PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

ML3: Librarians as Leaders for Media Literacy in U.S. Schools

This $149,748 planning grant will enable **Project Look Sharp**, in partnership with the **American Association of School Librarians** (AASL) and in collaboration with the **National Association for Media Literacy Education** (NAMLE), to develop a nationwide plan for school librarians to access the training, resources and support they need to be stronger and more effective leaders of media literacy in their schools. Building on the success of the **ML3** partnership between Project Look Sharp and the **New York State School Librarian Systems Association** (SLSA), this planning grant will enable us to study the opportunities and challenges for adapting and expanding ML3 to all 50 states including preservice education. In developing this plan, we will assess and revise our existing PD resources for school librarians, pilot and revise new outreach strategies to connect with librarians and organizations nationwide, and secure partners for implementation. This initiative will be shaped by advice from key target groups through our Advisory Committee, the AASL School Leadership Collaborative, a national survey, and focus groups as we work to identify what school librarians need to work directly with students and collaborate with teachers, to prepare all students with the habits of inquiry and reflection so critical for today's mediated world.

The Need for Critical Thinking about Media Messages

Several studies have shown that teens in the United States spend on average more than 9 hours a day using different types of media - not even counting time in school or for school projects (Common Sense Media, 2015, 2019) and that the pandemic dramatically increased screen time for both children and teens (Nagata, Cortez & Cattle, 2021). While there is widespread agreement that young people should become media literate, there is no nationwide approach for training educators to integrate media literacy across all curriculum areas and grade levels. For decades experts have been pointing to school librarians as the logical building-based leaders of this work (Considine, 1986; Montgomery, 1987; Callison & Tilley, 1998; Lucas, 2021). This grant will create a scalable nationwide plan to make that a reality – addressing the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program **Goal #3** *Enhance training and professional development*. **Objective 3.3**: *training programs to build skills and expertise in developing engaging lifelong learning opportunities, cultivating critical thinking skills, and facilitating self-directed learning opportunities*.

The current **"infodemic"** of disinformation and the epistemological crisis that threatens our democracy requires our educational systems to support K-12 students in the development of lifelong habits of critical thinking that are essential to enlightened citizenship in our hypermediated digital age (Sperry & Scheibe, 2020). This understanding is reflected in many of the new state mandates and legislation promoting media literacy, information literacy and digital literacy across the nation (**Media Literacy NOW**, 2023). In their work on how young people distinguish truth from misinformation in the media, Joseph Kahne and Benjamin Bowyer studied how media literacy initiatives could help teach all students to be better assessors of truth claims in media messages. They found that successful initiatives had students: 1) consider varied perspectives, 2) justify their own opinions with evidence, and 3) reflect on their own thinking - including their own biases (Kahne & Bowyer, 2017). Since 1996, **Project Look Sharp** (PLS), a non-profit initiative at **Ithaca College,** has designed **unique and effective materials** and an **instructional approach** for integrating these habits throughout the K-12 curriculum. Building on success in providing PD for librarians and teachers in New York State, we are poised to develop a plan for scaling this work nationwide.

Integrating Media Analysis Across the Curriculum

We would not have a print literate citizenry if reading was only taught in a few grades or through occasional units of study – no matter how well taught. To develop life-long habits of critical thinking, students need continual practice in analyzing media messages, across all levels and in diverse subjects (Scheibe & Rogow, 2012). Media literacy should begin with the youngest students (Rogow, 2022), it should address issues of equity and inclusion (De Abreu, 2022), and it should teach students to be metacognitive (Kahne & Bowyer, 2017). For critical thinking about media messages to become habitual for students across the nation, educators will need to consistently use media in the classroom not only to inform and entertain, but also to have students reflect on key media literacy questions such as: *Who made this, for what purpose? Is the source credible, the information accurate? How do I know? How do my own biases influence my thinking about this?* (See Appendix: *Categories and Sample Questions for Media Decoding*). To reach all grade levels and subjects in diverse communities in all 50 states, this initiative will develop a plan to support the unique capacity of school librarians to be the building-based leaders for media literacy integration across the nation. But to do this we will need to address the issue of time.

The Challenge of Time

One thing that unites nearly all schools across the nation is the impact of the global pandemic. Workers in K-12 education report the highest level of burnout of all industries (Marken & Agrawal, 2022). This has resulted in limited energy on the part of educators for taking on new initiatives. But this is not a new concern. In 1996 when Project Look Sharp began our work to integrate media literacy across the curriculum, we were consistently told by teachers that they don't have the time – in the day, in the curriculum, in their preparation – to add one more thing! But, with the right materials and the right questions they can use media analysis to teach their core content and standards. From the start, our teacher collaborators developed lessons that used the power of media to engage all students with complex thinking and learning. This led Project Look Sharp to a curriculum-driven approach to the integration of media literacy.

Starting in 2002 we began publishing lessons that used analysis and evaluation of diverse media, from books to blogs, to teach to the core curriculum, for instance: using **cereal packaging to teach about nutrition** and advertising in 1st grade, analyzing **clickbait to teach digital literacy** skills in middle school, using the introduction to the Disney film *Aladdin* **to teach about stereotyping** in 9th grade global studies, and analyzing conflicting diagrams about **hydrofracking to teach about hydrology** and sourcing in high school earth science. In addition to teaching subject area content through analysis of these "texts," teachers ask **key questions** about authorship, sourcing, credibility, bias and more.

With funding from foundations, government grants, school districts, universities, and Ithaca College, we have been able to provide these lessons and their associated media materials totally free to educators. We currently have over **575 lessons**, tagged to 28 different subject areas (including **Library/ Information Literacy**) for Pre-K through College. We apply fair-use of copyright law to the thousands of media documents that we provide to educators with lessons, handouts and more – for critical analysis of media messages in the classroom. Research into the effectiveness of these lessons by media literacy expert and scholar Renee Hobbs (2002) concluded that educators needed professional development in leading student-centered, question-based, objectives-driven media analysis. We have since codified this approach that we call **Constructivist Media Decoding** or CMD. It is based on the understanding that students construct their own meaning, and the role of the teacher should be to facilitate student understanding – not just to stand and deliver the information.

