

Special issue:

Media Literacy

IATEFL Slovenia Magazine, Summer issue 2022

in



FAKE
NEWS

REAL
NEWS

Much gratitude to the
U.S. Embassy Ljubljana and
the **Regional English Language Office**
for sponsoring the Media Literacy Symposium.

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- 4** **The Tale of Media and Reason**
(A sequel to Medea and Jason)
Milan Mandeljc
- 5** **The Importance of Digital Literacy During Pre-Election Campaigning**
Žiga Krajnc
- 6** **From a digital peasant to an informed citizen:** a path trodden by a teacher of English with 30 years of experience or a 30 year Chronicle of a living fossil with some milestones illuminated
Nina Cerkenik
- 8** **Media Literacy Symposium - My impressions**
Emir Begić
- 9** **Being a Teacher of English in Slovenia in the Age of Media (II) literacy**
Tanja Breznik
- 10** **Real Beauty is in the Eye of the Critical Beholder**
Vesna Gros
- 12** **IATEFL Media literacy symposium activity or Do the sifaka dance**
Ana Krompič
- 13** **Media literacy in the primary school English classroom**
Dolores Malič
- 14** **Fool me twice, shame on me: From April Fools' to media literacy**
Nina Jerončič
- 16** **Understanding and Teaching Media Literacy while Using Online Sources to Motivate Learners**
Anja Kogler
- 17** **Media Literacy Symposium – Reflection**
Andreja Mandeljc
- 18** **Digital media and the users – two ends of the same stick**
Nataša Makovecki
- 20** **Media Literate: Analysing Advertisements in the ELT Classrooms**
Alina Morano
- 22** **How technology is transforming teaching and learning in the classroom**
Martina Ostrožnik
- 23** **You too can have truths like mine**
Ema Ramot
- 24** **Media Literacy Symposium 2022** (an almost completely human-generated report)
Volodja Šiškovič
- 25** **The Challenges and Pitfalls of Media Literacy**
Barbara Majcenovič Kline
- 28** **“A man, though wise, should never be ashamed of learning more, and must unbend his mind.”** (Sophocles)
Katja Majcenovič
- 29** **The invaluable lessons on the value of media literacy**
Helena Miklavčič
- Teaching materials**
- The truth or truths? You too can have a perspective like mine.
 - Fake news
 - April Fool's
- Media Literacy Snakes and Ladders**
- Instruction for the teacher
 - Instructions for the students
- Bot Writer Articles**
- Step-by-step lesson plan
 - Handout 1
 - Handout 2

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Editorial

In this era of unprecedented access to information and a continuous stream of real and not so real information, we are constantly exposed to the media in its various forms and types, as well as the prevailing social media. From celebrity gossip to magazine covers, news stories and memes, social media spreads information, shapes our perceptions of the world, and even tries to make us behave or think a certain way. However, unverified information, misinformation, and disinformation on social media can cause harm by sowing confusion and drowning out accurate information.

There is no doubt that social media has become a pervasive part of our modern culture. Yet, despite the intrusion of social media into our lives, many still dismiss it as innocuous entertainment and claim that we are unaffected by its messages (Thoman and Jolls, 2013) even though research has consistently shown that individuals are influenced by the media messages they consume and that social media, at its core, actually contains messages that profoundly affect us (Hobbs and Jensen, 2019). The focus for educators, therefore, should no longer be on protecting or shielding young people from social media and its messages, but rather on acknowledging the role of mass media and its subsequent influence, while encouraging students to be competent, critical, and educated users of all forms of media.

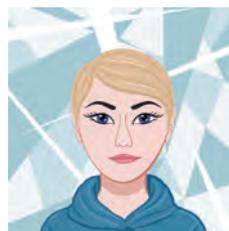
When it comes the teaching and learning of English, we can see that the global spread of English and its changing status in the world during the last decade have had an impact on how English is understood as a school subject and what it is meant to achieve. Furthermore, in the age of the Internet and a world in which media is right at our fingertips, it is critical that we make sense of the information and media landscape, consume content with a critical eye, recognise how the media shapes society's perceptions and actions, and contribute meaningfully through our own creations. It is more important than ever that students (of all ages) improve their media literacy, learn to use media knowledgeably, and think critically about the messages they constantly receive through various media.

Media literacy education (which teaches students to apply critical thinking to media messages and to use media to compose their own messages) assumes that individuals construct their own meanings from media messages based on their individual abilities, beliefs, and experiences. It goes without saying that media literacy education must have a place in all subjects, not just English classes, especially since research has shown that media literacy edu-

cation helps students discern media claims for what they are and enables them to recognise fake news (Adjin-Tettey, 2022). Attentive reading and critical thinking have always been core principles of media literacy, but in the age of social media, citizen journalists, round-the-clock news, and fake news, these skills have become even more important. In fact, media literacy is increasingly becoming an issue front and centre for English teachers. It is a skill that, along with critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, information literacy, technology literacy, flexibility, leadership, initiative, productivity, and social skills, has been identified as one of the twelve 21st century competencies that today's students need to succeed professionally in the information age (Stauffer, 2022).

The Media Literacy Symposium, kindly sponsored by the U.S. Embassy Ljubljana and the Regional English Language Office (RELO), was organized for English teachers to empower them in the area of digital media and education, to help them understand how information is produced, to recognize the role of media and the impact it has thereafter, and to reflect on their own experiences with and through media. The observations, impressions, reports, and results of group work during a four-day symposium are collected in this issue on media literacy. The issue first offers a collection of articles written by symposium participants from diverse backgrounds to inspire and empower you and your students to be more competent, critical, and knowledgeable in the use of various forms of media. The second part of the magazine contains a compilation of resources, worksheets, activities, and lesson plans that you can readily use in your classroom. The teaching materials will help your students better understand and engage more deeply with the topic of media literacy so that they become more informed, thoughtful, and responsible producers and consumers of media content.

We hope this issue inspires and empowers you to discover new teaching opportunities, enhances your and your students' understanding of today's media landscape, and helps you strengthen your students' ability to access information, analyse media messages, and competently use various forms of media to make their voices heard in the world.



Alenka Tratnik
IN Special issue editor

The Tale of Media and Reason

(A sequel to Medea and Jason)

Milan Mandeljc

In the mayhem of confusion,
paired with cellophane illusion,
dwarfed by colossal enterprises
that scream and shout in ghastly prices,
fighting storms in knightly manner,
(though no sword or no banner),
is the school with old guard teachers,
(no doubt witches and some witchers),
that see to paper when in doubt,
that see just one missing in a crowd,
and hardly stand the squeaking watches
(or their students staring at their crotches,
brightly lit and of full of news,
their brain crying of misuse).

News and posts defy the pen,
books are now of there and then,
dictionaries, who needs those?!
Check my new page, see, it glows!
New words are now right in the stir,
mix them up, add online myrrh
Java, Python, Swift and C,
how difficult could this real' B?
Why can't teachers understand
this is new times, the old's at end?
Tests and essays, forget them all,
we're digital natives after all!
Teachers heave, and work and toil,
unwrapping quizzlets out of foils...

And yet, it seems, they're never there,
one thing learnt, it's in the rear,
new apps, and arts and gadgets rise,
the school is shaded by steel high-rise...
Is this the end, are teachers gone?
Are they – click – and trash and #DONE?
From one quiet corner a cry is heard,
"Why is everything now getting blurred?"
"And why do I still feel alone,
with all the posts, dog-an-bone?"
"And why are there so many lies,
and abuses and no fewer cries?"
And what if the world is now at reach,
why do we still want and need to teach?"

The Head and teachers of Round Table,
met on Zoom, so says this fable,
and after some opening commotion,
(muted mikes are a well-known motion),
discussed the grave and urgent matter,
first in CAPTION, then some chatter,
that school shall stay, that schools are cool,
(not seeing this makes one a fool),
yet skills out there are new fresh,
and teachers strong in soul and flesh;
it's time they let the world inside
(for once inside, it will abide!)
and teach those children of 4D,
there are skills needed for esprit.

However strange and out of place,
these are giants they must chase:
Doubt and Reason, good old Proof,
(not seen in years, it's all a spoof),
there's Logic, Study and Good Use,
(let's hope they soon will get profuse),
and to see again this spring in Blum,
(without them, nothing is but doom);
Analysis and Evaluation,
will now hail the Crown Creation.
And the news and posts of Fake,
(it's a nearby contaminated lake),
were sieved through and through
and with every day, the passion grew!

The world no longer overlooked the fort
The proud would sail from its port;
and though the storms would still endure,
and trolls would leave online manure
and fake news fires would be set,
(and some politicians' tweets, I bet)
and Insta-Slender would still slander,
media literacy would be their fender!
And so it was, the realm of old,
as it was not only once foretold:
"No storm or hardship, albeit strong,
can defeat the teachers who fight along,
and that, in fact, their entire art,
resides in brain, but mostly in their hearts."

The Importance of Digital Literacy During Pre-Election Campaigning

Žiga Krajnc

In most representative Western democracies, the pre-election campaigning is the period before the election day during which the country's political parties appeal to eligible voters to be elected to office. In many representative democracies, elections are the only means whereby citizens or voters can participate and hold the political parties, candidates, and incumbent governments accountable for their promises and performance. Given that there are generally no legal or constitutional grounds for monitoring or requiring that politicians meet electoral promises, elections are often the only opportunity that citizens have to reward or punish candidates based on their integrity and performance (Electoral Transparency and Accountability). Consequently, politicians will utilize many forms of digital media as a means to publicize their electoral promises to reach as many potential voters as possible in the shortest possible time.

As stated by the Center for Media Literacy, a leading advocacy organization, media literacy "provides a framework to access, analyze, evaluate, create, and participate with messages in various forms—from print to video to the internet. Media literacy builds an understanding of the role of media in society as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy."

It is essential to inform potential voters about concepts such as misinformation, disinformation, and fake news, as these can and are usually utilized by political parties and by the pro-party individuals to besmirch and damage the reputation of their political opponents. Such examples can be seen throughout the United States and Europe. For example, the pro-Brexit UK parties ran the infamous "Red

Bus Campaign" claiming that the UK sends £350 million per week to the EU; the value they could instead pour into the NHS. Many facts checking organizations disproved the claim, claiming instead that the figure revolves around £250 million per week (See Full fact). However, they concluded that "in any case, the impact on the economy from changes to trade after leaving the EU is likely to be far bigger than savings from the UK's membership fee." (ibid.) Another example of the use of disinformation and fake news to disseminate propaganda is the "QAnon phenomenon" in the USA, which turned from a modest post on 4chan to a nationwide movement of far-right activists. Alternatively, a recent domestic example of misinformation, which directly tries to besmirch the opposing political party, is when the president of the Social Democrats (SD) Tanja Fajon claimed on national TV that the government of the then incumbent PM Janez Janša plunged the country's Freedom Index to the level of South Africa. As of writing this article, Slovenia's democracy index is at 8.37, similarly to France's (8.34). (see Freedom Index by Country 2022)

One way to combat this type of information is to implement media literacy in primary and secondary schools. We consume many types of media on daily basis, yet we receive little to zero education about how and where to look for and spot misleading information. In elementary school, there is already a similar subject called Media Education (Vzgoja za medije), but the curriculum is extremely outdated and focuses mostly on how the media works and not so much on the information itself.

