

“Youth Access to Media and Media Access to Youth”

Statement of the Problem/Concerns

- **Millions of people rely on the mainstream media everyday perhaps without critical analysis**
 - **Concerns that youth are not portrayed positively or representative of majority of the population in mainstream media**
 - **“Youth is a voice that is largely missing from mainstream media,” according to Tom Rainey of the Los Angeles Times.**
 - **Advocates, supporters, demonstrators, activists, lobbyist, concerned citizens, and protesters – each word evoking a different image, history and stereotype of violence regarding youth’s lived experience at the Democratic Convention. Many of us were mislabeled protestors by popular mainstream national newspapers, which did not depict youth involvement accurately.**
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Research Questions:

- **What is the media's presentation of youth issues and/or youth protesters?**
- **How does the media's framing of youth, youth issues, and/or youth protesters compare to youth reality?**

Literature Review

- **Johnson, T., Braima, M, Sothirajah (1999) Doing the Traditional Media Sidestep: Comparing the effects of the internet and other nontraditional media with traditional media in the 1996 Presidential Campaign, J &MC Quarterly, Vol. 76, N.1 Spring, p. 99-123**
- **Kellner, D. (1995), Cultural Studies, Identity and politics between the modern and the postmodern Media Culture**
- **Kellner, D. (1995), Preface, in McLaren, P. et. al, (1995) Rethinking Media Literacy?: A critical pedagogy of representation, New York, Peter Lang Publishing**
- **Lunsford, D. (1999) Exploring student's perceptions of the web as an information source, Educational Technology Systems, Baywood Publishing Co. Inc., Vol. 27(4) 337-347**
- **Sellers, P (2000), Congress and the News media: Manipulating the message in the US Congress, The President and Fellows of Harvard College and the Massachusetts Institute Technology, 5(1): 22-31**
- **Waltzer, H. (1999) TV Coverage of US Party convention, Press/Politics, The President and Fellows of Harvard College and the Massachusetts Institute Technology, 4(4): 119-21**

Critical Media Literacy – Theory, Terms and Vocabulary

- **Critical Media literacy** – to obtain facts from the media text necessary: to examine, ask questions, analyze and critically dissect all the forms of culture, language, issues of power, positionality within a text that may create particular meanings, identities, and to shape and transform the material and social conditions of our culture and society; To question reality vs. perception; To examine Who are the experts on the story? What do you believe is the most accurate, reliable, and factual source of information from the different types of resources or media? To explore how their culture, society, and polity are structured and work.
- **Corporate media** – Large, city-based mainstream papers/media companies that are organized on the model of mass production and is produced for a mass audience according to genres/language used.
- **Entertainment media** – Media that is solely used to entertain and is not always factual. It is often highly pleasurable and uses sight, sound and spectacle to seduce audiences into identifying with certain views, attitudes, feelings, and positions. Consumer culture offers a dazzling array of goods and services that induce individuals - commercial gratification.
- **Language** – words that evoke history, culture, power, positionality, race, class, gender, etc. and is rarely ever neutral.
- **Insider-Outsider circle** – this was a diagram showing how the person on the inside often has the power, voice, and more access to influence the lives of the outsiders and how outsiders live and see a situation.
- **Media Optic** - How the way the media views: events, incident, facts, who are the experts, what voices and stories are heard, the complexity of a situation, or themes etc. and what effects how media views the phenomenon.
- **Media filter** – How the media interprets, filters, and frames a phenomenon with some examination of how the media's positionality, corporate structures, marketing strategies, finance backers, etc. may influence what stories are told and what voices are heard, and who benefits from the story.

Critical Media Literacy – working diagram

**Ask Questions,
Examine facts,
Issues of power,
Who are the experts?
Youth representation, etc.**

Phenomenon

**Critical
Media
Literacy**

**Media
Optic**

**Event
Facts
Resources
Experts
Voices
Witnesses**

Media Framing

**Presentation
Of story**

Of youth

Pedagogy

**Media
Filter**

**Public
decisions
are made**

Methodology

Surveys

- Created surveys for general public and the media
- Data collection took place at UCLA, the Shadow Convention, Staples Center, Democratic Live taping, Pershing Square, the Marriott Hotel, and in our communities
- Data was then coded and analyzed through SPSS computer programming

Informal interviews

- Audio taped individual speakers or interviewees who only had time to answer one of our research questions/protocols that came from the surveys.