Constructivist Media Decoding – see 2 minute video

The CMD approach addresses many key needs for K-12 pedagogy in the 21st century. It gives teachers engaging media documents, including short video clips, social media posts, paintings, songs, excerpts from articles, etc., to teach core subject area content and skills, while also repurposing the media for critical analysis and questioning. According to students, this approach is "more interactive, it's more the students doing their own personal thinking." "It allows the students to question and to think for themselves and really have their own ideas." "When you go on and you are expected to write a thesis paper, you already know how to break apart information and how to form your own opinions on it, and you know how to look at all sides." (**High School Students Speak About Media Literacy**)

The most consistent comment from students about this approach is that it teaches them to think critically. "I no longer view the world from a single standpoint, and I am able to identify and empathize with multiple perspectives. I can comprehend why individuals have certain biases, and all the while question my own." This process of learning teaches students about their own capacity for lifelong learning. "I have a newfound desire to learn as well as be aware of the world, how it is presented to me and how I perceive it. I feel better prepared for school as well as life in general." "Media literacy is different from other forms of teaching because it is literally teaching you how to learn." (Sperry & Scheibe, 2022)

Empowering All Students – see 1-minute video

By using diverse media forms in the classroom educators tap into different learning orientations, engaging more students, including Special Education and students for whom English is a new language. "Some of the students who struggled most with literacy skills and feeling comfortable participating in the classroom were deeply engaged with this lesson. The

whole class, but those kids especially, blew us away with their depth of thought and ability to analyze the media." This methodology can heighten educators' expectations of their students. "Children can be stretched even further than I expected." "Even our youngest students are capable of complex analysis of media." "This work…stretched my pedagogy in helping to teach in a style that will guide my students to more critically think about information through media decoding." "I am a much better teacher now than I was before this." (Sperry & Scheibe, 2022)

Flexibility and Adaptability
The CMD approach provides an accessible model for student engagement, objectives-driven questioning, diversification of texts, and student-centered teaching – high priorities for many administrators - and it can be easily integrated into initiatives such as **PBL**, **DEI**, and **SEL**. The lessons are designed to be adapted to different lengths of time and for different purposes (introducing a new unit, teaching core content, assessment, etc.). To provide educators with the training and support needed for this to shift toward inquiry-based teaching practice, PLS has developed and published free online PD materials, including many short annotated **video demonstrations** of CMD, handouts and posters on **Key Questions for Media Analysis** and **Creation** for different levels and languages, **articles, webinars** and a **Do It Yourself Guide** for educators to create their own media decoding lessons. PLS also has a long history of very successful **professional development**, including in-person trainings, online workshops, classes, and coaching. We recently published our second book about this work, ***Teaching Students to Decode the World*** (Sperry & Scheibe, ASCD, 2022).

Who is Targeted and Who Benefits?
While PLS has collaborated for many years with different disciplines and national educational organizations (NCSS, ASCD, NAAEE, NCTE, etc.), over time we have recognized the unique capacity of school librarians in this work. As a result, we have become leading advocates of school librarians as the leaders of media literacy, for the following reasons:
- School librarians are typically the only trained information literacy specialists in their schools.
- School librarians have unique connections to students, often all students in a school and typically over many years.
- School librarians have unique academic and curricular perspectives on all subjects and levels in their schools.
- School librarians value and practice collaboration with all educators.
- School librarians are charged with providing professional development and instructional leadership.
- School librarians see media, information, and digital literacy as their core discipline.

School librarians and preservice students in library certification programs are the proximate target of the ML3 initiative. To reach them we will be targeting school library system agencies, organizations, networks, directors, and influencers, as well as pre-service faculty and programs. The initiative will also target school administrators and, to a lesser extent, policy makers, advocating for librarians as instructional leaders in their schools. We will indirectly target the teachers who will receive media literacy resources, collaboration, and PD from their librarians. But the ultimate target of this initiative is the life-long-learning and habits of thinking of all K-12 students across the country.

ML3 in New York
In 2021 when PLS had the opportunity to apply for a capacity building grant from the Booth Ferris Foundation, we proposed and received funding for a 2-year initiative: **Librarians as Leaders for Media Literacy** – in partnership with NYS SLSA. We had worked for decades with SLS directors across the state. They understood the role that PLS could play in training and supporting their librarians in this critical work. In September 2021 we put out a request for 18 participants in the ML3 initiative. In less than 4 days we received over 100 applicants, our first indication of the great interest in this work, despite the pandemic. Over the last 18 months we have worked closely with our ML3 school librarians, librarian trainers and SLS directors through workshops, online meetings, and coaching. They have helped us to develop new materials and resources for librarians now on the PLS website, including authoring new lessons such as **Picking the Right Book for Me** (Early Elementary), **Columbus "Discovers" America: What's The Story?** (MS-HS), and **Political Memes and Bias: What Resonates, What's True and What Do We Share?** (HS).

Developing PD for ML3
Throughout the 2022/23 school year we have delivered a series of full day in-person workshops that have reached hundreds of school librarians in all regions of New York State, hosted by more than half of all NYS BOCES school library systems. The overall ratings for these workshops averaged 4.76 on a 5-point scale. We have followed up with year-long online work with ML3 cohort groups, with each participant developing an integration plan, meeting with a ML3

trained coach, leading a practice decoding, and sharing their experiences, opportunities, and challenges with their group. We currently have 6 of these groups meeting across the state. The pilots will provide PD models for nationwide scaling of ML3. We have been working with ML3 librarians and SLS leaders statewide to develop the following PD resources:

- Slide sets, presenter guides, and other resources to support school librarians in giving PD presentations to faculty in their buildings and districts and library colleagues in their regions.
- A course in Constructivist Media Decoding that can be facilitated by school librarians using in-person, synchronous and asynchronous materials.
- A series of short advocacy videos targeting school librarians, administrators, teachers, and policy makers that present and promote librarians as leaders of media literacy.

A Model for Other States?
This work has been very successful in New York with a statewide media literacy rollout for all school librarians planned for May 2023. Throughout the ML3 initiative we have been gathering feedback and insights from our librarians and the library directors on our ML3 Advisory Committee. We have identified what has worked and what needs refinement, what additional resources are necessary, and how we might continue this work in a fiscally sustainable way after the end of the grant. But what has worked in New York will not necessarily work in other states. The school library system structure in New York is not replicated in most states. To identify how school librarians can deepen their instructional leadership of media analysis nationwide, we need to study the opportunities and challenges for implementation in other states. We need to develop partnerships and collaborations with school library organizations, agencies, networks, and influencers. We need to assess opportunities for integrating CMD into library preservice programs. We need to plan how to successfully advocate for librarian leadership to administrators and policy makers in all states. We need to pilot and evaluate the best approach to reaching librarians in all 50 states, to share existing resources and promote ML3 PD opportunities. And we need to plan strategies for sustainably supporting ongoing growth of librarians as leaders of this civic mission.