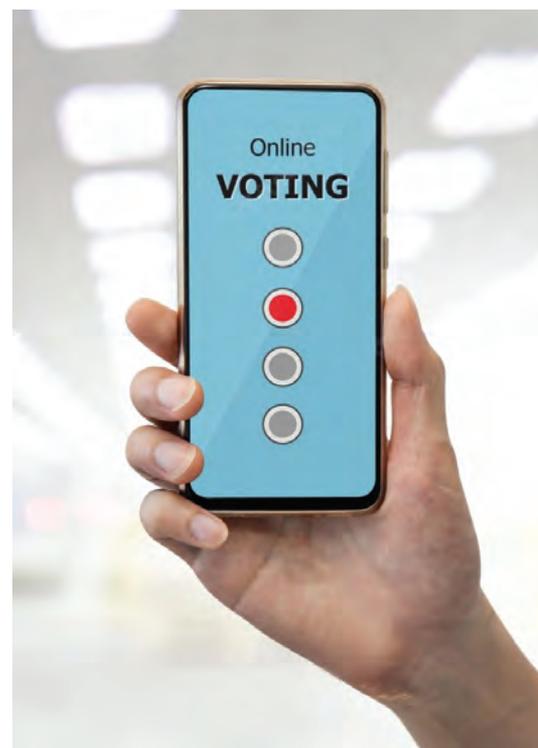
Another way to limit the scope of this types of harmful information is to educate students about their feelings, as misinformation and fake news tend to appeal to emotion rather than reason.

If a voter can correctly identify how certain information makes them feel, they will more likely spot a fake one, as they tend to be "too good to be true".

In conclusion, media literacy is an important skill to acquire because it can prevent harmful information from influencing one's voting decision.

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From a digital peasant to an informed citizen:

a path trodden by a teacher of English with 30 years of experience or a 30 year chronicle of a living fossil with some milestones illuminated

Nina Cerkvenik

To browse or not to browse

is no longer the question; nor is it a luxury or a pleasure, as it was once perceived by many. Let us be brutally honest – when was the last time you sped to your local library, school, bookshop or newsagents? Most probably the same time you wrote your last postcard. So it's been a while.

The PC vs. terminal question

We do not notice change when it creeps up on us. It is relatively easy to study changes as they occurred throughout history, not so much when we are an integral part of them or even when they come from within ourselves. As a matter of fact, I occasionally recall my university years, usually after my current students ask me a question, »What did you study, miss?« Other than English, I mean. So I tell them, Library Studies and provide them with an anecdote. This was in the late eighties – probably my freshman year, a lecturer at the Library Studies department took us round the Faculty of Education Studies library and pointed to a screen asking, »Is that a PC or a terminal?« I glanced at the screen and replied that it was a PC. The answer was wrong. That turned out to be an exam, which I passed, very much to my embarrassment. It wasn't until several years later that I understood the difference – from a first hand experience.

The question of generation

Although we often perceive the younger generation(s) to be more media literate or skilled with using digital platforms and media, this is not always the case. In the olden days, people paid more attention to who they would associate with – online behaviour exhibits fewer of these criteria. As isolation and social anxieties become more prevalent, some young people will hang out with anyone. Strik-

ingly, they find it easier to find and cultivate friends online. Older generations are more aware of the freedoms we give up to get our free lunch.

I have recently taken part in a digital exchange called the **Valiant** project where we read about and discussed the issue of the digital divide. There is now research that provides evidence which shows younger generation may frequent the digital media more, but may be less skilled in using it the smart way. In their article *Myths of digital native and multitasker*, Kirschner and De Bruyckere (2017) revisit the terms *digital natives* and *digital immigrants* in the light of digital literacy. Digital natives, a term coined by Prensky (2001), are assumed to have sophisticated technical digital skills and learning preferences for which the traditional education system is unprepared and unfit. He assumed that children "surrounded by and using computers, videogames, digital music players, video cams, cell phones, and all the other toys and tools of the digital age" understood what they were doing, were using their devices effectively and efficiently, and based upon this that it would be good to design education that allows them to do so. Kirschner and De Bruyckere (2017) go even further, presenting the findings of a report commissioned by the British library and the UK Joint Information Systems Committee which overturns the assumption that the Google generation is web-literate. Rowlands et al. (2008) concluded, "... that much professional commentary, popular writing and PowerPoint presentations overestimate the impact of ICTs on the young, and that the ubiquitous presence of technology in their lives has not resulted in improved information retrieval, information seeking or evaluation skills." (p. 308).

Furthermore, Kennedy and Fox (2013) question 1984 as the digital divide and suggest 1994 or even 2004. In a study of first-year undergraduate students at the Hong Kong University, Kennedy and Fox (2013) found that while students appear to use a large quantity and variety of technologies to communicate, learn, stay connected with their friends, and engage with the world around them, they use them primarily for "**personal empowerment and entertainment, but are not always digitally literate in using technology to support their learning**". This is particularly evident when it comes to student use of technology as consumers of content rather than creators of content specifically for academic purposes" (Kennedy & Fox, p. 76).

The question of presumptions

As teachers, then, we should not presume that young people will be selective in their usage of media platforms and groups to which they belong, but must actively prepare them for the world of digital harvesting. Would any of us give different types of personal data to a complete stranger? Definitely not. Who has the time to read all the terms and conditions before accepting them? Few. It is also a matter of perspective, of course. Younger generations have been born into a world of rights and liberties without ever having to fight for them. So it is quite possible that they take these rights and freedoms for granted – just as we take it for granted that they are competent media users.

Where does the responsibility for educating young people to be media literate begin and end? Well, as an educator, I am bound to say that it starts at school, but it should not end there. Parents should also bear some of the burden, provided they have been educated themselves. Ultimately, it seems to be a question of the chicken and egg.

Having taken part in Media Literacy Symposium sponsored by the U.S. Embassy Ljubljana, the Regional English Language Office for Central Europe and the Balkans, and IATEFL Slovenia, has been another horizon opener. Various lecturers shared their expertise on what is possible in the media world, thus raising awareness amongst bewildered participants. The more we discovered how easy it is to create and propagate bad news, fake news, of course within learning apps and educational tools, the more we appreciated the need to teach the young generations.

A most commendable resource, an international award winner, is ČASORIS (<https://casoris.si/>), presented by the editor herself, Sonja Merljak Zdovc (PhD), a well-travelled and experienced Slovene journalist, who runs the platform and media literacy workshops for children and teenagers. A real bonus for teachers of English is an article in English, usually published once a week. A small team works on educational materials and translates tools like the ESCAPE Junk News presented below – in Slovene it is called »poDVOMIŠ preden deliš?«

The questions of perspective, cognitive dissonance and ignorance

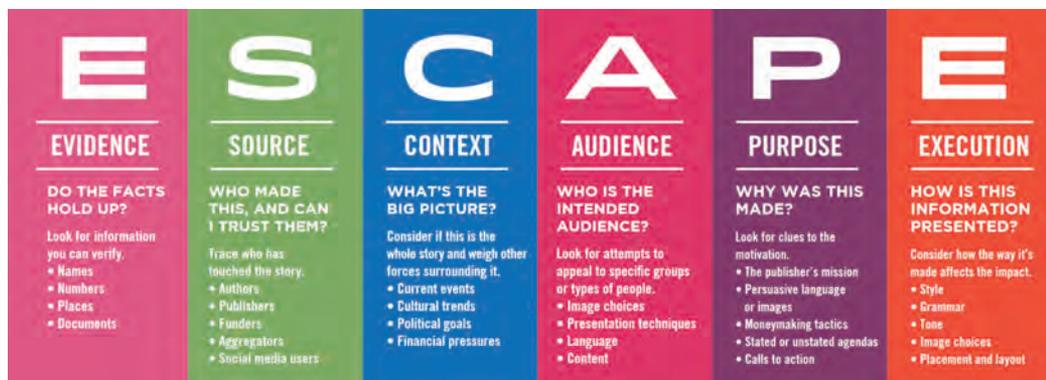
With the other issues out of the way, we came across the subject of bias. Our choices in general, in life, kick in whilst we are online deciding which source to choose, and none of us is a *tabula rasa*, so it can be presumed this bias is predicated by our millieu. No wonder we can't see eye to eye – and the algorithms just keep feeding us more and more – in that respect, it could be argued that we are digital monsters.

As if that hadn't caused enough distress and cognitive dissonance, a little research opens up new avenues. The Dunning–Kruger effect is a cognitive bias in which people with low ability overestimate their ability on a task. Some researchers also include in their definition the opposite effect for high performers: their tendency to underestimate their skills. The Dunning–Kruger effect is usually measured by comparing self-assessment with objective performance. It focuses on logical reasoning, grammar, and social skills, but has also been applied to literacy. Combined with another cognitive bias, above-average perfor-

mance, can have negative implications for society as well as a direct impact on an individual's life.

Therefore the objective has to be an informed netizen of the world, not a digital peasant. Joshua A.T. Fairfield (2017), a professor of Law at Washington and Lee University, puts it this way when discussing the ownership of smart appliances and the right to fix them, »In two years, we will not own our 'smart' televisions, which will also be used by advertisers to listen in to our living rooms. In the coming decade, if we do not take back our ownership rights, the same will be said of our self-driving cars and software-enabled homes. We risk becoming digital peasants, owned by software and advertising companies, not to mention overreaching governments.«

The next time you feel overwhelmed by the workload, making a change, or looking for inspiration, just remember this: **One** child, **one** teacher, **one** book and **one** pen, **can** change the world (Mala Yousafzai), but **not without** the aid of **social media**.



Source: <https://newseumed.org/>

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Media Literacy Symposium - My impressions

Emir Begić

The primary purpose of this writing is to present the newly acquired knowledge on media literacy. The other is to share all the interesting ideas that are especially applicable for everyday classroom use.

The symposium took place between 21 April and 24 April 2022, at Terme Vivat in Moravske Toplice, Slovenia. After arrival on Thursday and registrations, we got to know one another over dinner and exchanged pleasantries. The serious part, however, took off the next morning with the introductory session entitled Digital literacies: Media literacy. Apparently, the level of

communication has gradually evolved over the past centuries, even millennia, but really progressed in the past century. From smoke signals in the past, to modern inventions such as the telephone in 1876, the first pager in 1959, the first wireless/mobile phone in 1981, emails in 1982, to text messaging in 1992, across the IP cloud era, Skype, all the way to the proliferation of social media platforms on mobile devices as shown in Picture 1.

