot stereotypes and examine how values and ideologies are embedded in characters and stories.



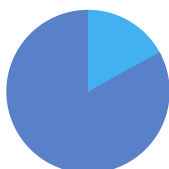
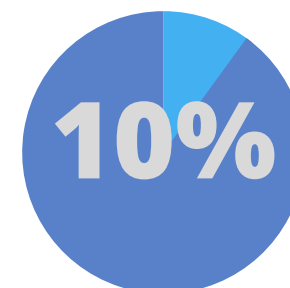
Team-Based Production

A small group of students work collaboratively to create a video and their work is viewed by parents, peers, or the community.



Balancing Online and Offline Life

Students keep track of their media use over a period of time and discuss how media may be beneficial or harmful to their health, identity, and relationships.



Participants estimated how many Maynard middle school students encountered any of these instructional practices during the 2022 - 2023 academic year. Pie chart percentages represent those who indicated most or nearly all students engaged in these learning activities. N = 47

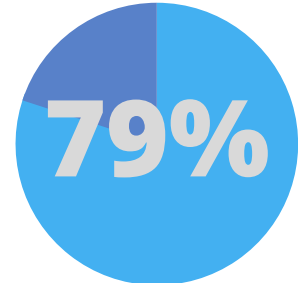


MEDIA LITERACY IN THE HIGH SCHOOL

Although most high school students in Maynard complete a research project, fewer than 1 in 3 get other media literacy instructional practices

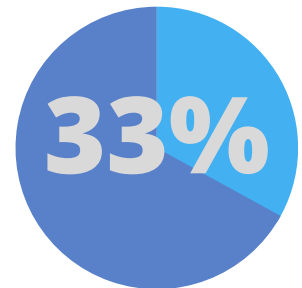
Research Project

Students learn how to generate questions and gather information from multiple sources to learn something new and then summarize what they learned by creating a written work, video, oral presentation, podcast, infographic, or other media project.



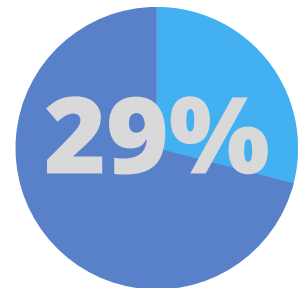
Reflect on Your Own Interpretations

Students examine various information sources and notice how their own opinions and existing beliefs may influence their interpretation of what they see and read.



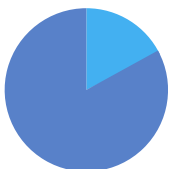
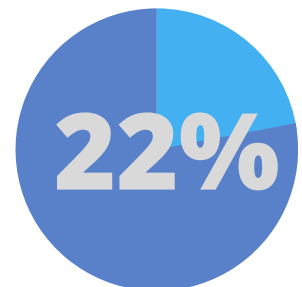
Social Responsibilities of the Communicator

Students reflect on how they use both online and face-to-face expression and communication in their social relationships and learn how to reduce conflict and disrupt hurtful or aggressive talk and actions through dialogue and active listening.



Music & Cultural Values

Students explore music from different time periods to identify how it reflects social values and activates strong emotions in ways that build consensus on controversial political issues.



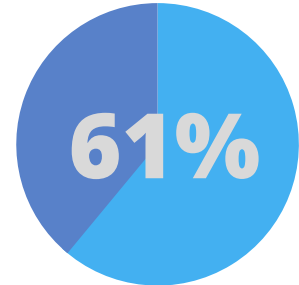
Participants estimated how many Maynard high school students have encountered any of these instructional practices during the academic year. Pie chart percentages represent those who indicated most or nearly all students engaged in these learning activities. N = 47

Many Maynard high school students have the chance to compose a persuasive message, but fewer than 1 in 5 students get a chance to learn about the role of advertising revenues as the heart of the business model for media industries



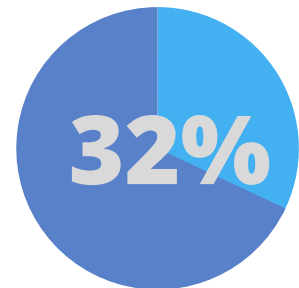
Present a Strong Point of View

Students write an article or create a media presentation that advocates for or against a specific action, using reasoning and evidence to defend their point of view.