Librarians as Leaders – see [1-minute video](#)
We need to communicate to teachers, administrators, and policy makers – as well as the public – that librarians can and should (and already do) play a key role in training our teachers to teach our students how to navigate the hypermediated world of information, entertainment, research, communications, and epistemology. And we need to convince librarians themselves about the role they can play as leaders of this work. A successful ML3 initiative at the national level must include a plan for how to change perceptions and grow the image of our school librarians as leaders in this work.

Preservice Education
The inclusion of CMD into pre-service library curricula is a logical component of any plan to support the next generation of librarians to be leaders of media literacy in their schools. This goal is supported by *ALA/AASL/CAEP School Librarian Preparation Standards (2019)* that specifically state:

2.1 Planning for Instruction in the library setting involves collaboration with classroom and content area teachers, specialists, and administrators (Kimmel, 2012; Montiel-Overall, 2008*). …the instructional plan is developmentally appropriate and engages learners with the curriculum through an inquiry-based approach* (Kuhlthau, 2010)

2.2 Instructional Strategies: Candidates design and develop guided inquiry activities and incorporate instructional strategies that engage learners in the process of inquiry in their learning experience. Candidates generate meaningful questions to guide inquiry and exploration.

3.2 Information Literacy: Candidates model, promote, and teach critical-thinking and the inquiry process by using multiple literacies.

5.1 Professional Learning: Candidates deliver professional development designed to meet the diverse needs of all members of the learning community.

Extensive research supports the role of school librarians as providers of professional development within their own school communities (Abilock, Fontichiaro, & Harada, 2012; Stroud, 2016).

As with K-12 education, the highly decentralized nature of teacher education provides challenges, but this planning grant will enable us to study, network and identify opportunities for integrating the CMD pedagogy, approach, and resources into preservice library education programs throughout the country.

A Unique Plan

While there are numerous initiatives with proven media literacy approaches for K-12 education, many being used by school librarians, the CMD approach developed by Project Look Sharp is unique in its scalable plan for integrating media analysis across the grades and subjects through a curriculum driven approach and materials. It is unique in its focus on the methodology of delivery, teaching educators in a student-centered, inquiry-based pedagogy that improves teaching practice. The ML3 approach is unique in its focus on professional development for school librarians to become instructional leaders in their buildings through the methodology of media analysis. This plan will be unique in leveraging and growing the institutional capacity of school librarians to become the school-based leaders of media literacy. And this plan will be unique in building on the success of this approach in one state, with a huge library of free, accessible, and proven materials, and a track record of successful professional development.

PROJECT WORK PLAN

Project Work Plan

This planning grant will build on the NY State ML3 initiative to accomplish the following over the next 2 years:
1) Convene and seek ongoing input and guidance from our ML3 National Advisory Committee and the AASL School Leadership Collaborative of superintendents and principals.
2) Assess the diverse needs and views of school librarians nationwide and promote ML3 through an interactive presentation at the AASL Conference, a national survey of school librarians, online focus groups, and other outreach.
3) Study school library systems and preservice programs in all 50 states to identify approaches and challenges for implementation, including: statewide structures, agencies, organizations, networks, standards, mandates, legislation, alignment to statewide priorities, or other leverage points.
4) Work with AASL to network and develop partnerships in diverse states for future implementation, considering both funding opportunities and the needs of under resourced regions and schools.
5) Pilot and evaluate approaches for reaching school librarians and administrators nationwide through AASL and other lists, newsletters, journals, and platforms used by regional, state, and national groups, agencies, and organizations.
6) Pilot and evaluate targeted messaging to, and website funneling of, school librarians who use the PLS website, including segmented Eblasts, new website elements, and other strategies.
7) Study, plan, pilot, and evaluate the use of diverse social media platforms and influencers to reach school librarians.
8) Remix short videos to promote ML3 to librarians, administrators, teachers, and policymakers in different states.
9) Evaluate and revise our ML3 PD resources/approaches (workshops, leadership groups, slide sets, etc.) for 50 states.
10) Pilot and revise the CMD course, for delivery online and in school settings, for use nationwide.
11) Identify opportunities for librarians to network and support each other in this work.
12) Author journal articles about the role of librarians in leading media literacy in their schools.
13) Develop a written plan for implementing ML3 nationally through work with statewide organizations/structures, pre-service librarian programs, and outreach to school librarians, schools and districts that will give school librarians across the country access to the training, resources, and support to become leaders of media analysis in their schools.

What We Won't Do

Our ML3 plan will be focused on media analysis. While media production provides rich opportunities for student engagement, at this point we do not think it offers pathways for scalability like media analysis. All teachers use some form of media in their teaching, be it books, posters, graphs, as well as videos, websites, social media, and other forms of digital media (including AI). All of these, and future forms of mediated communications yet to be developed, lend themselves to repurposing in the classroom for critical thinking as well as curriculum-driven instruction. Imagine a future where all educators habitually asked students a **key question for media analysis** whenever they use media in their instruction, and as a result, all students habitually ask those questions about their own use (and **creation**) of media.

We also recognize the importance of librarians being the instructional teachers of stand-alone media literacy classes and lessons, often dealing with issues of cyber safety, online ethics, digital citizenship, and other media literacy objectives. PLS has many free online CMD lessons on these topics. We support librarians offering stand-alone media literacy instruction and believe they are mutually supportive of our multidisciplinary curriculum-driven approach. But we do not believe that these lessons or courses are sufficient for raising a generation of truly media literate citizens who practice habits of thinking across all arenas of their lives. Therefore, the focus of this planning grant will be to support school librarians in their leadership work with their staff - as well as in their work directly with students.

The scope of the plan will be huge, embracing all 50 states and the diversity of needs and structures across the country. Including school librarian preservice programs further expands the scope of the initiative. Given this, we will not look to include public and academic librarians as part of this initiative. As we develop our plan focused on K-12 schools, we will consider the implications for the leadership of librarians in these other arenas. We also recognize that not all schools have a librarian. Part of the work of this planning grant will be to consider strategies for advocating that all schools have librarians. And we will continue to support all forms of leadership in the development of habits of critical thinking.