The presenter then moved on to explain the meaning of the DQ Framework (see Picture 2) with a special focus on digital literacy.

| | Digital Access | Digital Literacy | Digital Communication | Digital Safety | Digital Security | Digital Wellbeing | Digital Citizenship | Digital Rights |
|-------------------|------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Skills | Digital Literacy | Information Literacy | Media Literacy | Personal Cyber Security | Digital Privacy | Digital Wellbeing | Digital Citizenship | Privacy Management |
| Core Competencies | Digital Literacy | Information Literacy | Media Literacy | Personal Cyber Security | Digital Privacy | Digital Wellbeing | Digital Citizenship | Privacy Management |
| Key Concepts | Digital Literacy | Information Literacy | Media Literacy | Personal Cyber Security | Digital Privacy | Digital Wellbeing | Digital Citizenship | Privacy Management |
| Key Concepts | Digital Literacy | Information Literacy | Media Literacy | Personal Cyber Security | Digital Privacy | Digital Wellbeing | Digital Citizenship | Privacy Management |

Picture 2: DQ Framework

Being digitally media literate encompasses:

- understanding the basic structure of the digital media,
- using productivity software or applications to gather and organise digital content,
- evaluating the reliability and credibility of online information.

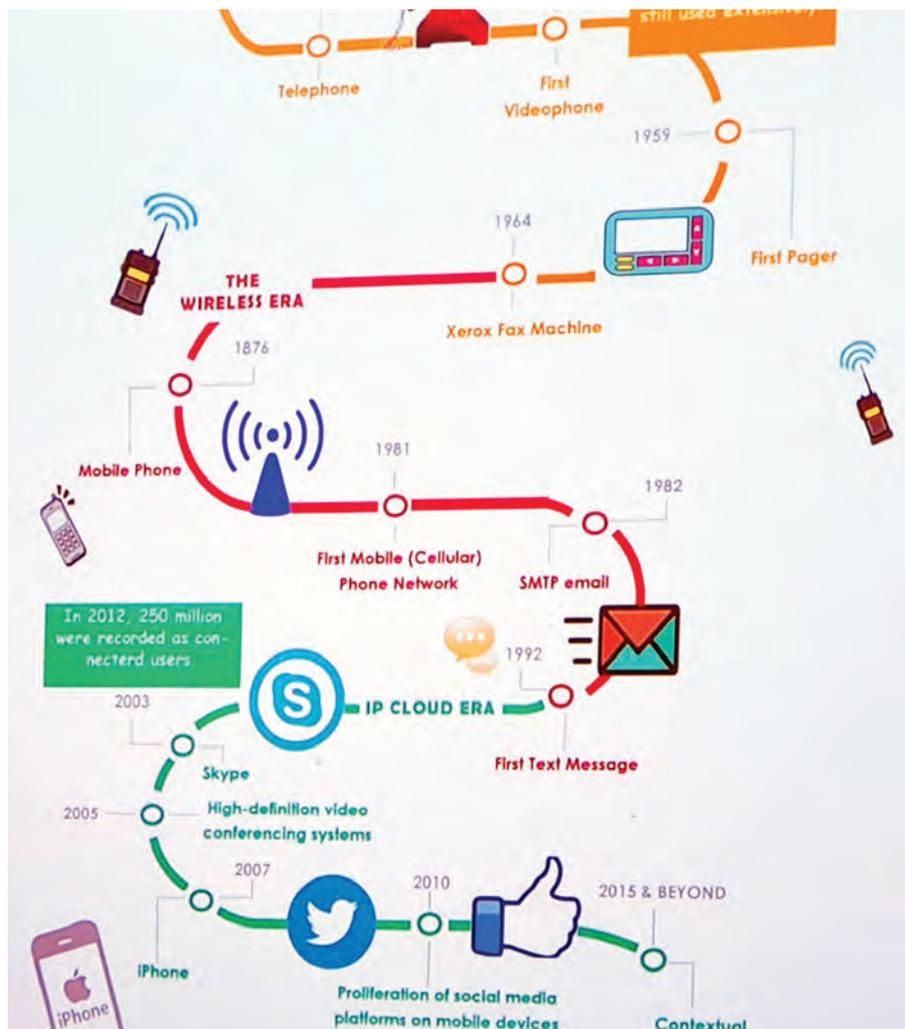
One of the more useful tools presented to us was the active poll at www.slido.com. The presenter had created a poll and asked all the participants to join in a quick survey about media use on the Internet. The participants were asked to rank the media they use most often online. The survey results are shown in Picture 3.



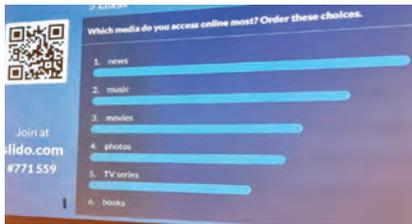
Picture 3: Active poll at slido.com

This type of a poll is particularly useful because it enables instant information from multiple participants in a very short time. Its value lies in the versatility with which it can be used, e.g., for a number of questions requiring a listing of various items in order of their importance.

In addition, the poll was accessed via a simple QR code that can be easily created using a QR generator. The QR codes have proven useful on a number of occasions where the participants



Picture 1: Media over time



Picture 4: Virtual tours at <https://artsandculture.google.com>

were given easy and quick access to various websites. One such example were the virtual tours (Picture 4) where the participants used their smart phones to access sites with interesting art and culture contents.

Another interesting highlight of the symposium was the fake news, fake videos, and deep fake technology, all of which are getting harder to debunk as technology advances. Particularly concerning is fake news, which is often a manipulated fabrication and a combination of either false, harmful news, or even both. When information is false and contains unintentional misleading content, it is misinformation. Mal-information is information that is either true or false, disseminated with the goal of achieving a negative, malicious outcome. Disinformation, on the other hand, is a combination of both: a type of false information that has the potential to be harmful. For example, a concoction of garlic and hot water as a remedy to battle the Covid-19 infection is both false and potentially extremely harmful. While it may be true that the consumption of garlic strengthens the immune system, this disinformation is harmful because it is so misleading that it may have fatal consequences.

In order to verify information, one should check if the information sounds believable. Are there any other reports on the topic, in the media and other sources? Who is the author and what is the purpose of the writing? How did they attract our attention? What is missing in the content? Is the portal reliable and have you heard of it? Is the photo or video genuine?

In conclusion, we learned that Media Literacy is the ability to access and analyse, evaluate, and create media messages in various forms and platforms as well as act upon the knowledge and insights gained.

Being a Teacher of English in Slovenia in the Age of Media (Il)literacy

Tanja Breznik

What does being a teacher of English in the age of media (il)literacy mean? For me, this means that as a teacher I have to have a thirst for knowledge and follow the news in Slovenia and the world as much as possible. I must constantly brush up on my English, and take part in seminars and symposiums designed for teachers of English. I also need to be motivated enough pass on the knowledge I have acquired to the students with enthusiasm.

I have been a teacher of English since 1997. My official career began at a secondary vocational school in Ptuj, where I taught for one year. I taught using the Headway Pre-Intermediate textbook and workbook. It was very important to me to start with Unit 1 of the textbook and do all the activities in the unit. I insisted that we covered all the tenses thoroughly. There were a lot of lessons where we practised the correct use of the tenses. I sometimes included some games to reinforce the correct use of the tenses, but looking back, I am sure I did this far too infrequently. When we read the texts from the textbooks, I dutifully put all the new words on the blackboard and explained what they meant.

In 1998 I got the position of a teacher of English at Gimnazija in srednja šola za kemijo in farmacijo Ruše. I started teaching "gimnazija" and chemistry technician programs. The textbooks that I used for students in years 1 and 2 were Headway Intermediate. In years 3 and 4, I used Headway Upper Intermediate. After a while, I realized that if I wanted to expand my students' vocabulary and improve their speaking and writing skills, I would have to start adding authentic texts from other

sources. I started buying British newspapers, the Guardian and the Independent at a newsagent's first and after a few years I started using the online editions, which I have been doing ever since. By adding authentic texts from the newspapers in my lessons, several objectives were achieved with each new generation of students.

What goals can we achieve by providing students with interesting topics from authentic newspaper articles? Firstly, the students' vocabulary is expanded. Secondly, the students' speaking and writing skills improve because after reading the text and learning the vocabulary, we discuss the topic in class and very often write essays whose titles are based on the topics from the newspapers. Therefore, students know much more about the chosen topics than they did before the topics were covered. Last but not least, by comparing and contrasting different information, by analysing content, students hone their critical thinking skills. Students learn to judge the value of information and ideas. All the above-mentioned skills also help students pass their maturity exams/end-of-school exams with higher grades than they would if we did not use authentic texts from quality newspapers.

Over the past 24 years, the level of knowledge of English among youth has been constantly increasing, especially over the past 4 – 6 years. As a teacher, I feel that I have to constantly improve my English. It is not an easy task, but at least I make an effort. Almost daily, I watch English language channels on TV for 30 minutes to one hour, especially Skynews and CNN. When I prepare a vocabulary hand-out

for my students, I make an effort to memorise the advanced-level words and try to use them in class. I try to take part in seminars and symposiums at least every other year.

Active participation in the symposium in Moravske Toplice (April 21st – 24th 2022) has truly benefited me in many ways. Sonja Merljak Zdovc's presentations convinced me that as teachers of English we should constantly remind our students to check, double check, and even triple check the facts, especially if they find them on social media. We should teach students about the dangers of conspiracy theories, so that they are not misled by them. The students should also think about the intentions of people who post stories online. Teaching our students how to be media literate is extremely important, because all of us, students and teachers alike, receive so much more information than we did 20 or 25 years ago and we have to learn how to process it. Furthermore, we have to teach our students not to share misinformation and disinformation, but first they have to be able to discern fact from fiction. Last but not least, Sonja Merljak Zdovc has reminded us how important it is not to let young people slip into passivity, and to maintain and stimulate their interest in challenging topics.

Kevin McCaughey's workshops emphasised the importance of comparing, contrasting and categorizing things. We learned that the purpose of comparing, contrasting and categorizing was not to state the obvious, but to illuminate slight differences. Another important point was that open-ended activities are desired in English lessons and that we should let our students know that we value their opinions.

Laszlo Katona's workshops emphasised the importance of different perspectives. Teaching English allows us to let students think outside the box, which is not the case in the majority of other school subjects. We should also encourage our students to think outside the box during our lessons. Laszlo Katona emphasised that by including different viewpoints, we can develop a number of skills, such as critical thinking, divergent thinking, problem-solving, and more. Moreover, our students develop tolerance be-

cause they are learning to view a problem from a different perspective. They also gain a better understanding of the world and become more empathetic.

Mrs. Nora Tartsay Nemeth stressed the importance of emotional intelligence and digital intelligence in the 21st century. While in the past physical strength and intelligence were very important, nowadays our emotional intelligence and the values we uphold are also extremely important.

