What if you were able to track the impact that the Coronavirus is having by looking at charts that capture thousands – even millions – of news articles that cover COVID-19 globally? With the Global Media and News Tracker from Nexis NewsDesk, you are able to do just that, with updates being provided every 15 minutes. The power of machine learning is becoming exponential, and it is fascinating to get a glimpse, on a mass scale, of measures of news coverage on COVID-19. Through the Nexis NewsDesk (at https://bis.lexisnexis.com/COVID-19) detailed charts provide data – for free – on:

- The number of COVID-19 cases, the news coverage and the relationship of such coverage to the S&P 500
- The main topics that people are talking about through the news
- The amount of coverage given to COVID-19 over time
- The country or State locations where the most coverage is coming from
- How COVID-19 is impacting behavior such as panic buying or quarantine
- Top COVID-19 news stories
- The number of articles, by global region, covering COVID-19

AHA! When we combine coverage results from many different sources, we may get a different “picture” of the news than if we just rely on one source.

Ages: 14-18+

Key Question #2: What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?

Core Concept #2: Media have embedded values and points of view or omitted from – this message?
Key Question #4: What values, lifestyles and points of view are represented in –with its own rules.

Core Concept #2: Media messages are constructed using a creative language


ACTIVITY:

Divide class into groups, and assign each group one of the 7 charts provided on the Nexis COVID-19 Tracker page: https://bis.lexisnexis.com/COVID-19

Ask each group to review and discuss the chart they are assigned. What does the chart track? What does the chart tell them, what “story” does the chart convey? Why do they think so? What data is cited? What does this say? Give the groups about 5 minutes to discuss together.

Have each group share their chart and their findings. Have each group take questions and cite the evidence for their findings – why do they think so?

Then, have the same groups discuss the two media literacy questions, #2 and #4. What mathematical “techniques” might be used? What computer science “techniques” might be used? Why do they think so? What impact on lifestyles, values and points of view does this data have? What does it mean to individuals? To society?

Again, have each group share their chart and their discussion/findings. Depending upon the time a teacher wants to devote to this activity, it could take 20 minutes or it could take a week!