Timeline
See Schedule of Completion for more details.   S/O/L=Systems/Opportunities/Leaders   O/P=Outreach/Promotion

Fall 2023	Advisory Mtgs #1-3 Leadership Mtg #1	AASL Conference	Begin Study of S/O/L Begin Study of O/P
Winter 2023-24	Advisory Mtgs #4-5 Leadership Mtg #2	Focus Group #1 Plan/Revise Pilot Course	Continue Studies of S/O/L & O/P Begin Preservice Study
Spring 2024	Advisory Mtgs #6-8 Leadership Mtg #3	ACSD Conference Run/Evaluate Pilot Course	S/O/L Networking Plan Preservice Plan
Summer 2024	Advisory Mtg #9	IMLS Interim Report	Finish S/O/L Study; Begin Pilot of O/P
Fall 2024	Advisory Mtgs #10-11 Leadership Mtg #4	National Survey Social Media Plan	Continue O/P Pilot S/O/L and Preservice Networking
Winter 2024-25	Advisory Mtgs #12-13	Focus Group #2 Website & Social Media Pilots	Evaluate O/P Admins & Librarians S/O/L and Preservice Networking
Spring 2025	Advisory Mtgs #14-15	Website & Social Media Pilots Write Articles	Evaluate Networking Revise Videos and PD Materials
Summer 2025	Advisory Mtg #16	Evaluate Website Pilot Evaluate Social Media O/P	Review Videos & PD Materials IMLS Final Report

Budget Summary
Our request for $149,748 includes funds for the following:
o *Salary and Benefits for the Primary Staff* working on this initiative (including overseeing all aspects of the grant, running focus groups of librarians, presentations at the AASL conference, and conducting other research, networking, advocacy, and planning for national implementation), all of whom will be working part time on this project ($72,127)
o *Subaward to AASL* for staff members to identify and network with national partners and preservice educators as appropriate for eventual implementation, coordinate our work at the AASL biennial conference, as well as collaborating and advising on the overall project ($20,000)
o *Outside Consultants* including **Dr. Rogow** who will handle evaluation of the planning and pilot work, remixing of promotional videos by **Rhys Daunic**, other consultants to work on developing the pilot online/hybrid course and prepare publications, and some website programming by Cyrus ($17,500)
o *Honoraria and Some Travel Funds* for the ML3 Advisory Committee members who will be attending an in-person meeting at the AASL Conference ($19,890)
o *Travel and Accommodations* for primary staff to attend conferences for networking and survey collection ($5,668)
o *Vendor Table* at the 2023 AASL Conference to meet with librarians and gather survey data ($950)
o *Indirect Costs* negotiated with Ithaca College at 10% of total costs as a non-research grant ($13,613)
See the budget form and the budget justification for a detailed breakdown of the finances.

PLS and AASL Partnership
While a quarter century of work with media literacy integration has positioned PLS to be a leader in in developing librarians as media literacy leaders, this proposal would not be feasible without the resources of the American Association for School Librarians (AASL). AASL has developed the organizational networks that will enable us to study, make connections, and develop partnerships with school library organizations and leaders in all 50 states. These relationships will be essential for this implementation plan. AASL's communications networks will enable us to reach out to school librarians across the nation, getting their input, surveying their interests, and communicating about ML3 opportunities.

For this planning grant we will use AASL's knowledge, expertise and networks to pilot and evaluate outreach strategies that will be critical for successful implementation.

Project Team

- *Chris Sperry*, the **Project Director** on this grant, graduated from Ithaca College in 1979 with a planned studies major in Media Literacy. He later received a master's in education from Harvard focusing on moral development and democratic schools. For over 40 years he taught social studies, English, media studies and was instructional coach at an innovative 6-12 public alternative school in Ithaca. In 1996 he helped Cyndy Scheibe found Project Look Sharp and has been Director of Curriculum and Staff Development for more than two decades. With his experience as an award-winning teacher, school leader, PD provider, curriculum designer, international media literacy leader, and director of the ML3 Project in New York State, Chris has the background and experience to lead this national ML3 initiative.
- *Sylvia Knight Norton* has been **Executive Director of AASL** since 2013. She has a wealth of experience that will support this initiative including as a school librarian, library systems administrator and evaluator, president of multiple state and regional library organizations, a school board member, and tireless advocate for school librarians. She will bring AASL's extensive resources, networking, and experience to support all aspects of this grant.
- *Dr. Cyndy Scheibe,* the **Project Administrator** on this grant, is PLS Executive Director and founder. She is a Dana Professor of Psychology at Ithaca College and serves as coordinator of the College's media literacy minor. She is co-author with Faith Rogow of *The Teacher's Guide to Media Literacy* (Corwin, 2012), and with Chris Sperry of *Teaching Students to Decode the World* (ASCD, 2022).   Together with Chris Sperry, Cyndy has overseen more than a dozen state, federal and private foundation grants. Cyndy will bring this administrative capacity and her experience as an international leader of media literacy education to all aspects of her oversight of this project.
- *Dr. Faith Rogow* is an internationally renowned media literacy expert. She is the founding president of NAMLE and author most recently of *Media Literacy for Young Children* (NAEYC, 2022). Faith will oversee the evaluation components of the ML3 planning grant and act as an ongoing advisor to the initiative.
- *Ari Kissiloff* has been an assistant professor of strategic communications at Ithaca College since 1997 and has collaborated with Project Look Sharp for over a decade. He will work closely with Chris Sperry on piloting, evaluating, and revising our outreach and promotion strategies for ML3 and on revising the PLS website to meet the needs of school librarians nationwide.
- *Roma Matott* is a school librarian in upstate New York and a current participant in the ML3 initiative. With a background in design and online learning, Roma has been working with Project Look Sharp to develop our hybrid course, in creating infographics, and in designing and administering the PLS newsletter. For the ML3 planning grant they will support our course pilot and design materials for outreach and promotion.
- *Rhys Daunic* is founding director of the educational initiative, **The Media Spot**. He has been working with ML3 to create a series of short advocacy videos that he will revise as part of the national outreach for this planning grant.
- *Susan Allen* is coordinator for the current ML3 grant. She is a long time school librarian and faculty at the University of Buffalo's school library certification program. She will support the ML3 study and networking for preservice education nationally.
- *Louise Holmes* is a consultant on online learning for adults. She has worked with PLS for many years and will support the piloting, evaluation, and revision of the online course for this planning grant.
- *Cyrus* is the custom computer programming company that has managed the PLS website for over a decade. It's director, Jim Verhagen, will work closely with Chris and Ari on ML3 needs related to PLS website.

Hearing from Our Stakeholders

Project Look Sharp's success in developing our approach to media literacy has been based in listening well to our key stakeholders: students, teachers, school librarians and administrators. The same will be true for this planning grant.

The ML3 Advisory committee will meet at least 8 times per year with project staff (Chris, Sylvia, and Cyndy) to advise and shape the initiative, beginning with a Sunday morning breakfast gathering at the AASL conference in October 2023. The committee includes national leaders in the fields of school libraries, media literacy, preservice education, and school reform. It includes school librarians and teachers from elementary and secondary schools, rural and urban communities, from regions across the nation, and with different ethnic and racial backgrounds.