In order to prevent the spread of fake news, algorithms searching for misinformation, disinformation and malinformation are being developed. However, I strongly believe that these algorithms only do one part of the job. The other part has to be done by us, the teachers, who have to educate our students about the dangers of fake news. By providing them with authentic materials and discussing important topics with them and by providing them with opportunities to write about important topics, we develop their critical thinking skills. By preparing activities that require them to compare, contrast, categorise, analyse, and evaluate facts and opinions, we also develop their critical thinking skills. The ability to think critically is of utmost importance in the 21st century and definitely leads to media literacy.

As you can see, teaching English has truly evolved over the past 25 years. At the beginning of my career, I taught mostly tenses and vocabulary, and then I moved on to teaching students critical thinking and media literacy, among other important topics. Despite the fact that I have to put in a lot of time in preparing all these important topics, my students not only enjoy these lessons more but also gain valuable knowledge that will come in handy even after they have finished the secondary school.

Real Beauty is in the Eye of the Critical Beholder

Vesna Gros

If this is not the first article you have read from the participants of the Media Literacy Symposium 2022, you have probably realised by now what an amazing and mind-blowing experience it was. Coming to IATEFL events has always been like coming home in a way for me. Yet, this event was different because we were a smaller group and worked, dined and relaxed together throughout the whole event, which brought teachers from different levels (primary to university) side by side with top-notch experts in MIL (Media and Information Literacy).

We did amazing group work and put the things we learned into practice by creating diverse and engaging teaching materials based on MIL. Once the programme was over, we kept on lingering at the venue. In hindsight, it was not only the pleasant atmosphere that nailed us there, but also the grim realization of how much fake news and data there is out there and how easy it is to create and (mis)use it. Even though we learned about different fact-checking websites (Snopes, Poynter, Politifact, Tineye), it is hard to check everything twice, three, four times, or remove the false information once it had been fed to people and the damage had already been done.

On a lighter note, I would like to share with you one of the ideas I took home from Nóra Németh Tartsay, which can be used with teenagers and younger learners as well, and that is creating avatars. An avatar is an icon or figure representing a particular person in a video game, internet forum, as a profile picture, etc. Students can easily create their avatars online with mobile phones, tablets, or computers using one of the free online avatar makers, for instance www.avatarmaker.com. You can have them do that at school and share their work via Jamboard/ Padlet, or assign it as homework and they upload it in their e-classrooms, share it via email, or bring printed out copies into class the next time. You can pre-teach vocabulary for facial features (topic: describing people) or elicit and teach vocabulary based on their avatars.



Picture: An example of my avatar created with Avatar Maker

To critically reflect on their work, students can discuss their avatars in a follow-up task, by debating:

- Why did you choose certain features of your avatar?
- What qualities were you trying to protect/hide/enhance?
- What non-human character would you choose as your avatar and why?
- Are there any features your avatar has (not) got that you would (not) like to have?
- Does your avatar have any negative qualities; why?

Learning about how students (would like to) see themselves is also a good starting point for introducing the topic of real photos of real people. Altered photos of models do not help teenagers feel good about their looks and it is important to talk about photoshop and fake faces/bodies.

Back in 2011, a global proposal was created to encourage mandatory disclaimers when manipulating bodies in advertising. Preparing a petition in the form of infographics to send a message to the fashion industry is another idea that might appeal to youngsters. However, it is not just the beauty industry, but also teenagers themselves who are exerting pressure on each other by posting perfect selfies on social media, which is another topic worth discussing.

It is important to be aware that how we perceive ourselves is not necessarily how others see us. Scan the QR code below to watch Dove real beauty sketches campaign video, which reveals that a stranger can see us in a quite different, more positive light compared to what we might think of ourselves. While watching this touching video, teens might become aware of how they are often too critical of themselves and how distorted their perceptions of beauty sometimes are. Other food-for-thought questions that cross my mind related to the same topic, are:



- Does beauty affect one's success in life?
- Is it better to be physically attractive or intelligent?
- Is it better to be physically attractive or wealthy?
- Is beauty related to power?
- Do people spend too much time and money on beauty?
- How important is beauty in your daily life?
- Do you think people should have cosmetic surgery to enhance their looks?
- Do you think it is OK to use photo filters to enhance selfies?
- Would you post your selfie without make-up on social media?
- What do you think of the proverb, "beauty is in the eye of the beholder"?
- Would you ban fake nails at school if you were a teacher?
- How much time do you spend getting ready for school compared to going out with friends?
- What is the longest you've ever worn your hair?
- What make-up would you wear on a first date/to school/on a field trip/...?
- Do you watch make-up tutorials on YT?

The ideas from this article show how you can build-up on a simple learning objective of describing people to spice things up and teach not only the vocabulary for facial features but also gently spur some critical thinking related to toxic beauty standards in (social) media. Feel free to use any of ideas and let other colleagues know how it went.

IATEFL Media literacy symposium activity or Do the sifaka dance

Ana Krompič

From 21st and 24th April 2022, the 1st IATEFL Symposium on Media Literacy took place at Terme Vivat. The aim of the symposium was to equip EFL teachers with tools in creative thinking and to understand the basic concepts of media literacy which most of our students live with on a daily basis. In fact, during COVID19, the usage of different types of applications and media became the norm of learning. The challenge for us teachers is to get to know this part of students' lives and find a balance between the smart usage of smart technology and its harmful aspects.

Throughout the weekend, the teachers took part in several workshops led by Hungarian and American EFL teachers. We learnt about the definition of media literacy, different types of digital media, fake images and news, different perspectives connected to media, fundamentals of critical thinking, science in media, and much more. At the end of the weekend, we were asked to prepare some ready-made materials in groups for other teachers to use.

The teachers I worked with in my group at the symposium came up with a board game called *Media literacy snakes and ladders*. It was designed for 13- to 14-year-olds, but it can be adapted to teach younger or older students as well. Upon returning from the symposium, I decided to immediately implement the new knowledge I had received in my classroom. I am employed in a really small rural school where parents tend to support and acknowledge physical work and disapprove and frown upon IT, digital intelligence and knowledge. So I did not really know in detail how much my students knew about the topic, but I decided to expose them to this activity anyway and see where it took me.

I chose the 8th grade to try the activity in. There are 10 students in the class, so I put them in 2 teams of five. I printed out one game sheet, gave them a

dice, and allowed them one phone per team. I asked the students to bring their phones and download the Google Arts and Culture app before the lesson.

There were several aims in this lesson: I wanted to see whether it was really possible to talk about media literacy without pre-teaching the topic first (a statement made in one of the workshops at the symposium), to get students to think creatively and critically, to work together, to listen to each other, to introduce the topic of finding sources, to check the reliability of news, etc. Right from the beginning, the students really enjoyed the game. The fact that they were given phones to use in class was an extremely good motivator. All the students participated in the activity, scanning the QR codes and finding out where they take them. The open-ended questions and tasks made them laugh as they got creative and thought outside the box. The latter was the ultimate goal of our group at the symposium while creating the game. It took us almost 90 minutes to finish the game, and after we played it, the students commented that the time flew by and that they would like to do more activities like this.

The students' knowledge of the topic was better than I had imagined. They were fairly familiar with many of the terms used in the game.

The second activity I chose to teach was a song that introduced media literacy terms using mime. I did the activity with younger students (9 and 11 year-olds) because an activity that involves movement is always a good idea. At the beginning of the lesson, we had a short discussion about whether the students have their own phones, what apps they use, whether they believe everything they see, and so on. Before learning the song, we decided on the movements for "take a selfie", "true", "fake", "use the phone", "imagination" and "clap your hands", "turn around", "Superman", "hands on

your head", "sit down" and "stand up". Remembering the many laughs we had had at the symposium, I showed the students a video of the animal "sifaka". The students also found it extremely funny and could not wait to show everyone what they thought the movement should be like. I included the movement in the song. So, I started singing the song (without any instruments) slowly, and exchanging the words in random order. After a while, I picked up the pace. Of course, there was a lot of laughter and mistakes in the movement. The "sifaka dance" did not have much connection to media literacy, but it was an invaluable part of the activity simply because it was funny. I used it as the last movement before the end of the song. The great thing about this activity is that you can adapt it to any level, you can use whichever terms you wish, the melody and the pace are completely up to the teacher, the students get to move around and it really is fun. After the song was finished, the students wanted to repeat it over and over again and after some time it has become a constant to our lesson endings.

In retrospect, I was quite wrong in my beliefs about my students' knowledge on media literacy, I was quite mistaken. The students who were not that interested in apps and IT got a lot of help from their classmates who were familiar with them, which was also one of my goals for the lesson – teamwork.

What I find shocking after completing the seminar and talking to my students is the sheer size and number of images and data that our students have to deal with every day and that it is many times difficult, if not even impossible, to determine whether those images are real or fake. After attending the media literacy symposium and learning the many activities mentioned above, I too feel more comfortable discussing and also teaching such topics.

Media literacy in the primary school English classroom

Dolores Malić

IATEFL Slovenia together with the Regional English Language Office and the American Embassy) provided a great opportunity for its members to participate in a symposium entitled “Media Literacy”. A smaller group of Slovene teachers worked together for three whole days and learnt a lot of new things that we can take back to our classrooms. I believe most teachers already use many applications, but I hope I can bring some freshness to these methods and ideas.

One of the things that you can do with your students in class is create avatars. These avatars can be used later to make up a story – you can also use any of the free online tools to create a slogan, if you want your students to design an advertisement, for example: The topic is travelling, students can design a brochure in which they can include different slogans to attract tourists (for a particular hotel or restaurant or tourist attraction). Avatars and slogans can be used when describing a holiday, for example. In this, students can use technology (even their phones, if school rules allow them), they are creative, and they use the target language, so it is a win-win situation for the students as well as their teacher.

A similar variation of this activity is to tell students to use the icons of the applications they use – here it would be useful to add some more applications, including those with which students are not familiar. These unfamiliar applications can be explained in advance, or students can create a short story by giving them their own meaning – explaining what a certain icon means in their story.

If you want to show your students the importance of using a particular colour in order to achieve a certain aim, such as power, for example, you can find the “Colour Emotion Guide” online and talk about it with your students

about this. The guide tells you which colour carries/expresses a certain emotion, and then students can then explore which world-known brands use which colour. The next step is to talk to students about the intention with which a company uses exactly that specific colour: What does it want to achieve by using this colour? Do you think the goal has been achieved or should the company choose a different colour or colours?

Another useful tool we talked about is Google Arts and Culture. It allows you to explore arts and also play with artwork. The possibilities for using this website are almost infinite. Younger students would especially like the “Blob Opera” where the four blobs can sing various famous tunes in different cities around the world (each city offers a selection of typical music for that part of the world) and painting with music where they turn their paintbrushes into musical instruments. The site also offers some historical moments that you can see in a 360° view. This website was new to me. So if it is new for you too, you should check it out.

By using photos or drawings that can be viewed in more ways than one, you can stimulate students’ imagination and use them as a speaking or a writing activity. You can also vividly show them the importance of a person’s perspective. This way, you also help students achieve and develop their sense of empathy, their willingness to see another point of view, to compromise, and to express their opinions respectfully.

