

Suggestions for teachers

1. *Medios y remedios* is designed to be used in a classroom or other group setting. Your computer must be connected to a video projector or large monitor, and to audio speakers, so you can display the media examples. (See the "Help" section for more information about hardware requirements.)
2. Before using the CD-ROM in class, review the information in the "Media literacy" section. You can print out all the text in this section by using the buttons at the bottom of the screen. Next, select the health topic you're interested in, and print out the questions and answers for that topic. Then preview the media examples, and decide which ones you will use in class.
3. In class, display the media examples -- pictures and movies. Play each movie several times, stopping it at key points and using the slider or the "next frame" and "previous frame" buttons to freeze important shots. Use the questions and answers to stimulate discussion.
4. Most kids -- from the youngest kindergartner to the most cynical high school senior -- are fascinated by media. It shouldn't be too difficult to get your students to watch and discuss the media examples assembled on this CD-ROM. Your challenge is to use this setting to convey accurate information about critical health issues.
5. Some teachers approach media education with the attitude that "media are bad, and I'm gonna prove it!" This approach rarely works. In truth, most media are both good and bad. Media inform and entertain us. At their best, media can broaden our horizons, and can give us important information we need to make decisions about our lives. But media can also give us incomplete, biased, or wrong information. Media can be boring, stupid, or offensive. And media sometimes encourage us to make bad decisions. Media literacy skills allow one to sort out the good from the bad, the healthy from the unhealthy. The best approach to teaching media literacy is to acknowledge the good aspects of media -- it's often funny and entertaining, for example -- while helping students figure out for themselves what isn't so good.
6. An excellent approach to teaching media literacy uses media examples to entertain and involve students. Don't be afraid to have fun with this CD-ROM! Once students are engaged, ask questions and encourage students to express their opinions. During the discussion, find opportunities to share important information about media and health.
7. Because media literacy is a set of skills, it's extremely important to get your students to interpret and analyze the media examples on their own. Don't interpret the media examples for them! The best media literacy teachers ask

questions about the media examples and solicit student responses, drawing out various interpretations. This develops the critical thinking skills that are central to media literacy.

8. One of the basic principles of media literacy holds that individuals construct their own meanings from media. Although media makers attempt to convey specific messages, people receive and interpret them differently. Different interpretations should be respected. The questions and answers that accompany the media examples on this CD-ROM reflect one interpretation of the media. These responses should be viewed as suggestions, not definitive answers. You or your students will likely have different interpretations and responses. That's great! Good media education emphasizes questioning, not preaching.

9. While this CD-ROM is designed for use with middle school and high school students, many of the media examples and discussion questions are appropriate for younger students. The CD-ROM can also be used effectively with adults.

10. Because much of the media relies on provocative, titillating or sensational images to grab viewers' eyeballs, some of the media examples included in this CD-ROM may not be appropriate for your students. Please preview all media examples before class.

11. Many of your students (or their family members and friends) undoubtedly engage in some unhealthy behaviors – eating lots of fast food or smoking cigarettes, for example. For this reason, it's important to make a distinction between people and their behavior. It's not helpful to blame individuals for making unhealthy choices. It's more useful to point out how our media culture encourages us all to engage in unhealthy or harmful behaviors, and to provide accurate information about healthy lifestyles so that students can make better, more informed choices.

12. Many of the media examples on this CD-ROM bring up issues like violence or addiction that may be quite distressing for some students. When appropriate, consult with your school psychologist or counselor, and even to request his or her presence in the classroom.

13. Some parents may not understand the concept of media literacy, and may wonder why you're showing TV commercials to their kids. Others may have concerns about media examples that touch on sexuality, violence or other topics. Before using *Medios y remedios* in class, you may want to send home a letter to parents, explaining the objectives and procedures.

14. The New Mexico Media Literacy Project offers a number of training opportunities for teachers, health professionals and others interested in media literacy. Please contact NMMLP for more information.