Advisory Committee:
- *Michelle Ciulla-Lipkin*: Executive Director of the National Association for Media Literacy Education
- *Michelle Coolbeth*: ML3 trained school librarian in East Syracuse, NY
- *Molly Dettmann*: librarian at Norman High School, Norman Oklahoma
- *Heidi Hayes-Jacobs*: national leader on curriculum mapping and 21st century teaching and learning
- *Melissa Jacobs*: Director of Library Services for the NYC Department of Education
- *Jennisen Lucas*: AASL President 2021-22, district librarian in Cody, Wyoming
- *Mary Kate Longeran*: middle school social studies teacher, media literacy specialist, Fayetteville, NY
- *Melina Melgoza*: former high school teacher, Los Angeles, CA, currently PHD candidate, Harvard School Educ.
- *Pamela R. Moore*: preservice specialist and Asst. Prof. of Ed. Media & Technology, University of South Alabama
- *Jamila Rhue*: librarian for Providence Englewood Charter School, Chicago, IL

We will also meet at least 3 times with the ***AASL School Leader Collaborative*** of superintendents and principals. In addition to advising on the overall ML3 initiative, they will give targeted feedback on the strategies, pilot, and evaluation of our promotional approaches for reaching school administrators nationwide.

We will begin sampling the views of school librarians at the **AASL Biennial Conference** in Tampa in October 2024, where we will have access to a national (although self-selected) audience through our vendor table, display board and face-to-face networking at the conference. We will also conduct a survey and in-person discussion near the end of our 60-minute workshop about ML3. We will then facilitate online **focus groups** in January 2024 and January 2025 to listen to a diverse group of school librarians discuss opportunities, challenges, strategies, and questions related to scaling ML3 nationwide. In between the two focus groups we will deliver a national **survey** of school librarians to get broader input on the state of media literacy in K-12 schools and the level of interest in librarians serving as leaders for PD in their schools. We will work closely with the Advisory Committee to develop the questions for each focus group, and we will seek approval from the Ithaca College IRB if the planning grant is received.

Evaluation

Evaluation will be ongoing, led by Dr. Faith Rogow. In addition to regular check-ins with project partners, staff, consultants, the Advisory Committee, and the Leadership Collaborative, there will be five major facets to our evaluation:
1. Empirical analytics – using referral links and analytics software to track the number of people who respond to various forms of outreach and messaging to determine what conduits and messages best reach the target audience.
2. Website analytics to track the activity of school librarian users on the PLS website.
3. Nationwide Qualtrics surveys to determine the level of understanding about CMD and how it relates to the broader area of media and information literacy methods, and to assess the opportunities and challenges in having librarians serve as PD leaders in their schools and districts.
4. Focus group meetings via Zoom to discuss the opportunities for engaging in CMD and PD in schools, as well as ways to overcome obstacles to implementation and to create or sustain networking.
5. Inviting feedback from the Advisory Committee and the Leadership Collaborative on key professional development resources, especially DIY resources such as the course and selected toolkits.

Tracking Our Progress

We will track our progress in a variety of ways, including:
- Bi-monthly meetings of the primary staff, with a Google Doc to record all work and decisions
- Monthly meetings with the AASL Executive Director, with follow-up sharing of meeting notes
- Monthly budget meetings with the PLS budget coordinator to track expenses
- Reports to the Advisory Committee prior to each meeting (8 times a year) and follow-up notes after each meeting
- Periodic meetings with Dr. Rogow to discuss assessment and evaluation issues
- Periodic meetings with other consultants as needed
- Periodic updating of list and map of librarians, schools, and contacts across the 50 states
- Formal assessments of grant project planned steps and accomplishments every 4 months
- An interim grant report and assessment at the end of the 1st year of the planning grant

DIVERSITY PLAN

CMD and Diversity

Effective teaching of diverse student populations is core to CMD and to PLS's materials development. It is important for students from traditionally marginalized communities to see themselves, and the issues of importance to them, reflected in the curriculum. PLS's library of free materials include hundreds of media decoding lessons that integrate diverse perspectives about a huge range of topics into the core curriculum. Like all of our lessons, they have students do the analysis free from the bias of the teacher, be it through having 1st graders analyze media messages about Ramadan (**Discovering Ramadan**) or 12th graders analyzing Twitter posts about the Seuss family decision to remove books from circulation (**Censoring Seuss: Cancel Culture or Cultural Respect?**). Our collection gives educators the resources to make thoughtful decisions about what is safe, appropriate and teaches to specific standards. While the educator chooses the media documents and questions and leads an evidence-based decoding of the texts, the students do the analysis. They learn from each other as the teacher pushes for complexity in their thinking, choosing where to probe and when to have students apply core knowledge. This academic process of analyzing and evaluating media messages can facilitate safe discussions of challenging issues, especially in classes with diverse backgrounds and identities.

The CMD approach fosters teaching for equity, diversity, and inclusion. Centering lessons around rich and varied forms of communication is effective with all students, but especially when working with students who have been disenfranchised by strictly print-based instruction. This inquiry-based approach builds student engagement, agency, and life-long learning as they decode the media that inundates their lives. Our PD protocols train librarians how to teach teachers to listen well to the meaning making of their students, to ask questions and to facilitate civil dialogue, especially about potentially polarizing issues that link to diverse identities. Our PD trains educators to cue into the emotional and cultural orientations of their students while leading media analysis that focuses on document-based evidence and self-reflective interpretations by students of diverse backgrounds and orientations.

"Do No Harm" is one of the core principles addressed in our professional development work. Media messages can be empowering and inspiring, they can be alienating and traumatizing, and they can have unintended consequences. This is part of what we must deal with as educators as we repurpose powerful media messages in our classrooms. ML3 PD will consistently addresses issues of identity and cultural perspective, along with developmental appropriateness and classroom norms. This work is ultimately about how our students, and we, interpret and evaluate social messages. Therefore, it brings up challenging but fundamental issues of how we teach, who we listen to, and how we respond to different students, their emotional experiences and their meaning making.