To teach and/or encourage critical thinking in students, you can use photos that are part of everyday news. We have found how hard it is sometimes to decide whether a photo is fake or real. To help students with this, there are different online tools you can use, such as TinEye. TinEye helps you find out where an image

appears online. This way you can get more information about a photo and decide if it is an original. Determining whether a photo is fake or real is also part of teaching students how to check if a piece of news is real or fake. It seems that this skill is becoming more and more important in today’s world full of fake news and companies and individuals trying to influence people by distorting reality to suit their needs and ambitions.

Dr. Sonja Merkljak Zdovc, editor-in-chief of Časoris, explained about fake news. She told us what things we can and should pay attention to in order to decide whether a piece of news is real or fake. If you do not know Časoris yet, let me give you a short description. Časoris is a Slovene online newspaper or magazine for children. The journalists who write for it are all reliable and they respect their audience, i.e. children. They are well aware of their position and responsibility to bring the news to children in a child-friendly and realist way. They also warn about the negative sides of using the Internet and give emphasis to online safety. They also offer some articles in English, making them even more suitable for use in an English classroom – the teacher does not need to translate them. The magazine covers various topics; the articles can be used as a warm-up activity or provide some food for thought.

All in all, my experience with this symposium has been nothing but positive. I got a lot of new ideas that I will definitely try out in my classes. I also met some new people and had a great time talking to adults in English after a long (Covid-related) time again.

Fool me twice, shame on me: From April Fools' to media literacy

Nina Jerončič

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I have been a teacher for nearly a decade, but was drawn to teaching and languages all my life. Although I have worked with different ages and levels, most of my experience comes from teaching young learners and teens at primary level. Growing up, my favourite book character was Pippi Longstocking with her endless curiosity and untameable spark. She never wanted to be a boring old adult, and with children around me, I can tap into my inner Pippi every day.



Fake news is all around us. It's an incontrovertible fact in 2022 that social media has many of us living in our own personal information bubble. The reliability even of traditional media (print, radio and television) is in decline; the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights expressed in 2021 their worry over "the marked deterioration of freedom of expression and of the media in Slovenia". The current climate has made many sceptical about various news sources but some, inevitably, are not sceptical enough. However, there is one day of the year when we all show a little more critical thinking towards what we hear and see – April Fools' – and there are many lessons we can draw from this day in thinking more critically and promoting media literacy.

Friday 1st April, 2022 was a fairly uneventful April Fools' Day for me this year. None of the children at school even tried to prank me. And the pranks I saw them trying with each other didn't really hit the mark. A co-worker had me fooled for a second with a gag about the police doing a background check on him in connection with a visit from the Ministry of Education we were receiving that day. All in all, though, I was quite certain I wouldn't be fooled so easily after that one. That evening, I came to the victorious conclusion that I had, in fact, remained un-fooled for the rest of the day. I went to bed feeling rather proud of myself.

The first thing I did on Saturday, the following day, was to check my social media. I hadn't been scrolling through Facebook for long before I came across a post by Perpetuum Jazzile, the famous Slovenian choir group. They had excitedly shared news of an impending collaboration with Ed Sheeran, who had discovered them covering one of his songs through an Instagram Story. I was thrilled. I love the group and I LOVE Ed Sheeran. So naturally, I wanted to hear that cover.

I tried YouTube. No hits. Instagram. No post with the song, and no archived version of the story. I turned to Google, which led me to a video of an interview with the group about the previous day's revelation. The interview was a part of POP IN, a segment of POP TV's news show, 24ur. But still, you couldn't hear the song that had led to this momentous meeting of musical minds! By this time, I was properly irritated. I just wanted to hear a cover of a song I liked. So, I decided I'd just have to listen to the original.

So, I did. Later that day, I opened Facebook again, only to find another post by Perpetuum Jazzile declaring that it had all been an April Fools' joke. I was so mad, mostly at myself.

I had fallen for an April Fools' joke on 2nd April, a day late. How lame is that? What's more, I had been so close to coming to the conclusion that something wasn't right with that news story. After all, what artist wouldn't want to showcase a song that had got them noticed by such a big star? I had researched the news and, despite finding a lack of evidence, had still bought it hook, line and sinker.

It made me wonder whether this would have happened the day before, when my mind was still set on not believing everything I heard. Later in the month, while attending the 2022 Media Literacy Symposium, and listening to Sonja Merljak Zdovc talk about fake news and how to recognise it, I was reminded of my own April foolishness. If we were all more vigilant and more critical of things published in media or posted online, how different would the world be?

April Fools' hoaxes have been a staple for many traditional media, with one of the most famous examples according to Little (2019) being the Swiss Spaghetti Harvest, a spoof documentary by the BBC about people in Switzerland growing pasta. Slovenian media is no exception, and you can find hoaxes in print media, online news websites, and in TV and radio programmes. However, according to Sonja Merljak Zdovc (2022), such hoaxes are not as popular as in the past, given that the prevalence of fake news has made the tradition of publishing April Fools' hoaxes morally questionable. In 2020 and 2021, for example, 24ur publicly announced that they weren't going to print an April Fools' joke, considering the pandemic situation at the time (Zver, 2021). It is interesting, however, that they deemed the second month of the war in Ukraine a good time to reintroduce this tradition with the Perpetuum Jazzile spoof.

Certainly, we're not yet seeing an end April Fool's jokes, and they may even

offer an insight into how fake news works. A study published in 2019 compared the language of fake news articles, April Fools' articles and real news articles, and found a lot of similarities between the features of fake news and spoof articles, with an algorithm based on a corpus of both being similarly accurate in determining the veracity of various articles. The implications here are interesting, as these findings could be used to build a better algorithm; one capable of assuming the Sisyphean task of fact-checking the internet.

It may be some time before such an algorithm is deployed (if, indeed, it ever is). So, in the meantime, we educators have a duty to equip our students to read between the lines and be critical of the information presented to them. "In an ideal world, fake news would've killed April Fools' Day – we would all be so discerning and digitally literate that we wouldn't trust anything we read online without doing our own research," said the owner of a parody news site while observing that, unfortunately, everyone is still much too gullible for this to be the case (Tait, 2019). But in the English classroom, we have an opportunity to empower and educate our students on how to recognize a spoof story – and not just assume everyone is digitally literate enough to spot them from a mile away. This is where Merljak Zdovc's (2019) criteria for fake news come in; they can be used to check for fake and spoof articles:

- Is the article plausible?
- Has it been reported on by other media?
- Who is the author?

- How did it get your attention?
- What is the purpose?
- What is missing?
- Are the photos and videos fake?
- Is the portal trustworthy?

With April Fools' articles being their own genre, we can add some extra criteria:

- Are the names of authors or other people in the article common? Can they be anagrams for something? Or a translation from a different language?
- Are there any obvious word plays in the text?
- Is the topic very humorous?
- Is there an online version of the article? Is there a redaction or an admission of its being a spoof?
- Are any parts of the text true, therefore making the whole piece seem more believable?

Another set of criteria for predicting spoof stories and fake news can be based on the Dearden and Baron (2019) study:

- Are the articles short?
- Are they easy to read?
- Do they use more first-person pronouns?
- Are dates and times more vaguely mentioned?
- Is the language simplistic and less formal (use of first names, profanities, spelling errors)?

All the above criteria can help students train their perception of news sources. In this way, reading becomes more than a simple comprehension task and, what's more, these criteria can be used with any reading comprehension. Secondary schools often

assign their students an article to read every week and every month, and by adding fake news criteria into the mix, students have more to talk about than they would taking the content at face value.

Whenever we talk about the school of the future, we mention skills and competences over content, and reading and thinking critically may just be the cornerstone of this skills-based approach. If we can take the critical awareness that many of us have that one day of the year, we can hone that skill and apply it to the other 364. Maybe then, fake news will be less likely to make a fool out of us.

PS: I have found the much-desired cover song video since. My internet research skills have obviously improved as a result of the Media Literacy Symposium.

PPS: Perpetuum Jazzile, kindly record a full version, thank you.



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Understanding and Teaching Media Literacy while Using Online Sources to Motivate Learners

Anja Kogler

Introduction

I have been teaching English at different levels ever since I graduated at The Faculty of Arts in Maribor in 2013. In recent years, I have been teaching in a secondary school as well as grammar school. Throughout the teaching process, I try to learn most about my students' ways of perceiving and understanding of this world, their preferences and interests, in order to find ways to motivate them, because I consider lack of motivation a noticeable post-corona problem. Even though teaching different age groups has shown me that teenagers are frequently most difficult to motivate, it seems this problem has intensified even more so after such a long period of distant-learning. I will try to explain some of the problems that occur in ELT due to lack of motivation related to media literacy and explain how I try to overcome this particular issue in the classroom.

I consider myself a young teacher, one who should not only acknowledge the students' interests, but also have a common sense to recognize the media world and use similar ways and techniques to find information, interact with people, and use or at least be familiar with the Internet in general. However, when questioning their ways of using media, on the one hand I sometimes feel behind the times, and on the other hand I realise that it is necessary to encourage teenagers to use the many hours spent in front of the screen more wisely than they normally do and to equip them with media literacy skills. Both, media literacy and motivation go hand in hand as we teachers use various Internet tools and sources on many occasions to increase the students' involvement and curiosity. When using online media in ELT, we should utilize every online activity to teach media literacy at the same time.

Quizzes and games

To begin with, online quizzes and games attract students' attention and hence make a great warm up activity. Many quizzes and games are available online and are easy enough for teachers to adapt the games to their students so that they serve their purpose. I often use Kahoot and Educaplay when it comes to games. I find them useful when specific grammatical structures need to be practised, because they complement the exercises they usually get in workbooks or handouts and give the teacher clear information about individual progress. The teacher can monitor individual performance and decide accordingly what still needs to be explained or practised and which students need extra help. What is more, games present a fun way to learn, and on many occasions students who want to practise more engage in similar games in their free time. To add to that, I like to give my students the opportunity to talk about the games they like to play, and I also ask them about games they think are educational, and some good ideas always come up. We discuss the games they think are educational, and they are always eager to show me how they like to learn English through games.

I use Menti or Slido for quizzes; I would use quizzes whenever I want everyone in the classroom to answer general questions. Whether I introduce a new topic or merely open a discussion, their (dis)likes, habits, or opinions are shared and give and incite debate in the classroom. Quizzes not only enable teachers to get an answer from every student in a short span of time, but also reassure all students to participate, even the introverts. On the one hand, online quizzes require the participation of all students, as opposed to asking a question where only a few have the opportunity to share their point of view. At the same time, everyone needs to be active and

come up with a suitable answer. On the other hand, students are always interested in their peers' answers. I would always use a quiz after a test to simply ask them to rank the difficulty of the test and the expected grade. In addition, I would also use a quiz to show a picture that introduces a topic and elicit vocabulary that describes the picture ("Imagine you are a part of the happening in the picture; What do you smell/hear/feel/see?"). Moreover, when I teach them how to plan an essay, I use quizzes to share ideas, being pros and cons, naming reasons, etc. This expands their views and helps them with planning. Lastly, shared ideas always raise students' interest because they want to know what their peers think, like, feel, etc. Whenever a discussion is underway, ideas that appear as a result of a quiz are a great starting point.