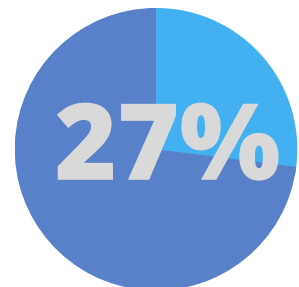
Media Law and Policy

Students learn about the First Amendment and other laws that empower them as citizens in a democracy and apply social responsibility as both creators and consumers of media messages.



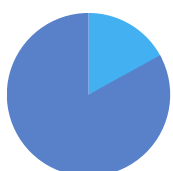
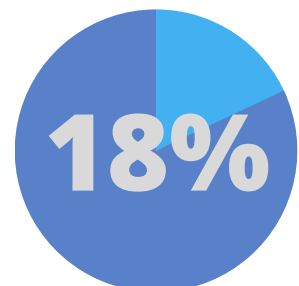
Create a Public Service Announcement -

Students choose a topic and work collaboratively to create a public service campaign designed to raise awareness, promote a cause or an event, or motivate people to take action in the community.



The Business of Media

Students learn about how advertising is targeted to increase its effectiveness and how selling audience attention is the way that media companies make money.



Participants estimated how many of the high school students in their schools or community have encountered any of these instructional practices during the academic year. Pie chart percentages represent those who indicated most or nearly all students engaged in these learning activities in 2020-2021. N = 47

WHY MEDIA LITERACY MATTERS

Media literacy learning experiences are important because of their value in protecting students from manipulative messages, say educators, parents, and community stakeholders

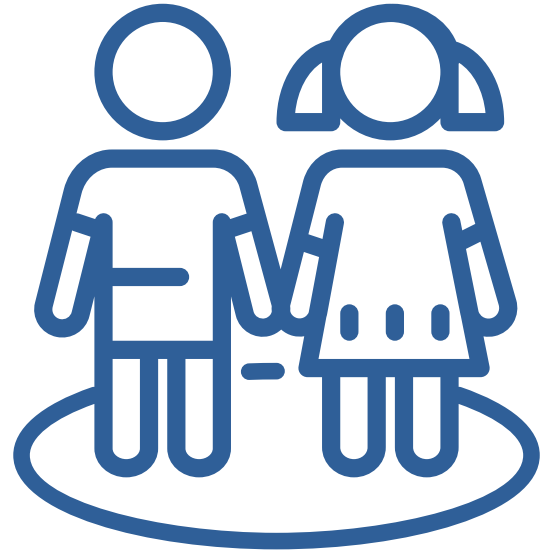
For most Maynard educators, parents, and community members, media literacy education is not understood as a fundamental part of language arts and literacy education. Instead, media literacy is viewed as a cognitive defense against a powerful form of manipulation. As these participants explained:

Students should learn how to analyze... how media informs our worldview, especially since they spend most of their days online; soundbite news that they receive is generated by an algorithm and "echo chambers" can and do result. The more they are aware of this and learn how to recognize this implicit and explicit bias, the better they'll be able to resist advertising, discern the truth from "fake news" and disinformation, and understand policy that impacts their lives directly. a story is an important skill.

- survey participant

Kids are surrounded by advertising at all times and looking at it with discerning eyes is important.

- survey participant



It is hard to recognize a narrative without understanding how stories are made, the elements of a good story, and if we cannot recognize a story, we cannot tell when we are being fed a narrative.

- survey participant

It is important that students start thinking critically about what they are watching/reading from an early age. It is important that they learn to identify why the information is being presented in a certain way and what the point of view and target audience might be.

-survey participant

CONNECTING THE CLASSROOM TO THE CULTURE

Maynard educators, parents and community members recognize the importance of learning to comprehend and critically analyze news media in school

The 'news' doesn't seem to be true journalism anymore, with all kinds of 'news' sources. And anyone can become a 'journalist' by writing something online and publishing as fact. It's even difficult for adults to decipher objective journalism from opinion written as fact.

- survey participant

I think students need more instruction on how to examine the news. This is becoming an increasingly difficult skill, but it is so important.

- survey participant

Middle schoolers should be able to determine the difference between fact and opinion because too much opinion is disguised as fact.

- survey participant

There's a tie between balancing online and offline use and examining the news. When students better understand how media can affect their mental and emotional well-being, they are better equipped to spot fake or heavily biased news stories.