Listening for Divergent Perspectives

Our commitment to bringing forward different, and often divergent perspectives needs to also be reflected in our planning process for this initiative. We have attempted to bring together a diverse Advisory Committee, with additional input from administrators in the *AASL School Leadership Collaborative*. As we develop the national survey and focus groups, we will be particularly attentive to hearing different voices, including librarians new to the profession and those at the end of their careers, young and older folks, and librarians with diverse personal identities. We will also ensure that we hear from librarians who work with different populations, including students with disabilities, students for whom English is a new language, students living in rural, suburban, and urban communities, and students from all income levels. We will look at the difference in experience between elementary, middle, high school, and K-12 buildings. We will also consider the constraints and conditions that librarians work under, in schools and districts of different sizes, and in schools and communities with varied levels of resources and support. While we recognize our inability to hear all perspectives, we will continually ask ourselves what voices are being left out of our considerations.

We will reach out to get input and develop relationships that will help us to include the perspectives of special needs and underserved populations. We will use AASL's role as a division of the American Library Association (ALA) to connect with the ALA Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services (ODLOS), round tables and other ALA affiliate EDI oriented groups. We will survey the literature for school librarians and media literacy related to special education and ENL students. And we will reach out early in the grant to involve additional groups, such as the **Joint Council of Librarians of Color**, to seek advice and collaboration.

PROJECT RESULTS

A National Plan and Partnerships

The completion of this planning grant will result in a written plan documenting the study and findings regarding:

- networking across school library systems and preservice programs for national ML3 implementation,
- promotional plans and pilot results for outreach to administrators and school librarians across the 50 states,
- an outreach plan for social media platforms and influencers,
- a plan for implementing the CMD course online and in schools across the U.S.,
- partnerships and collaborators for implementation of ML3 in multiple states and with diverse populations,
- website changes, revised PD materials, advocacy videos, and journal articles to support implementation of ML3.

The plan we develop will consider a huge range of variables in how schools can best integrate media literacy through the leadership of their librarians. This will include librarians becoming familiar with the CMD process and materials through their work with students, through sharing resources, through collaborating with teachers, and through offering PD in their buildings, regions and beyond. This planning grant will identify the most efficient and effective strategies to have the greatest number of librarians and ultimately teachers entering this work, and not just from well-resourced districts or certain states. The attention of our planning will be national in scope, diverse in its targets, and effective in its impact.

Our plans will include the best opportunities for providing professional development to librarians in diverse regions of our country. It will include plans for facilitating the collaboration and networking of school librarians nationwide in growing and sustaining their role as media and information specialists. It will promote the role of librarians as instructional leaders to policy makers, administrators, teachers, and librarians. Ultimately, this initiative will enable librarians to lead an essential educational and civic mission – to have students develop habits of critical thinking about all media messages and about their own meaning making.

Sharing the Results

This planning grant will position ML3 for nationwide scalability, giving librarians across the country access to our free lessons and PD materials, and alerting them to leadership opportunities. As just one example, after piloting and evaluating the CMD hybrid course and adapting it to meet the needs to school librarians and systems nationwide, after piloting and evaluating the outreach strategies identified through this grant, and in partnership with the organizations, leaders and networks developed as part of this grant, we will be able to launch nationwide a hybrid CMD course that school librarians can use to facilitate school-wide adoption of media decoding materials and instructional methodology.

The mission of Project Look Sharp has been to provide educators with the resources and training needed to effectively integrate media literacy into their classrooms, libraries, and curriculum. This is why all our lessons and online PD materials are free. While we will limit access to some PD training materials for the purpose of quality control (providers need training to effectively deliver some PD), wherever feasible and appropriate we will provide unfettered access to our PD resources through our website. We will also write journal articles about the ML3 approach to grow the collaboration between media literacy and school library systems.

Sustaining the Benefits

Like with the current ML3 Booth Ferris grant for New York, this IMLS planning grant will be capacity building for Project Look Sharp, for question-based media analysis, for school librarians, and for media literacy nationally. The information, strategies, insights, networks, and partnerships identified as part of this grant will enable PLS to further the mission of providing more school librarians with effective training to become media literacy leaders, to provide their students with effective and engaging media literacy lessons, to collaborate with their teachers on media literacy integration, and to provide effective PD in their schools and regions. The relationships, partnerships, networking, and shared work of this grant will link the fields of media literacy education and school library services as never before. The scope and success of the implementation plan is hard to predict, but if this initiative is as well received in other states as it has been in New York, the planning grant will seed systemic changes to how our next generation thinks about all media messages.

Schedule of Completion YEAR 1 (Fall 2023 – Summer 2024)

AC = Advisory Committee   **S/N** = Study/Network   **O/P** = Outreach/Promotion   **F** = Findings
S/O/L = Systems/Opportunities/Leaders

	Sept	*Oct*	*Nov*	*Dec-Jan*	*Feb*	*Mar*	*Apr*	*May*	*Summer*
Advisory Committee Mtgs	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9
AASL Conference	X	X							
School Leadership Mtgs			#1	#2				#3	
O/P Study	X	X	X	F	X	X	X	X	X
Course Pilot				X	X	X	X	F	
Focus Groups				X	FG #1 + F				
S/O/L Study + Network	X	X	X	F	F	X	X	X	F
Preservice Study						X	X	X	X
ASCD Conference						X			
Interim Grant Report									X