Browsing for specific information

Encouraging students to find information online is a common task they are assigned, and not only in English classroom. Unfortunately, students seem to be immediately pleased with the result of their online search. Being used to quick answers, they are rarely motivated to research and further explore any topic. When the results of their online search need to be presented in classroom, they are generally unfit to explain the topic or to present an overall understanding of the it. In addition to having only vague knowledge, they often come across irrelevant or unconfirmed information. For this reason, we should guide them to explore further. Whenever I ask students to research something, I ask additional questions that require them to continue reading, to actually open web pages and read the articles they find. Sometimes I would ask them to confirm their ideas by finding more articles online on the same topic. Whatever theme is discussed in ELT, there is always more to learn. I often assign homework in which they need to find

out more about a particular subject; I ask them to briefly summarize what they have found and cite the source.

Finding meaning of words or phrases

It is very common in ELT to use the internet to find meanings or phrases they come across. When they try to find an explanation for an unknown word or phrase they tend to type it straight into the search engine instead of using dictionaries. Even though the results of their search on some occasions fit the purpose, they are often inadequate. To stimulate learners, I introduce them to online dictionaries and explain what information about words they offer. I encourage them not only to look up the meaning of words, but also synonyms and antonyms. And finally, I require them to focus on how the words are used. I advise them to use SKELL, an online language learning engine that is manageable and offers a variety of contexts through examples of words or phrases in sentences. Therefore, I encourage the use of such tools and spend time with my students to acquaint them with some of these tools.

Conclusion

Finally, teachers should recognize the importance of media literacy in modern society and acknowledge the fact that we as teachers have an impact on how media literate these and the following generations are. I have recently attended the Media Literacy Symposium organised by IATEFL, which broadened my knowledge and understanding of media literacy. Not only did it give me magnificent ideas on how to teach media literacy, but I am also more aware of its importance and take it into consideration when preparing my lessons on a daily basis. In my opinion, an important part of teacher's media literacy is understanding students and recognising their behaviour. We should take time to speak to them about the media they like, what news sources they trust, etc. We should ask our students what apps can be found on their mobile phones and why they are keen on them. They like to explain how they learn English by playing some games, following podcasts or watching their favourite YouTube channels. Only by understanding how they use media, can we improve their media literacy. We can also try to encourage them to expand the use of media, stay interested in the topic, and make a better use of their screen time.

Media Literacy Symposium – Reflection

Andreja Mandeljc

Lately, it seems, more than half of my working days and planning is led – if not driven – by reflection. I believe reflection, be it on your own work or work of others, and giving feedback, is a skill that we often neglect. As a Primary School teacher, I believe I should also give my students the opportunity to learn and apply the aforementioned skill. I therefore chose two reflection tools to present and, at the same time, give reflection, on the wonderful symposium. Both have also proven useful in formative assessment and in peer-reflection, as they are user-friendly and straightforward.

TOOL 1: TWO STARS AND A WISH

By using this reflection tool, we focus on two positive aspects of the presentation/evaluation/work done, and provide one issue we might have encountered, a suggestion for the presenter or our wish for them for the future, or even a question we might still have for them.

| | |
|---|--|
|  | <p>The organisation of the event was superb. The staff from IATEFL Slovenia, RELO Belgrade and the American Embassy of Ljubljana were all very enthusiastic, supportive and resourceful. The venue could not be more apt for a teacher conference, as we could retreat to the spa part after a hard day's labour at the workshops. The choice of workshops leaders was excellent, as well.</p> |
|  | <p>The workshops offered a variety of mind-blowing activities and tools we could use in classrooms and at home to raise awareness of the phishing, (deep)fakes, and academic dishonesty within our schools or homes. We were introduced to apps and platforms to enhance and enrich our teaching, and offered a wonderful opportunity to cooperate with kindred spirits.</p> |
|  | <p>One wish I have is that all schools around our country were offered the same level of support and resources when it comes to developing media literacy skills among teachers or students. I am afraid we are lacking the equipment, as well as knowledge, to properly respond to ever-arising issues and traps of social media, gaming, and cyber-bullying.</p> |

TOOL 2: THE PMI CHART (PLUS-MINUS-INTERESTING)

This reflection tool does exactly what its title says. You should list things that you found positive (P), things you found negative (M) and things that caught your interest (I).

| P | M | I |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organisation • fun • activities • workshops • people • ideas • having fun • nightlife | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • too short | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how many different people generate similar ideas and how similar people generate a variety of ideas • the amount of knowledge you can syphon when you're well-rested and offered a spa after a session |

All in all, the symposium offered some of the best workshops I have attended in my life. It was bursting with ideas and new friendships, and I believe we all benefited from it greatly. It is definitely an opportunity that should be offered to all modern educators.

Digital media and the users – two ends of the same stick

Nataša Makovecki

Teaching English in secondary schools goes well beyond merely developing language proficiency and enabling students to rise through the CEFR levels. Since I started my teaching career, different issues have come to the forefront of our teaching efforts besides the language – there has been emphasis on cultural diversity, cross-curricular learning, and empowering students by teaching them to form and refute arguments, etc. All of this, of course, remains still quite relevant, however, in the last two years, a new issue, in urgent need to be addressed in schools, has risen to the surface: How can we support and guide our youngsters through the messy, ambiguous and potentially dangerous new world we are thrown into and, which is, more often than not, interpreted for us through the digital media?

The world is changing rapidly. Those of us born in the 20th century can still remember the times when we relied mainly on words and printed texts to create our own mental representation of reality. However, in the last two decades we have increasingly been relying on images and short videos to do the same. Nowadays more and more young people “think” in a different way. Individuals or small groups of people have gained access to platforms that enable them to reach easily thousands or even millions of people with a single click. AI can tirelessly generate contents that are indistinguishable from those created by humans. With deep-fake technology we can “steal” somebody’s image (thereby hijacking all of his/her respect, credibility and influence) and make the avatar do or say anything without the audience even noticing it. Most of us will agree that these developments are quite disturbing.

How can we and our students find our way through this dangerous maze of mirrors? One way to tackle the prob-

lem of fake news and manipulation is to equip students to spot the telling signs of deceit and to use the verification programmes. While this is better than ignoring the issue, it is not sustainable. It takes a lot of time and effort to discern what is fake and what is not. In addition, with rapidly developing technology it will be increasingly difficult to do so. Another problem is that this approach focuses entirely on “fixing”, sorting out the digital media reality and leaves out the user’s inner world. The ability to discern real from fake alone was obviously not enough during the COVID-19 pandemic.

During this period, we could all witness a total opposition of opinions and too often a complete breakdown in reasonable communication between otherwise intelligent groups of individuals, especially when it came to acknowledging the existence of the pandemic or the necessity of the vaccines. What was true and what was fake? Should we get vaccinated or not? Everybody created their own individual representation of reality even though we all had access to the same bits of information – that is if we wanted it. But very often we did not want to.



We saw people who were clearly unable to manage the huge input of often conflicting information. They succumbed to uncritical acceptance of beliefs in the echo chambers of their social networks (Wollebæk et al., 2019) in which an idea totally unsupported with scientific evidence (usually a conspiracy) was repeated time and time again and the information to support it was sifted and selected uncritically, eventually elevating the idea to the ultimate truth.

If we want to maintain a healthy democracy in the future, schools need to address these social and psychological tendencies and enable students to avoid falling into a situation where a reasonable scepticism of what is presented to them as a fact breaks down into unconstrained and debilitating doubt about everything - a situation in which we feel we can no longer know anything for certain at all. This is undoubtedly very dangerous because then everything is allowed and if we cannot even agree on the basic facts, conversation is no longer possible and the only way out of this gridlock is violence.

The best way we have at our disposal, not to fall into this trap, is relying on science and the scientific way of constructing our representations of the world. Indeed, science has its limitations and often it is marred with inaptitude and corruption, but we can always counter this with even more science and transparency. In our daily lives, if want to arrive at a more reliable, truer representation of the world, we have to, as in science, "get out of our own way" and push aside our hidden emotional and social agendas and biases.

We all know that it is very difficult to change the mind of others (or our own). I strongly believe that in schools we can do even more good for our society if, instead of focusing on how to change others in the digital media world, we focus more on ourselves, the users. This means that we should not just ask: Why is it so difficult or even impossible to convince somebody to change their mind? How can we do it?, we flip the question around and also ask: Why are we so reluctant to reconsider and update our beliefs? And why should we do it?

We have all experienced a situation when we grow quite indignant if someone presses us too hard to embrace an alternative truth. Even if they provide reliable facts, we do not (and cannot) accept them as such. We close ourselves off and keep our minds tightly shut, clearly feeling the negative emotions towards the "intruder" arising in our hearts, which we take as yet another proof that we are right and they are wrong (What they say feels wrong, doesn't it? So it is wrong). What is behind this? Neuroscientists have discovered that we stubbornly hold on to our beliefs for two main reasons: because we believe they are based on facts (whether they are false or not) or because we want them to be true. The latter usually happens because of an emotional burden we are under (we tend to avoid unpleasant feelings – uncertainty, ambiguity, fear, anger, disgust, etc.) or for social reasons (Our group identity shapes what we allow ourselves to accept as true – we are under the influence of friends, family, political groups. We are subconsciously afraid that if we think differently we will no longer belong and will lose an important part of our identity.). Both of these seem to be very strong and prevent us from being cognitively flexible and evolving.

What we can do as educators is to help our students recognise the red flags within themselves – to become aware when they are under the influence of emotions and/or society and for this reason they WANT reality to be a certain way. A moment of mindful introspection, evaluating the truthfulness of a belief before creating and/or sharing something in their social network will definitely contribute to a healthier and more reasona-

ble democracy. If we can identify when and how these mechanisms are triggered in ourselves, it is much easier to identify the same mechanisms in other users of the digital media world. If we can achieve this in our classrooms, we have undoubtedly empowered the students to think and act more rationally and independently.

So, how exactly can we incorporate all of this into our teaching strategies and aims? All activities that promote introspection, cognitive flexibility, acceptance of alternative but equally conceivable interpretations of an event (known as the Rashomone effect) (Orfano, 2021), relying more on logos rather than ethos or pathos, etc. are steps in the right direction. But there is much more out there that we can use. Some teaching materials designed to promote digital literacy were created at the 2022 Media Literacy Symposium and are feely available in this magazine. I strongly believe that once it is clear to us what we desire to achieve as educators and for what reason, it is no longer difficult to come up with good ideas.

To conclude, it is critically important that we acknowledge and react to the changes in the world today and support our students to better understand the mechanisms that rule our world – both: outside in the digital world and also within themselves, so that they can develop into reasonable, active and responsible citizens. We cannot uncouple ourselves (and our students) from the digital media world. The relationship between users and digital media is not a gigantic combat of one against the other in order to win and prevail. To understand and effectively address this issue, we need to focus on both ends of the same stick.