-survey participant



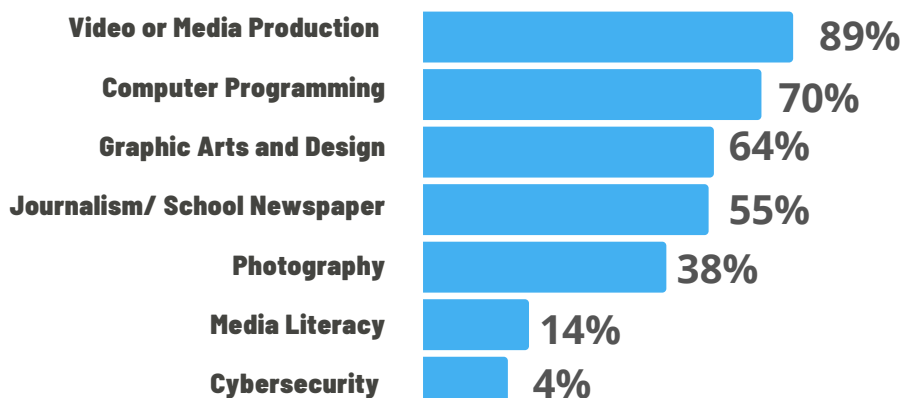
Educators, librarians, and community members also believe that students benefit from opportunities to work collaboratively to create a written or media presentation.

Team-based productions immerse students in the creation of a piece knowing that there will be an audience for it. This will help them to be strategic, thoughtful, and thorough in their approach and force them to think of all aspects of the subject and how it may be received by the audience.

- survey participant

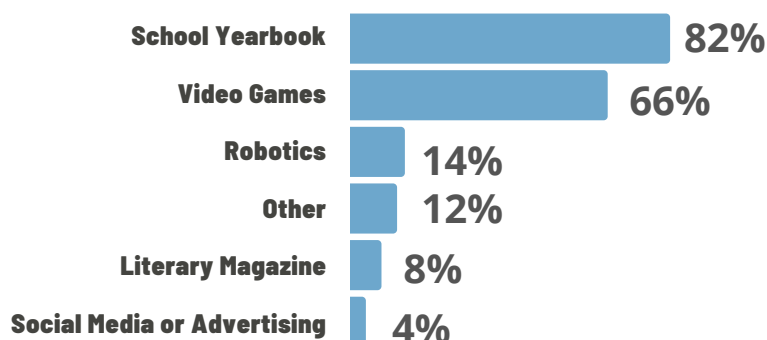
ELECTIVE COURSES

Survey respondents believe that Maynard schools offer elective courses and student clubs for students to develop media literacy competencies, but only a small number of students generally participate in these programs



Media literacy competencies may be activated by participating in these types of electives and student clubs, but such learning does not happen automatically

STUDENT CLUBS



Participants were asked to indicate which electives or student clubs were available to students in their schools or community. N = 86

Media Literacy Education

- requires active inquiry and critical thinking about the messages we receive and create
- expands the concept of literacy (i.e., reading and writing) to include all forms of media
- builds and reinforces skills for learners of all ages. Like print literacy, those skills necessitate integrated, interactive, and repeated practice.
- affirms that people use their individual skills, beliefs and experiences to construct their own meanings from media messages
- recognizes that media are a part of culture and function as agents of socialization
- develops informed, reflective and engaged participants essential for a democratic society

Core Principles of Media Literacy Education, National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE)

SCHOOL & COMMUNITY CONTEXT CHALLENGES & OBSTACLES

Attention to more urgent priorities and lack of educator confidence limits opportunities for innovation in integrating media literacy into the curriculum

For each category, participants were asked to indicate which of these challenges were most relevant. N = 86

Technology

- **wireless connectivity in the home: 44%**
- **school policies regarding mobile phones: 44%**
- access to digital devices: 30%
- limitations of space in the school: 28%
- wireless connectivity in the school: 28%
- school policies on film and video: 21%



Student Readiness

- **students lack basic skills and knowledge: 57%**
- **students not emotionally ready: 43%**
- students are too young: 28%
- students lack interest: 30%
- lack of interest in the community: 28%
- resistance from the community: 9%



School Culture

- **other priorities are more urgent: 65%**
- **not sure where it fits in school curriculum: 48%**
- **limits in educator knowledge, experience, or know-how: 43%**
- **focus on test scores in reading and math: 43%**
- no perceived need to change the curriculum: 22%
- concerns about controversy in community response: 22%
- educators and teaching staff are reluctant: 15%



CHALLENGES & OBSTACLES

What Participants Say

Fitting media literacy into the curriculum

The biggest challenge is where this topic fits in with the curriculum. I feel that only some teachers include it in their classroom activities.