Aug - Sept 2023	<u>AC</u> Mtg #1 – introductions, IMLS grant overview, ML3, CMD, PD, committee tasks <u>AASL Conference</u> – prepare workshop, display, vender table, transport, etc. <u>SN</u> – develop S/O/L study plan for 50 states including state & national structures, agencies, orgs, networks, mandates, legislation, & priorities - ID approaches & challenges for implementation <u>O/P</u> – develop initial O/P study plan for digital outreach of approaches for reaching school librarians and administrators through lists, newsletters, journals, social media, and other platforms.
Oct 2023	<u>AASL Conference</u> (10/19-21 in Tampa) – workshop, display, vender table, networking <u>AC</u> Mtg #2 – Sunday10/22 Tampa (some members virtual), orientation to plan & work, prep SLC <u>S/N + O/P</u> – begin S/O/L study, begin O/P study
Nov 2023	<u>AC</u> Mtg #3 – S/O/L study, O/P study, <u>Leadership</u> Mtg #1 – intro to ML3, CMD, ML3, plan <u>S/N + O/P</u> – continue S/O/L study, continue O/P study
Dec 2023-Jan 2024	<u>AC</u> Mtg #4 – O/P findings, Leadership report, <u>Leadership</u> Mtg #2 – advise on outreach to admins. <u>Focus Group</u> – develop plan, seek participants, <u>Course Pilot</u> – revise, prepare, recruit participants <u>S/N</u> –S/O/L study findings, network w/potential partners for implementation <u>O/P</u> – continue O/P study, seek advice and revise plan, administrator outreach
Feb 2024	<u>AC</u> Mtg #5 – networking plan & initial contacts, focus group plan, Leadership update <u>Focus Group</u> #1 – synthesize findings <u>S/N + O/P</u> – continue S/O/L study and networking, O/P pilot planning
March 2024	<u>AC</u> Mtg #6 – preservice study plan, initial findings from SOL study <u>S/N</u> – cont. S/O/L & preservice studies, cont. networking w/potential partners (incl. at ASCD Conf) <u>O/P</u> – develop digital outreach materials for pilot, develop evaluation plan for outreach <u>Course Pilot</u> – start and run pilot course, evaluate & revise on ongoing basis
Apr 2024	<u>AC</u> Mtg #7 – focus group #1, S/O/L study initial findings, networking plan <u>S/N</u> – continue S/O/L and preservice studies, continue networking with potential partners <u>O/P</u> – develop digital outreach materials for pilot, develop evaluation plan for outreach <u>Course Pilot</u> – complete pilot course, evaluate & revise, collect feedback from participants
May 2024	<u>AC</u> Mtg #8 – Leadership advice + admin. outreach plan, initial video plan <u>Leadership</u> Mtg #3 – review outreach materials and plan for administrators <u>S/N + O/P</u> – cont. S/O/L networking, cont. materials develop. for outreach, cont. preservice study
Summer 2024	<u>AC</u> Mtg #9 – IMLS Implementation Grant proposal, outreach plan to administrators <u>S/N</u> – complete S/O/L study, continue preservice study, continue networking <u>O/P</u> – revise materials development, initial outreach to librarians and administrators <u>Interim Grant Report</u> – to IMLS

Schedule of Completion YEAR 2 (Fall 2024 – Summer 2025)

AC = Advisory Committee   **S/N** = Study/Network   **O/P** = Outreach/Promotion   **F** = Findings   **P** = Pilot
S/O/L = Systems/Opportunities/Leaders

	Sept-Oct	*Nov*	*Dec-Jan*	*Feb*	*Mar*	*Apr-May*	*Summer*
Advisory Committee Meetings	#10	#11	#12	#13	#14	#15	#16
School Leadership Mtgs		#4	F				
O/P Study Librarians + Admins	P	F	X	F			
Social Media Study	X	P	P	P	P	F	
Website Revisions		X	P	P	P	F	
Survey + Focus Groups	Survey	F	FG #2	F			
S/O/L Study + Network	X	F					
Preservice Study + Network	F	X	X	X	F		
PD Materials					X	X	X
Videos				X	X	X	X
Articles					X	X	X
Final Grant Report							X

Sept-Oct 2024	<u>AC</u> Mtg #10 – update on networking, findings on preservice, plan national survey <u>National Survey</u> – out to school librarians nationally in October <u>S/N</u> – continue S/O/L networking, begin preservice networking <u>O/P</u> – pilot & evaluation outreach to admins + librarians, develop social media outreach plan
Nov 2024	<u>National Survey</u> results synthesized <u>AC</u> Mtg #11 – evaluation of admin outreach, survey results, social media & website plan <u>Leadership</u> Mtg #4 – findings from outreach to admins, focus group, implementation plan <u>S/N</u> – complete S/O/L networking, begin preservice networking <u>O/P</u> – pilot & evaluation outreach to librarians, social media outreach, develop new website pilot
Dec 2024-Jan 2025	<u>AC</u> Mtg #12 – IMLS implementation plan proposal, plan focus group #2 <u>Focus Group</u> #2 – synthesize findings <u>S/N</u> – continue preservice networking <u>O/P</u> – continue pilot & evaluation outreach to librarians, continue social media and website pilot
Feb 2025	<u>AC</u> Mtg #13 – focus group findings, pilot + eval plans for social media & website, advocacy videos, <u>S/N</u> – complete S/O/L networking, continue preservice networking <u>O/P</u> – complete pilot & evaluate O/P to admins/librarians, continue social media and website pilot
March 2025	<u>AC</u> Mtg #14 – preservice plan, PD materials revision plan, advocacy videos, articles <u>S/N</u> – preservice findings <u>O/P</u> – continue social media pilot, website pilot <u>PD Materials</u> – revise for national audience
Apr-May 2025	<u>AC</u> Mtg #15 – implementation plan including partnerships, outreach, PD, advocacy, etc. <u>O/P</u> – evaluate social media pilot and website pilot <u>PD Materials</u> – revise for national audience <u>Articles & Videos</u> – write articles, revise videos
Summer 2025	<u>AC</u> Mtg #16 – social media & website pilot findings, videos, PD materials, sustainability, next steps <u>PD Materials</u> – complete revisions for national audience <u>Articles & Videos</u> – submit articles, complete videos <u>Written Plan</u> – IMLS report and plan completed

Digital Products Plan

For this planning grant we will have the following types of digital products:

1) **Documentation of grant work** including meeting notes, study plans, pilot plans, pilot evaluation reports and findings, final written plan for scaling ML3, and grant reports.
   - Type**:** These will be in the form of Word and/or Google Docs archived in the PLS google drive, in a folder labeled ***IMLS Planning Grant****:* *https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/12etTFgeXGSngQr5wHbwTHybhBLtkvydb*
   - Availability/Sustainability**:** These resources will be accessible indefinitely to anyone with the ***IMLS Planning Grant*** link *or* upon email request to **looksharp@ithaca.edu**. We will keep back-up documents on a hard drive.

2) **Promotional materials** including Eblasts, notices, flyers, and social media posts.
   - Type**:** Many of these will be accessible on the PLS website on (or linked from) a new ML3 page. Materials not on the page will be archived in the ***IMLS Planning Grant*** folder*.*
   - Availability**:** Since these are for promotional purposes we will want them to be as widely distributed as possible, of course at no cost.
   - Sustainability**:** These resources will be accessible indefinitely on the PLS site or to anyone with the ***IMLS Planning Grant*** link *or* upon email request to **looksharp@ithaca.edu**.

3) **Web pages** related to ML3.
   - Type**:** We will be creating pages on the PLS website section related to the ML3 planning grant. We will be using the following software to run the website: HTML, CSS, PHP, Javascript, SQL
   - Availability**:** Since the materials on these pages are to inform users about the ML3 initiative, we will want them to be as widely shared as possible, at no cost.
   - Sustainability**:** These resources will be accessible indefinitely on the PLS site, with future revisions likely. PLS web site is hosted by Media Temple and is backed up regularly on a schedule.

