

## Renewing Media Literacy Education

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If you read any news story in the past year and a half about fake news, then you likely also saw a reference to media literacy. There is a tremendous interest now in providing teachers with media literacy training and students with media literacy skills.

Those news stories that called for media literacy education were referring to students' abilities to question, analyze, and evaluate what they consume from the news. In reality, media literacy is much more than just that. Media literacy is critical thinking about media messages -- including everything from propaganda to photos to advertising, social media, and videos. For more than 20 years, the National Council for Teachers of English has recommended media literacy to its members. NCTE is not alone. In 2016, the National

Council for the Social Studies passed a revised resolution on media literacy. The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, as well as the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards -- among many others -- are also on board with media literacy recommendations.

The Common Core teaching standards offer a few ideas when it comes to media literacy, but those standards are still confined to print media, when, in reality, our students are already part of the media generation and are thereby exposed to more messages in media than in print. Shouldn't we be teaching them how to close read the media too?

Many educators are not comfortable with popular culture and don't understand how bringing it into the classroom can be the catalyst to meeting teaching standards. For the most part, many educators have never received one minute of media literacy training, so they're ill prepared to teach it. Every educator who uses images and video in instruction needs to have background in media literacy.

Our students need to have experience in both analyzing and producing their own media. In many schools, we're already allowing students to use cellphones or iPads to shoot and edit photos and video. In many ways our students are already broadcasters and filmmakers, even though they've had no formal training. That alone is media production, but it is not media literacy.

Consider the type of media literacy training each teacher needs. If a teacher doesn't get the necessary training, he or she won't be prepared to tackle media. It's not too late to begin charting your district or school's path to effective media literacy education.

Visit [the Media Literacy Clearinghouse](#) online for many media literacy resources.

Also of interest with other resources to explore: [Students Won't Stop Fact-Checking Me: Teach Kids to Read News Critically](#)

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