**Key Concepts for Media Literacy**

Media educators base their teaching on key concepts of media literacy, which provide an effective foundation for examining mass media and popular culture. These key concepts act as filters that any media text has to go through in order for us to respond.

**1. Media are constructions**

**Media products are carefully designed and constructed.** They are created with a purpose and from a particular perspective, **using specific forms and techniques** (codes and conventions). Media literacy works towards deconstructing (understanding) these products, taking them apart to show how they are made and exploring the decisions and factors behind them.

**2. Audiences negotiate meaning**

We all bring our own life experience, knowledge and attitudes to the media we encounter. **Each person makes sense of what he or she sees and hears in different ways.** Media literacy encourages us to understand how individual factors, such as age, gender, race and social status affect our interpretations of media and how producers of media work to target these factors.

**Demographics:** **Recognizable characteristics of media consumers such as age, gender, education and income level.**

**3. Media have commercial implications**

Most **media production is a business and must**, therefore, **make a profit**. In addition, media industries belong to a powerful network of corporations that exert influence on content and distribution. Questions of ownership and control are central because a relatively small number of individuals control what we watch, read and hear in the media.

**4. Ideological messages underpin all media**

**Explicitly (obviously) or implicitly (subtly), the mainstream media convey ideological messages and notions of values, power and authority.** In media literacy, what or who is absent may be more important than what or who is included.

**Ideology:** A world view, a system of values, attitudes and beliefs which an individual, group or society holds to be true or important; these are shared by a culture or society about how that society should function.