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Editors' Note: The Need for Media and Information Literacy in Graduate Education


Jeremy Harris Lipschultz

University of Nebraska at Omaha, jeremy.lipschultz@gmail.com

Michael L. Hilt

University of Nebraska at Omaha, mhilt@unomaha.edu

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Editors' Note: The Need for Media and Information Literacy in Graduate Education

Jeremy H. Lipschultz, Ph.D. and Michael L. Hilt, Ph.D.

University of Nebraska, Omaha

ABSTRACT

Media and information literacy perspectives could offer new justification for the expansion of graduate program offerings in a variety of fields. The interdisciplinary field of media and information literacy continues to discover new paths of research. For example, visual literacy, computer advertisements, critical deconstruction of media, distance education, convergence, video games and music videos were some of the topics explored in 2006.

The seventh year of *Studies in Media & Information Literacy Education (SIMILE)* is marked by the need for new directions in research. One area that should not be ignored is the need to incorporate media and information literacy into graduate curricula. Too often, we think of literacy as relating to primary education rather than understanding it as a life-long process of development.

At a time when graduate programs across the nation are facing pressure to assess programs in light of decreasing state aid and increasing costs (Lipschultz & Hilt, 1999; King, 1998; Parker & Drummond-Reeves, 1992; Lewis, 1988; Trott, Barker, & Barker, 1988), media and information literacy perspectives could offer new justification for the expansion of offerings. Given the media age we live in, a variety of academic programs could offer new insights about literacy and its application in a host of professional fields.

For example, there has also been discussion over the years about the value of communication theory in a professional school setting (Vocate, 1997). The business community often seems prone to disregard theory and research methods in favor of applied industry skills. Even at the graduate level, students sometimes question the need for more academically-based learning.

Nevertheless, it has been our experience in graduate seminars that discussions about deconstruction of media images and conversations about media use, such as how individuals perceive web pages, prompts new revelations for the students. The synthesis of theory and practice may spontaneously promote new ways of thinking about media and information literacy.

During the past year, *SIMILE* authors have explored a wide range of topics that help us discover new paths for researching media and information literacy. Articles about visual literacy, computer advertisements, critical deconstruction of media, distance education, convergence, video games and music videos elaborated deeper meanings about literacy. We hope that future articles will continue to explore new avenues of research while bridging to this growing body of media and information literacy literature and its dominant themes.

Journal Annual Report

In 2006, *Studies in Media & Information Literacy Education (SIMILE)* published 12 refereed articles from 16 submissions, for an acceptance rate of 75%. While we continue to identify a stream of high quality manuscripts for publication, we encourage you to assist in this process. *SIMILE* has room to publish an increased number of papers and resources available to review twice the number of manuscripts. We would not close the door to publishing innovative and exemplary research on media and information literacy produced by current doctoral students. We have occasionally accepted such articles when they meet rigorous academic standards for scholarship.

The following editorial board members assisted in reviewing manuscripts during the past 12 months: Jonathan Adams, Frank Chorba, Lona Cobb, Jeremy Cohen, John Dillon, Ross Eaman, Daradirek Ekachai, Sheila Intner, Yasmin Jiwani, Thomas Johnson, James Kelly, Colin Lankshear, Pepi Leistyna,

Carolyn Lin, Greg Lisby, Margaret Mackey, Ann Marie Major, Sally McMillan, Ali Mohamed, John Pavlik, Dan Peak, Angela Powers, Will Straw, Nancy Thomas, and Kyu Ho Youm.

Additionally, the following scholars in the University of Nebraska at Omaha School of Communication assisted in reviewing manuscripts: Chris Allen, Teresa Lamsam, Dave Ogden, Hugh Reilly and Michael Sherer.

The field of media literacy education offers one strong example of the growing interest in research. The Media Literacy Education Research Summit, for example, takes place June 22–24 in St. Louis. The Alliance for a Media Literate America is seeking “an expanded conceptualization of traditional literacy that addresses the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and produce media in all its forms.” Within this framework, researchers are interested assessment and measurement of media literacy program impact and effectiveness.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Dr. Lipschultz (Ph.D., Southern Illinois University, 1990) is Robert T. Reilly Diamond Professor and Director of the School of Communication at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. He teaches media theory, research, technology and regulation.

Dr. Hilt (Ph.D., University of Nebraska, 1994) is Professor and Graduate Program Chair in the School of Communication at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. He teaches broadcast journalism, writing, and quantitative research.

AUTHOR CONTACT INFORMATION

Dr. Jeremy Lipschultz
Reilly Professor & Director
University of Nebraska at Omaha
School of Communication
6001 Dodge Street, ASH 108C
Omaha, NE 68182-0112
Telephone: 402-554-2563
Fax: 402-554-3836
E-mail: jlipschultz@mail.unomaha.edu

Dr. Michael L. Hilt
Professor & Graduate Program Chair
University of Nebraska at Omaha
School of Communication
6001 Dodge Street, ASH 140B
Omaha, NE 68182-0112
Telephone: 402-554-4855
Fax: 402-554-3836
E-mail: mhilt@mail.unomaha.edu

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