

## WHY MEDIA INFORMATION LITERACY SHOULD BE TAUGHT IN SCHOOL

*by:*

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In today's digitized world, the ability to critically analyze and navigate the vast sea of media information has become an essential skill. Media Information Literacy (MIL) refers to the ability to access, evaluate, and use media effectively and responsibly. It enables individuals to be informed and discerning consumers of media and empowers them to participate actively in the digital age. As such, MIL must be taught in schools.

First and foremost, teaching media information literacy equips students with critical thinking skills. In an era where anyone can create and disseminate information, students need to develop the ability to evaluate media sources critically. They need to discern accurate and reliable information from misinformation, fake news, and biased sources. By teaching students how to analyze media content, identify biases, evaluate sources, and fact-check information, they become more discerning consumers of media. This critical thinking skill is applicable beyond the realm of media, as it empowers students to approach information critically in all aspects of their lives.

Media information literacy also helps students become responsible digital citizens. With the rise of social media platforms, individuals have become content creators, sharing their opinions and perspectives with the world. However, this also comes with the responsibility to share accurate and reliable information. By teaching students how to evaluate media content and recognize the ethical responsibilities associated with sharing information, they become more aware of the potential consequences of their online actions. Media literacy education encourages students to consider the impact and

implications of their online behavior, ultimately fostering responsible and ethical digital citizenship.

Additionally, teaching media information literacy promotes media diversity and inclusivity. The digital landscape is filled with various perspectives, representations, and voices. However, certain groups may be underrepresented or misrepresented in media. By teaching students how media construct narratives and shape public opinion, they become more aware of the biases and stereotypes prevalent in media content. This awareness fosters critical engagement and enables students to challenge and deconstruct these biases, promoting media representation that is inclusive and reflective of diverse communities. Media literacy education empowers students to become active participants in shaping a more inclusive and equitable media landscape.

Moreover, media information literacy serves as a protective shield against the negative impacts of media. Young individuals are particularly susceptible to harmful media influences, such as cyberbullying, body image issues, and exposure to violent or explicit content. By teaching students how to critically evaluate and navigate media, they become more resilient to these negative influences. Media literacy education equips students with the skills to recognize and question the messages and representations portrayed in media, reducing the potential harmful effects it may have on their health and well-being.

Lastly, media information literacy prepares students for the future workforce. In an increasingly digital and media-driven society, employers value individuals who can navigate and critically analyze complex information. By developing media literacy skills, students become adept at sifting through vast amounts of information, identifying credible sources, and making informed decisions. These skills are essential in a wide range of professions, from journalism and marketing to healthcare and politics. Media literacy education enhances students' employability by equipping them with the skills necessary to thrive in a technology-rich, information-saturated world.

Hence, media information literacy should be taught in schools to equip students with critical thinking skills, foster responsible digital citizenship, promote media diversity and inclusivity, protect against negative media influences, and prepare students for the future workforce. By prioritizing media literacy education, we empower students to be discerning consumers, responsible digital citizens, and active participants in shaping the media landscape. It is imperative that schools recognize the importance of media literacy education and integrate it into the curriculum to prepare students for success in the digital age.

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