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Media Literate: Analysing Advertisements in the ELT Classrooms

Alina Morano

Introduction

Media Literacy was the main topic of a recent symposium for teachers of English. It was organized by IATEFL Slovenia in April 2022 at Terme Vivat. We talked about the role of media, journalists and teachers in democratic societies, discussed how social media work, learned how to recognize propaganda and fakes news, got many practical ideas on how to introduce the topic of media literacy in schools, and created some of our own materials that other teachers can use. We tried to contextualize the value of media literacy in schools, and concluded that media literacy is inseparable from education. According to the Centre for Media Literacy, media literacy is “the ability to access, analyse, evaluate and create media in a variety of forms – from print to video to the Internet.” It is important that we help our students become media literate, because they spend a lot of their free time glued to different screens, swiping through different social media sites, so they need the tools to question the media they encounter.

In this article, I share five classroom activities that can be used to introduce the topic of media literacy, focusing on advertising, one of the key features of the media landscape. This could be done by inspecting, analysing and creating different advertisements. We can barely watch a film, listen to the radio, and browse through different media sites or videos on YouTube, without being interrupted by different advertisements. Teenagers too are also exposed to them on a daily basis on different platforms “such as YouTube, game apps, and Instagram, [where] advertising exposure has been quantified to be 14 minutes per hour, slightly higher than that of traditional media such as television” (Riesmeyer et al., 2022: 340). One of the most problematic aspects of advertising is that some teenagers and adults trust advertisers and their products. It is our job to

make them understand that advertising aims to promote, convince and get people to buy the product. Furthermore, we are exposed to the effects of advertisements even if we are aware of their aims. They tend to slide into our subconsciousness on the subliminal level, without our being aware of their effects on the psyche. Given the increasingly sophisticated techniques used by advertisers, it has never been more important for teenagers to be equipped with knowledge to unmask the aims and meanings of advertisements that aim to manipulate their emotions, desires and behaviour. The activities described were partly inspired by the Media Literacy Symposium I attended. They promote learning by doing, creative expression, and critical thinking. They were designed for secondary school students, but could, with some adjustments, also be used with primary school students.

ACTIVITY 1: The Traps of Advertisements (Discussion)

Advertisements are fake paintings of life, because the people in them all seem to be happy, extremely beautiful, and successful. Advertisements suggest to viewers that if they buy the advertised product, they will also become the appealing, fortunate and wealthy people in them. Since we are being bombarded with advertisements everywhere we look, students should have no problem participating in a class discussion. Students can try to answer the discussion points in groups, or the teacher elicits the answers from individual students. Below are some suggestions for questions I would address in a discussion:

- Where all do you encounter advertisements?
- What is the purpose of advertisements?
- Have you ever bought a product because you were convinced by an advertisement?
- People in advertisements seem overly enthusiastic about the advertised product. Do you know such people in everyday life?
- Do you think that advertisements can be misleading?
- Have you ever tried to change your looks after watching videos of influencers?

ACTIVITY 2: Advertising Tactics

As the Federal Trade Commission (2013: 1) states, the advertisers carefully “study what people like and then try to design an approach that will appeal to their target audience.” They choose from a long list of persuasive techniques that make the viewers see their product as a solution to their problems (*ibid.*). For this activity a variety of different magazine, Internet, and TV advertisements is needed. Students are encouraged to examine them. In pairs, they pick an advertisement of their choice and try to answer the following three questions:

- Do you think the advertisement is clever or creative? What makes it memorable?
- Would you consider buying the advertised product? Why?
- Can you spot any advertising tactics that were used to attract the viewers’ attention?

The teacher then encourages them to present their findings to the class and devotes some in-depth time to talking about the different persuasive techniques used in different advertisements. For example, very often in advertisements the viewer is led to believe that if he or she wants to be popular, they should buy the product. By purchasing the product, they will also become the beautiful and successful people in the advertisements. What is more, celebrities swear that the product has changed their lives, and saved them valuable time and money.

ACTIVITY 3: Coming up with a Slogan and a Logo for the Advertisement

After students have been introduced to the wheel of advertising, they can be encouraged to try and sell their own ideas and products. They can start by coming up with a catchy slogan and a noticeable logo for a product of their choice. Slogans are short phrases that paired with a memorable logo help consumers remember the product longer. In this activity, students can first be encouraged to think of the slogans and logos they remember. Then they analyse what makes them stand out and memorable. At this point, the teacher can also briefly introduce colour psychology, the study of how we react to colours and how they make us feel because, as (Lamb, 2021) argues, “without consciously recognizing it,” we “already make assumptions about [...] a brand simply from the colours present.” The colour red, for example, “brings to mind the passion of Valentine’s Day, the joy of Christmas, and even signifies luck in Chinese culture” (ibid.). Research also shows “that seeing red speeds up our blood flow, which in turn speeds our metabolism and makes us hungry. So it should come as no surprise that brands like McDonald’s, KFC, and Coke utilize this tone” (ibid.). After that, they can design an alternative slogan and logo for the product already being advertised, or create their own original slogan and logo for the product of their choice. The teacher may also decide to allow the students to do this activity using their mobile phones. They can design their personal logos and slogans on platforms such as Logo-Maker or Shopify: Slogan Generator, which are free and fun to use.

ACTIVITY 4: Creating an Advertisement

Now that students are equipped with a logo and a slogan, the knowledge of colour psychology, and advertising techniques of persuasion, they can take one step further. They can be asked to design an advertisement for a product of their choice. This activity is best done in groups. First, the groups decide on the product they would like to sell and think about who their target audience is. Then they brainstorm for fresh ideas and select the best one. They write a script and use many repetitive but highly praising words to describe their product. Students can either make a print or a video advertisement. In either case they are en-

couraged to use as many advertising tactics as possible, they can even offer prizes for the fastest buyers, etc. If they choose to record themselves selling their product, they are encouraged to use different technical tricks, sound effects, and animations.

ACTIVITY 5: Combating Stereotypes in Advertisements

Another interesting aspect of advertisements are the stereotypes that still too often appear in them. Teenagers are daily exposed to different advertisements on social media sites such as TikTok and Instagram. Osadan and Hanna (2015: 37) point out that “[y]oung girls are becoming increasingly aware of their body image through the image of models in advertising” Influencers and celebrities they follow and the looks they promote are often their inspiration. They look up to them as role models, but all too often these role models promote a picture-perfect lifestyle, unrealistic body figures and unattainable beauty standards. It is important for students to realize these models use photo and video manipulation techniques to appear impeccable. For this activity, the teacher gathers different advertisements that feature boys/girls/men/women from different (online) magazines and newspapers. He or she then sticks the advertisements around the classroom. Students then walk around the room, look at them, and try to describe how males and females in them are represented. In groups, they then try to answer the following question that can help address and combat stereotypes:

*What is the content of advertisements aimed at girls / women?
What about boys/ men?*

They are encouraged to write down words that describe how the different genders are portrayed in advertisements. For example:

*Girls: beauty, youth, popularity, passivity...
Boys: strength, courage, aggression, curiosity...*

If the answer to the above question is not apparent enough in today’s advertisements, or as a curiosity, we could also have a peek at the old ads where the gender representations and stereotypes are even more apparent.

Conclusion

As journalist and author Sonja Merljak Zdovc pointed out at the Media Litera-

cy Symposium “we [should] teach children how to value information, how to think critically about content and messages they come across and how to spot disinformation,” and for many, school is the place where they can acquire media literacy related skills. In my article, I have attempted to describe five classroom activities that can be used to introduce the topic of media literacy to primary and secondary school students through a closer inspection of advertisements. I focused on the topic of advertising, because it is ubiquitous in our lives and can present a good jumping-off point for teaching media literacy. Most of the activities were based on the IATEFL symposium I attended, but I also tried to upgrade them with my own ideas. The activities were designed to help students analyse different advertisements, understand the strategies behind them, and learn how to apply these persuasive techniques themselves. As Bazalgette (2010: 72) argues, helping children become media smart involves “approaching advertisements as complicated social and media texts,” but it also invites them to “consider other forms of persuasion (for instance [...] by politicians), [in]justice and inequality.”

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How technology is transforming teaching and learning in the classroom

Martina Ostrožnik

Technology has transformed the way we learn and the way we teach. It has also led to a sort of a revolution in the classroom as well. Nowadays, if you want to be a successful instructor it is no longer enough to stand in front of your class and lecture the day away.

The fact is that technology has become an increasingly important part of education. One of the reasons for this is that technology can provide students with access to a wealth of information and resources that they might not otherwise have. Additionally, technology can help motivate students learn by providing opportunities to be creative and explore new ideas and concepts. It is also changing the way teachers teach by giving them new tools and resources to help them plan lessons, deliver instruction, and assess student learning.

That is why I decided to attend the IATEFL Slovenia, together with the Regional English Language Office and the American Embassy, which provided a great opportunity for their members to participate in a symposium entitled "Media Literacy".

Somewhere during the lectures, which were extremely interesting, lecturer Lazslo Katona mentioned that it does not make sense to continue banning the use of mobile phones in class.

Instead of a strict school policy that severely restricts the use of these devices, it would make more sense to use them on a daily basis and teach students to use applications for educational purposes. Outside of school, pupils use all too many apps that are not meant to explore the world or read the news, but simply for entertainment. Apps like Tik tok, Snap chat, Twitter and the like are not supposed to be all that kids can master. At the symposium, I learned about a whole range of tools that I can use to add variety to my lessons, plus I can actually teach children how to use their phone.

I believe that most students in primary schools are media illiterate, and by that I mean they are not able to distinguish real life from "digital" life as well as real news from fake news. Children and teens can get into trouble if they are not aware of the consequences of recklessly sharing their personal information via a mobile device with Internet access. Their online reputation may be affected, and they may be more easily contacted by people who may want to abuse them. Defamation, the exchange of information and images via mobile phones between friends can also be a form of cyberbullying. Leaving a digital footprint is never a good thing.

All these reasons signal that teachers need to try and show/teach children

how to be media literate and use the great technology properly and in this way help the (sometimes) powerless parents.

Tips for using technology in the classroom

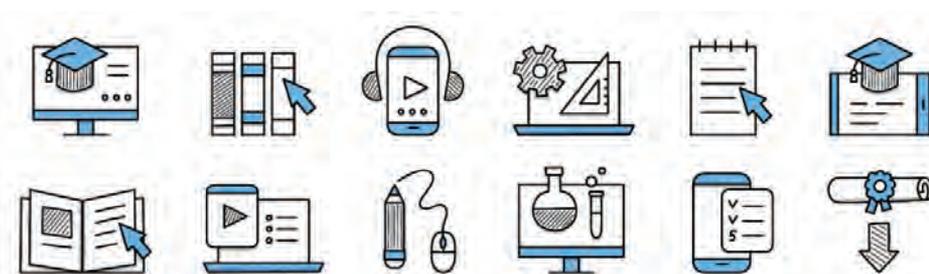
Technology can be a great asset in the classroom, but it is important to use it in the right way. Here are some tips on how to use technology to transform teaching and learning in your classroom:

We have to make sure our **students are engaged**. Technology can be a great way to engage students in the material, but it is important to make sure they are actually paying attention and not just staring at a screen. Using interactive features like quizzes or games keeps them engaged.

