Dear Art and Media Studies Teachers,

For over two decades, Project Look Sharp, a mission-driven not-for-profit **media literacy** organization at Ithaca College, has been collaborating with educators to provide free, inquiry-based, standards-aligned **media analysis lessons** that integrate core subject area content and skills with habits of critical questioning.

Below you will find an overview of our lessons for **secondary art and media studies** followed by an introduction to the purpose and pedagogy of our approach, ending with information about our free professional development resources for Constructivist Media Decoding.

THE LESSONS:

We currently have 154 Visual Arts lessons, 156 Film/Video Arts lessons, and 118 Commercial Arts/Advertising lessons that use question-based media analysis tied to the curriculum. For example, each of the nine units in the kits Media Construction of Peace and Media Construction of Social Justice have extensive collections of visual images and songs to teach history and critical thinking. The kit, Creativity and Aging uses clips from documentary and dramatic films to explore curricular themes. Our kit, Soviet History Through Posters, has students learn the history of the USSR through visual analysis. These are in addition to hundreds of stand-alone lessons using thousands of engaging media documents.

Below are just some our **newest lessons** for teaching **secondary level art.** Click on any title below to get a brief description and to download all the teaching materials.

Faces of COVID-19 – Artists as Activists (videos)

Google Image Searches – Do They Promote or Counter Stereotypes? (image search)

Youth, Hip Hop & Climate Change (Music Videos)

Miles Davis: Inspiration to a Masterpiece (doc. + feature film)

National Geographic's Africa (photos)

2016 Meaning in Memes (Memes)

First Contact: Who's Telling the Story? (paintings)

Time Magazine's Person of the Year – How Selections Change Over Time (Illustrations)

Mapping the Border: Who Decides? (map illustrations)

[Constructing King](#) (sculptures)

[Female Superheroes: Changing Powers Over Time](#) (comics)

[Media Representations of Working Class Men: Different Eras, Different Understandings](#) (TV + Mural)

All our lessons provide rich media documents to teach art and habits of critical thinking. You can [search](#) our lessons by grade level, subject area and keyword, and filter your search by **media type**, educational standards, and much more. For instance, filtering for *[High School + Student Media Production](#)* results in 14 hits, *[Middle School + Film/Video Arts](#)* pulls up 71 lessons, *[Illustration + Visual Arts](#)* – 87, keyword *[“Justice” + Art](#)* – 43.

CONSTRUCTIVIST MEDIA DECODING:

Our [constructivist approach](#) is particularly effective for leading reflective document-based analysis about **potentially polarizing issues**. Our lessons and methodology help students learn to habitually ask key questions; assess truth, credibility, and accuracy in media messages; and become **metacognitive** about their own thinking.

We believe that the critical analysis of all media messages - from books to blogs, paintings to *Pinterest* - must become habitual for all our students. Students need **continual practice** in asking [critical thinking questions](#) such as:

- *Who produced this for what purpose?*
- *Is the source and information credible?*
- *What are the biases in this message?*
- *How does my own identity influence how I see this?*

For this kind of self-reflective critical analysis to become ingrained, we need to have students practice this questioning, in age-appropriate ways, from kindergarten through 12th grade, and in diverse subject areas. And we need effective and **efficient methodologies and free materials** to support the integration of media analysis into the core curriculum – helping us to teach what we already teach in ways that **engage more students** more effectively.

Project Look Sharp has published over [500 media analysis lessons](#) on our website and over [70 professional development resources](#) for this purpose. All our lessons – including the lesson plans, media materials, and student handouts – are grant-funded so we can make them available **FREE for educators** through the [Project Look Sharp](#) website. All educators need to do is set up an [account](#).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES:

Project Look Sharp also has short, annotated video demonstrations of in-person and online classroom media decoding for different levels and subjects including:

- Soviet History Through Posters
- National Geographic's Africa
- WWI Propaganda Posters
- 2008 Election Magazine Covers

Our extensive free PD materials about **curriculum driven media decoding** include:

- Key Questions to Ask When Analyzing Media Messages and other handouts and posters
- Articles and webinars about Constructivist Media Decoding
- A DIY Guide for creating your own lessons

Please consider signing up for a free account to fully view our lessons and get added to our email list so that you will get periodic notices about new lessons and resources. And please pass on the word about Project Look Sharp. Together we can build a more civil, reflective and just society for all.

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