**Continuing in our special series of #K12Media chats, this week’s discussion will centre on Concept 2 from the *8 Key Concepts of Media Literacy*: Media Construct Reality. As a recap, last week we discussed how media are constructions. We spoke specifically about the news media as constructions.**

For a refresher on the concepts:   
<http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/teachers/media_literacy/key_concept.cfm>

**2. The media construct reality**

Media are constructions, and in turn, they can shape our reality. We, as viewers, create impressions and opinions of the world around us based on the media we are exposed to. There are places we have never visited and people that we have never met that we feel we “know” at least superficially due to exposure to media. The carefully crafted messages within media will impact, shape, and potentially distort our reality.

**Hot Topic One:**  
How do individuals interact with their environments? How much of those environments are “natural” and how much of them are mediated spaces constructed by governments and businesses? How an individual interacts with their environment is dependent on how that environment is constructed, as well as age, race, class, physical limitations, urban vs. suburban vs. rural etc. How do these factors determine our interactions within our physical environments? How are these considerations downplayed/constructed/viewed by mainstream media? How is “school” constructed by the media?

**Hot Topic Two:**  
Media construct reality that often will be consumed without question. How do stereotypes continue to be (re)created in mainstream movies? What are some of these stereotypes and what is the benefit of their continuing inclusion? What strategies can be fostered in students to help them re-shape the realities with which they are presented?

**Hot Topic Three:**  
Some public figures/famous people are more media savvy, using media outlets to their advantage. Which figures are able to manipulate this construction of their public selves? How/why do people feel connected to a famous person because of this manipulation? What is the potential fallout (for the individual, for the public) when the public persona and the personal one are disjointed? (Lady Gaga, politicians, reality stars, etc.) How do we get our students to critique and analyze the public reality being shaped and constructed?