- survey participant

People are unsure about how to fit it into the curriculum for their specific class and students.

- survey participant



Making media literacy a priority

Other priorities appear to be more urgent, therefore it is difficult to fit it into the school curriculum. Teachers have not had to focus on this so there is lack of experience and knowledge.

- survey participant

Need for professional development to build knowledge and confidence

No time to provide educators with proper professional development regarding implementing media literacy in all grade levels

- survey participant

I would say the biggest challenge is getting other teachers on board, since this is something that is important across the curriculum...however, many people think this is the "job" of only social studies teachers or digital communication teachers. Connected to this problem is that many other teachers might not have the background knowledge (e.g. First Amendment law, current issues in sociology, etc.)

- survey participant

RECOMMENDATIONS

It will take a community working together to develop media literacy competencies for students in the Maynard Public Schools

School Leaders

- Prioritize student media literacy competencies in district strategic goals and school improvement plans
- Increase professional development for faculty/staff and support release time for planning, coordination, implementation, and assessment
- Update policies about use of mobile technology in school to ensure that students develop skills for using their digital devices for learning purposes
- Increase parent awareness of media literacy that includes both protection and empowerment perspectives
- Gain knowledge about students' uses of media at home for information, schoolwork, and daily life at the beginning of each school year
- Use an annual family survey to increase community awareness and inform families about the full range of media literacy activities that can be practiced in the home

Educators and Librarians

- Create a district-wide cross-curricular map to develop a scope and sequence for embedding the 16 core instructional practices into PK-12 education
- Increase attention on helping students learn how to critically analyze persuasive and entertainment genres and understand the business of media
- Form a study group to review materials, research, lesson plans
- Support teachers and students in creating media to build confidence about the power of create-to-learn pedagogies for all learners

Parents and Community Members

- Offer discussion opportunities that take advantage of online resources to learn more about bringing media literacy education into the home
- Explore how media literacy competencies apply to college and career readiness
- Gain knowledge about how to use a wider range of media literacy activities in the home
- Help parents appreciate benefits and affordances of media as well as the potential risks and harms
- Promote coordination between public libraries and schools to develop media literacy programs

Public Officials and Philanthropic Leaders

- Offer town hall conversations/presentations to increase communication between school and home and leverage community expertise in this area
- Expand fiscal resources to enable schools to develop a leadership cadre in the school district to advance media literacy learning opportunities for all students
- Provide financial support through community grants dedicated to media literacy education to build connections to arts and culture programming

Media Professionals

- Showcase examples of young people, educators, and librarians who are demonstrating their media literacy competencies through creative media production

METHODOLOGY

This report uses survey data collected over 2 years to examine the implementation of media literacy instructional practices in the Maynard Public Schools

The study is designed to help schools and communities document and monitor the implementation of media literacy education locally by examining the different types of learning experiences that students may or may not receive. It also explores how differences in access to technology, perceptions of student readiness, and school culture may affect implementation.

Survey Research

After reviewing the scholarly literature in the field, we identified 16 core instructional practices of media literacy education and 19 challenges and obstacles that may be present and created an online survey. We developed a research proposal and received approval from the University of Rhode Island Institutional Research Board. We tested items with a small sample of teachers and used think-aloud protocols to check comprehension of survey items.

Sample

The student survey was distributed by high school student Gracie Gilligan as part of her Senior Project in 2022. The survey of education stakeholders was distributed by recruiting participants for the online survey during the spring of 2023. Teachers were recruited to participate during professional development time. Parents and community members were recruited through school newsletters. To qualify to take the stakeholder survey, participants certified that they were over the age of 18 and that they lived or worked in Maynard, Massachusetts. After cleaning the data, there were a total of 87 participants, including school leaders, educators, librarians, elected public officials, parents, and members of the community, but not all participants answered all questions.

Data Analysis

We analyzed survey data by performing statistical analysis and coded open-ended responses for themes. We used data analysis techniques to depict research findings visually.

Research Team. Renee Hobbs, Pam Steager, and Mary Moen collaborated to develop the survey instrument for education stakeholders. Renee Hobbs and Gracie Gilligan collaborated on adapting the items for students in Grades 4 - 12. Jean LaBelle-Pierce, Maynard High School librarian, initiated and led the survey project in the greater Maynard community. Special thanks to Media Literacy Now for connecting the Media Education Lab researchers with the Maynard community survey team.