4) **Journal articles**, periodicals TBD.
   - Type**:** In the spring of 2025 we will be submitting journal articles to multiple publications (e.g., *Knowledge Quest* and *The Journal of Media Literacy*) about the ML3 initiative.
   - Availability/Sustainability: Once published, these articles will be accessible in their entirety free of charge, indefinitely, on the PLS website on the **Articles page.**

5) **Videos - revisions** of short advocacy or promotional videos.
   - Type: In the spring of 2025 we will be completing revisions of a series of short (approximately 5 min. each) videos that present and promote the ML3 work. Our videos are self-hosted on an Amazon Web Services bucket.
   - Availability: Since the videos are to inform users about the ML3 initiative, we will want them to be as widely shared as possible, at no cost.
   - Sustainability: These videos will be accessible indefinitely on the PLS site, with future revisions possible.

6) **PD materials – revisions** of slide sets, presenter guides, flyers, etc.
   - Type: These materials will include PowerPoint or Google Slides, Word documents, and PDFs.
   - Availability: Some PD materials that do not require any prior training from PLS (e.g., those that present how to access materials on the site) will be accessible to all users free of charge from the

> PD Materials page (to be created). PD materials that require prior training from PLS (e.g., those that have presenters leading a media decoding) will be accessible to users free of charge who have the appropriate account credentials.
> - Sustainability: These materials will be accessible indefinitely on the PLS site, with future revisions certain.

7) **Online course materials** - **revisions**
   - Type: These revised materials will include multimedia elements yet to be determined (e.g., *Edpuzzle*, *Nearpod*), to be incorporated into a *Teachable* course. We will be using HTML, CSS, PHP, Javascript, and SQL to run the PLS website.
   - Availability: Course material will be accessible to participants in the CMD Course, as identified through their account credentials. For the pilot for this planning grant, this course will be made available free by invitation with participants providing feedback on specific elements.
   - Sustainability: In the future during implementation, if the course continues, we will likely need to charge at-cost for the course (e.g., to schools, districts, or educational collaboratives) and/or receive external funding.

Availability: As a mission-driven organization with the goal of supporting educators in the integration of media literacy into the curriculum, since 2002 we have provided nearly all our resources including: **580+ media decoding lessons**, **video demonstrations**, **articles, webinars**, **handouts**, our **DIY Guide**, etc. - free to educational users through the **PLS website**. For **fair-use purposes** we require users to create a free **account** to access the lessons and media materials. This verifies that the media materials will be repurposed from their original intent (commerce, education, persuasion, etc.) for the purpose of educational analysis (critique or criticism). We do not sell user data or provide it to any other organizations.

The digital materials created or revised as part of this ML3 planning grant will be accessible free for users unless otherwise stated below. Users of the PLS site will be able to access, read, analyze, and – where possible – download the work. This will include PPTs, Google Slides, Google Docs, Excel, PDFs and MP4 files. We will use HTML, CSS, PHP, Javascript, and SQL for the Project Look Sharp website.

No materials presented/promoted on our website that have a cost (e.g., books) will be related to the ML3 Planning Grant. We will continue to provide fee-for-service **professional development offerings** (such as workshops) during the time frame for this planning grant. We may evaluate the success of these events and materials as part of this planning grant, but the grant will not pay for any of those fee-for-service professional development offerings.

For quality control purposes we restrict access to certain professional development materials (e.g., slide sets, presenter guides) to users who have been through advanced PLS trainings such as a train-the-trainers workshop or course. Users with these credentials in their accounts will gain access to these materials free of charge. The materials for the CMD Course will be restricted to participants currently in the course through their account credentials. Some PD materials (e.g., slide sets, presenter guides) and materials for the CMD course - that are revised as part of this grant - will be restricted to users with the appropriate account credentials for the reasons stated above.

Sustainability: Project Look Sharp is an initiative of Ithaca College. PLS has been in operation since 1996 and we anticipate continued support from the College for hosting our website (using Media Temple and AWS), and Google Drive.

Organizational Profile

Ithaca College was founded as a music conservatory in 1892 and is today a private, four-year, residential, comprehensive college of about 5,000 undergraduate and 400 graduate students across five schools: Business; Communications; Health Sciences and Human Performance; Humanities and Sciences; and Music, Theatre and Dance. As a mid-size, nationally ranked college with more than 100 degree programs, Ithaca College offers students opportunities for personalized attention in every academic program and engagement in a wide variety of campus activities. Ithaca College also has the only interdisciplinary minor in media literacy in the U.S. (founded in 2019), drawing students from nearly 20 majors across the college.

The mission of Ithaca College is to "educate, engage, and empower through theory, practice, and performance." Under our recently adopted five-year strategic plan, Ithaca Forever, our vision is to become "a global destination of bold thinkers seeking to build thriving communities." The values of Ithaca College are: "academic excellence, respect and accountability, innovation, sustainability, and equity."

Ithaca College's library has a long history of supporting information and media literacy, and has collaborated with Project Look Sharp on multiple initiatives. The library's mission is to enhance teaching and learning at Ithaca College through the provision of flexible, diverse, and user-centered information services and resources. Their strategic priorities include developing multiple opportunities for students to acquire information literacy skills and faculty to enhance their research skills.

Project Look Sharp (PLS) is a non-profit outreach media literacy initiative of the School of Humanities & Sciences at Ithaca College, whose mission is to help K-16 educators enhance students' critical thinking, metacognition, and civic engagement through media literacy materials and professional development. Founded in 1996 by educators Cyndy Scheibe and Chris Sperry, Project Look Sharp has received both direct and indirect funding from Ithaca College, although the majority of funding has come from grants (including the Park Foundation, the Booth-Ferris Foundation, Library of Congress, the New York State Dept. of Education, and many other sources) and from fee-for-service PD offerings.

Since 2005, Project Look Sharp has provided free (grant-funded) online lessons for educators through our website. Now offering more than 580 free lessons that use constructivist media decoding to engage students and build critical thinking and reflection skills, Project Look Sharp's lessons have been downloaded by educators in all 50 states and more than 160 countries. Using a curriculum-driven approach, these lessons are designed to help educators teach core content (in social studies, science, ELA, math, health and more) and information literacy skills.

Project Look Sharp was a founding organizational member of the National Association for Media Literacy Education, and has been actively involved in state and national initiatives to increase teaching of media literacy in K-12 schools (including Media Literacy NOW and DemocracyReady NY at Teachers College Columbia University). Directors Chris Sperry and Cyndy Scheibe have given keynote addresses and led workshops for educators across the world, including Turkey, Panama, Kenya, England, Georgia, Iran, India, and Bhutan.