Focus group interviews

Audiotape, videotaped, and took field notes on focus group interviews with the UCLA Media Relations, LA Times, and LA Opinion staff reporters

Guest Speakers:

- Field notes

Lived experience

- Field notes and journal entries - Personal record of our observations and lived experiences during the month of research

Newspaper analysis

- Examined 5 mainstream media papers (*USA Today*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *LA Times*, *Chicago Tribune* and community paper *La Opinion*) all printed on Tuesday, August 15th to examine how the media framed youth activists, demonstrators, and concertgoers who were asked to leave a concert/protest area by police. Concern with language, framing, main issues of youth stated, experts quoted, youth quoted, etc.

FINDINGS

SURVEYS REVEALED:

- Although local community papers/members/friends/family, National newspapers, TV News and/or radio are the most relied upon/valuable resources by individuals – the most accurate and factual resource was considered by many to be their own lived experience.

Informal interviews

- 40% Media and general public believe most recent stories or themes around youth depict that of violence, drugs, alcohol, and teens out of control. .

Focus group interviews

- Revealed that there are passive and active roles that media takes
- Some stories are pre-selected before event
- Differences in resources and investigation
- Different audiences
- Majority White middle class reporters vs. local community member people of color reporters
- Packaged information, investigation, and “If it bleeds it leads” stories

Guest Speakers:

- Provide various aspects of the community and media

Lived experience

- **Both media and police profiled youth to be violent protestors including us as we walked to the Marriott hotel.**

Newspaper analysis (Sample)

Newspaper on Aug. 15	Word Count	Coverage of youth activist/protest issues	Pictures
USA Today	Weapons – 13 Police – 6 Fire – 1 Protester – 5 Students – 0 Youth - 1	None	At nighttime, four protesters surround a fire, two with handkerchiefs covering their mouths. One protester is putting a piece of paper in the fire out of the 8000 youth at concert/demonstration area
LA Times	Weapons – 2 Police – 20 Arrest – 2 Riot – 5 Protester – 4 Youth – 2 Gas Masks – 1 Students – 2	None	Five cops of color walking in the middle of the street with riot gear preparing for any riots that may break out.
Chicago Tribune	Protester – 22 Violence – 7 Weapons – 5 Police – 27 Fire – 1 Anarchists - 2	2 issues mentioned – “Human need not corporate greed” and “Occidental Petroleum Inc.	Six LADP Police officer in riot gear with batons are on top of a protester who is trying to cover his head with his arms
LA Opinion	Protester – 2 Police – 7 Manifestantes – 12 Disturbance - 1	3 – issues mentioned – Oil drilling, nuclear weapons, spending money on schools	Three pictures – one cop hitting one person, calm protesters walking and holding signs, and a picture of other calm demonstrators

CONCLUSION

- Many of students may have a tendency to read and interact with mainstream media without questioning the perspective, the experience, the truth, the author's positionality, and the expertise of others, let alone how it might affect students in process of and identity formation, how they interact with others, or how decisions are made regarding youth, youth issues, and youth activists.
- It is highly possible that in the process of accessing various types of media (i.e. newspapers, television shows, internet, radio, etc. in addition to what they learn from peers, family members, communities, and other forms of text), many students may consciously or unconsciously question and/or learn what it means, for example, to be stereotyped and silenced in the United States from those whose language evokes a particular history, position of power, and oppression over others.
- Given media coverage and the structure of many stories will likely remain unchanged, students must be instilled with a more critical awareness of the language, social construction of identity and how race/ethnicity relations is discussed in media.
- In particular, we need to encourage students to critically think, raise questions as to what factors may affect who students think they are, what they can become, how they think of others, how students interact with others, to examine issues of power, and to analyze relationships particularly Black and Latino youth relations.
- Students need to be trained in critical media literacy and seen as experts on youth to be empowered to change our future for the better.