

Excerpts/Quotes from *Critical Media Literacy and Fake News in Post Truth America* (2018):

This edited collection is not a response to the 2016 United States Presidential Election so much as it is a response to the issues highlighted through that single event and since when incredibly smart, sophisticated, and intelligent members of our society were confused by misinformation campaigns. While media literacy and critical media literacy are ideas we've both interacted with leading up to this point, including using activities in teaching K-12 students and in methods of teaching courses we've taught at our respective universities, the need for increased attention to these issues has, we argue, never reached a flash point like the present.

Trying to write about these topics at this particular point in American history feels akin to trying to run out of a high rise hotel during an earthquake. Each step that lands finds the hallway floor in a bit of a different place than it was a split second earlier, bouncing us into the walls that may or may not be crumbling down around us. Other times it feels like the floor is altogether gone and we must suddenly leap to where a floor remains. What we meant when we said “fake news” in late 2016/early 2017 was clearly very different than what we mean now (November 2017) or what it may mean when this book is released. What we meant then was that fake news was the misinformation and literally untrue news stories that swirled in the political toilet that was the 2016 election cycle, stories with enough truth to be believable but that misrepresented—or completely falsified—the facts. A particularly famous case of this is referred to as “Pizzagate.” *The New York Times* summarizes the event in the opening to an article:

Edgar M. Welch, a 28-year-old father of two from Salisbury, N.C., recently read online that Comet Ping Pong, a pizza restaurant in northwest Washington, was harboring young children as sex slaves as part of a child-abuse ring led by Hillary Clinton.

The articles making those allegations were widespread across the web, appearing on sites including Facebook and Twitter. Apparently concerned, Mr. Welch drove about six hours on Sunday from his home to Comet Ping Pong to see the situation for himself, according to court documents. Not long after arriving at the pizzeria, the police said, he fired from an assault-like AR-15 rifle. (Kang & Goldman, 2016, n.p.)

Or, as host of *This American Life* Ira Glass lamented in the October 21, 2016 broadcast,

The presentation of facts is seen as partisan opinion, and then every day a barrage of untruths are presented as truth, and we're just supposed to suck it up. That's the moment we live in. That's our country right now. And this is going to continue after this election, no matter who wins. Like, this is the rest of our lives, I think, this post-truth politics. With so many of us getting our news from social media and from sources that we agree with, it's easier than ever to check if a fact is true, and facts matter less than ever. (Glass, 2016)

Definitions

Kellner and Share (2007), we define **critical media literacy** for the purposes of this volume as “an educational response that expands the notion of media literacy to include different forms of mass communication, popular culture, and new technologies” (p. 59) and “focuses on the ideology critique and analyzing the politics of representation of crucial dimensions of gender, race, class, and sexuality” (p. 60).

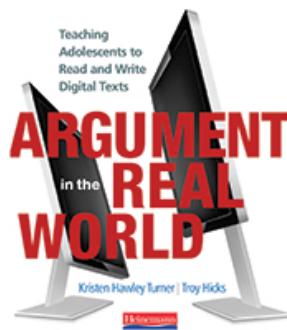
Media literacy: the ability to ACCESS, ANALYZE, EVALUATE, CREATE, and ACT using all forms of communication is interdisciplinary by nature. Media literacy represents a necessary, inevitable, and realistic response to the complex, ever-changing electronic environment and communication cornucopia that surround us. – National Association for Media Literacy Education

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How to be **MINDFUL** readers and writers of social media

- M MONITOR** your reading and writing
- I IDENTIFY** your claim
- N NOTE** the evidence
- D DETERMINE** the framework and mindset
- F FOCUS** on the facts
- U UNDERSTAND** the counterargument
- L LEVERAGE** your response



"While sharing misinformation is becoming a societal problem, there are ways to help students become mindful, critical users of social media as well as active producers of accurate information."

Created by Kristen Hawley Turner (@teachKHT) and Troy Hicks (@hickstro) for the Heinemann book, *Argument in the Real World: Teaching Adolescents to Read and Write Digital Texts* (2016)

KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN ANALYZING MEDIA MESSAGES

from The Core Principles of Media Literacy Education @ www.NAMLE.net

AUTHORSHIP

Who made this message?

PURPOSE

Why was this made?

Who is the target audience (and how do you know)?

ECONOMICS

Who paid for this?

IMPACT

Who might benefit from this message? Who might be harmed by it?

Why might this message matter to me?

RESPONSE

What kinds of actions might I take in response to this message?

CONTENT

What ideas, values, information, and/or points of view are overt? Implied?

What is left out of this message that might be important to know?

TECHNIQUES

What techniques are used? Why were those techniques used?

How do they communicate the message?

INTERPRETATIONS

How might different people understand this message differently?

What is my interpretation of this

and what do I learn about myself from my reaction or interpretation?

CONTEXT

When was this made? Where or how was it shared with the public?

NAMLE

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR MEDIA LITERACY EDUCATION