Technology is a great tool **to supplement our instruction**, but it is important that we provide face-to-face interaction and guidance. Students still need that personal connection with their teacher in order to learn effectively. We also have to be aware of **potential distractions**. If students are spending more time texting or browsing social media than paying attention to the lesson, it is time to put the phones away.

Technology can be a great way to get students involved in the material and engaged in active learning. Try using **apps or online resources** that allow students to relate to and be fully mentally engaged. This means that technology can help students learn independently and at their own pace. Many tools were presented to us, and as a beginner with how to integrate media literacy into the classroom, I decided to share a few very simple ones.

1. If you are looking for a fun way to kill some time and learn a little about art history, the Google Arts



& Culture app is definitely worth checking out. The Google Arts & Culture app has been around for a while, but it has recently gained popularity thanks to a new feature that lets you match your own face to a piece of art. The app uses facial recognition technology to match your facial features with those in its database, which contain more than 70,000 paintings, sculptures, and other works of art from more than 1,200 museums around the world.

2. Mentimeter is a popular tool that allows users to create and share surveys, polls, and presentations. It can help you collect data and feedback from your students. It is easy to use and can be a great way to engage your students in a presentation or survey.
3. Slido is a powerful new tool that allows you to create and share engaging presentations with your audience. With Slido, you can easily add multimedia content to your slides, making your presentations more engaging and interactive. You can also use Slido to poll your audience, get feedback, and create custom questions.
4. Deep fake videos are currently one of the hottest topics in the tech world. With this app, you can superimpose one person's face over another person's body, and the videos become more realistic by the day. There are a lot of potential uses for deep fake videos. For example, you could use them to create realistic character animations for movies or video games.

The possibilities are endless, and we can only imagine what will be possible in the future. So far, the future seems clear – technology will continue to evolve and the only reasonable thing I can see is to keep up with it in the classroom as well.

To sum up, the symposium has been an eye-opening experience for me, where I learned that there are numerous apps that can bring students alive in the classroom and help them become more media literate, and I will gladly attend another symposium in the future.

You too can have truths like mine

Emma Ramot

There are several books that never leave my bedside table. There is, however, one that has no rival in vying for my attention – »The Collected Short Stories of Roald Dahl«. The blurb by The Irish Times definitely hits the nail on my head – Dahl's stories are addictive. In »The Great Automatic Grammatizator«, Adoph Knipe, a computer genius, builds a computer that will write stories. It is when the computer is upgraded and can write novels, however, that the business gets really lucrative. The domination of the publishing industry eventually occurs when real authors are bought out and paid never to write again. The surprising twist in the satire comes when the narrator enlightens us that "over half the novels and stories published in the English language" are created by Knipe's machine. The fiction story was first published in 1953.

Fast forward seventy-odd years and an article on GPT-3 appears in the Guardian, asking us if we are scared. "This article was written by GPT-3, OpenAI's language generator. GPT-3 is a cutting edge language model that uses machine learning to produce human like text," notes the editor.

Judging by our response to the Guardian's news story at the »Media Literacy Symposium 2022« in Moravske Toplice, not many people know about this technology. As one of »the analogues«, I find it difficult to keep up with the endless opportunities technology offers today's teachers. I believe I teach media literacy in a more traditional way by focusing on critical thinking and using authentic media content. Confirmation bias definitely kicked in during Kevin McCaughey's critical thinking workshops, which invariably ended with the speaker pointing out the importance of instilling "We value your opinion." in our students to help them become independent thinkers and thus more resilient to fake news, disinformation and malinformation.

There was no cognitive dissonance with Lazslo Katona's perspectives in his "Perspectives and Media" workshop. I often remind my pupils that they should be aware of the negativity bias. It is an expected and natural response to media messages, particularly when it comes to the perception of complicated world events. We are bound to perceive the same event differently for we are influenced by experience we have made in life and by our internal biases.

The symposium took an interesting approach. Media literacy was dealt with from various perspectives presented through interesting and engaging activities that the four speakers used to motivate and empower us in creating activities for our students. Different teaching styles resulted in very different ideas, which had to be debated, negotiated and agreed on if we were to create meaningful tasks.

Our group's main activity explores the approach known as the Rashomon effect, which raises the important question of what the truth really is in the world in which we are attached to our beliefs, where opinions matter more than arguments and facts, and where we feel contempt for people who do not confirm our beliefs and biases. Our work, however, is proof that cooperation and dialogue are possible and produce results, and that, as our slogan states, "You too can have a perspective like mine".

I dare say the participants' articles will also reflect our different perspectives and individual styles. Our opinions will differ, as will our truths. And I do hope none of our articles will be generated by GPT-3 technology.

Media Literacy Symposium 2022

(an almost completely human-generated report)

Volodja Šiškovič

The blurb made it hard to resist – four days and three nights in Terme Vivat, all expenses paid, lectures and workshops by experts, a chance of meeting and working with fellow teachers, an almost ideal weekend retreat. When the email arrived that I was accepted, I was as giddy as a schoolboy. I hoped for the best, and for those with no intention of reading the rest of this piece, I got it.

People

It is hard not to be at least a little bit apprehensive when arriving to a meeting like that. Who will be there, what they'll be like, will there be challenges, will there be fun? Well, duh.

Suddenly, I'm in the company of university lecturers, IATEFL Slovenia movers and shakers, experts, teacher training authorities, seasoned experienced colleagues, and some enthusiastic, energetic fresh blood, all primed and ready to go teaching, supervising, learning, collaborating and producing ... something – whatever that may be, since nobody is quite sure what we're supposed to do. Yet.

Experts

There are four lecturers, who all do their part to let us understand various aspects of media literacy and skills necessary for us to be able to navigate the treacherous media waters, and the dangers within them that prey on the unwary. Nora unleashes her ocean of knowledge on media literacy concepts and tools for creation in an understated and relaxing way, so that we don't even notice how much there is to learn. Kevin is hellbent on getting us moving (and we do move) and gives us a plethora of tools to get our students asking questions. Laszlo alerts us to media manipulation and the ways to defend against it by pointing out the skills needed for that, while Sonja, like an expert she is, floods us with information on media, fake news and tools to fight it. They get us involved, enthusiastic, and engaged.

Work

Finally, we are able to put into practice what we've been learning about for two days. It is group work, and I have no group, much less an idea. I needn't worry, though, the group finds me. I've known both Helena and Milan from previous ELT events, and they kindly invite me to join their group. Working with them is like running a hot knife through butter, ideas just find a way to develop, we divide work without making any plans, things take shape as if on their own. In mere hours, we take an idea, mix it with curiosity here and a pinch of trivia there to get a lesson plan we are all happy with. I feel privileged to be able to see how my colleagues work, and to be able to participate.

Results

What the groups are able to produce is astounding. Each presentation is impressive, the materials excellent, each is followed by an enthusiastic applause. There is such an abundance of ideas I wouldn't imagine possible. The materials will be presented elsewhere in this publication, I will just say that it was a pleasure being in the same room with such a talented, inspired and enthusiastic group of teachers.

Darker Stuff

I'm quite certain that all the participants were aware that our digitally connected enhanced reality does pose some dangers to us, analogue intruders, but only few had probably been aware of what a (put in a contextually appropriate expletive) nightmare cyberspace actually is. It is not simply people lying (honestly, we've had that for a while), corporations collecting our data and spying on our internet habits, it is also unleashing AI on it to discern patterns which would otherwise remain hidden to a human brain, bots in social media, and even artificial intelligence which could create seemingly human content or converse with people, completely una-

ware of the fact. To demonstrate (and instil some well-deserved fear), I have asked my newly-found friend, AI Writer (panel.ai-writer.com), to write a few words on media literacy. You, too, should give it a go and have your calm media ocean ruffled a bit.

Media Literacy (by AI Writer, computer generated)

Media literacy challenges youth to question, assess, understand, and value their media culture. Media literacy is the ability to comprehend information presented to us and react accordingly. In other words, media literacy is the ability to apply critical thinking skills to messages, signs, and symbols conveyed via the popular media. The field speaks to developing competencies, or skills, that can help individuals analyse, assess, or even produce media.

The ability to think critically about powerful images, words, sounds, and messages infused throughout modern culture increases students' chances for success both inside and outside of the classroom.

Conclusion

(again by Volodja, human generated)

It is nice to know, as a teacher, that there are people who have our back, who are willing to work hard and pay real money, so we can unleash our creativity, get our mojo back, meet the oh-so-real people, who are our colleagues and hopefully friends, and give us another reason to stick around, handle our job, and do the best we can in an occupation that many in the general public think is unnecessary. It is even greater to know that somebody cares how we feel and wants us to relax at the end of a hard day. I'd say, in a way of recommendation, take your chance if you get it, and apply if IATEFL Slovenia organises a course. I'm leaving with a wealth of experience, some unforgettable memories, and loads of new friends.

The Challenges and Pitfalls of Media Literacy

Barbara Majcenovič Kline

Abstract

With the fast-developing digital age come specific changes in how primary-, secondary- and tertiary-level educational institutions approach teaching and learning (or even acquiring) any skills. By that I mean not only “traditional” courses like math, natural or social sciences, languages, mother tongue, and the like, but even more so the knowledge on digital literacy, computer literacy, IT literacy, media literacy, and others. As learners are increasingly exposed to constant influence through various online sources – online books, newspapers, magazines, websites, and/or social media, and since many are considered “lazy clickers,” it is of the utmost importance to equip them with the skills that incorporate not only information literacy as the basis for other literacies, but also with critical reading and listening skills for them to be able to assess critically which sources can be trusted, how to check for (in)accuracies, how to find the trace all the way to primary sources, what might be false news, fake news or alternative truth constantly presented in the media.

This might be a challenge for many educators since the home environment might not necessarily provide appropriate steps or actions toward their young becoming digital media users equipped with critical reading and listening skills. It is thus necessary for teachers to first keep up with this growing tendency of constant digital changes, and secondly, to convey appropriate knowledge to their learners for them to become independent and able to differentiate between the truth, fact, and misleading information.

Why Is a Critical Approach to Various Sources so Important?

In the good old days, one would rely on one or two news channels and a couple of newspapers to remain informed of the daily local and world

events; the library was the place to go for those more studious ones. There, it was impossible to search for and select countless books. First, searching for materials was time-consuming; secondly, there was only so much one could carry home, or specific materials were only accessible within the library. Thirdly, there was a limited borrowing time; therefore, one would only choose the number of books or other materials one could read within that timeframe. Access to information was thus fairly limited. Moreover, journalists had more time to retrieve and confirm the data before publicizing the news, which means the followers of the scarce media were not as skeptical as we are today.

Fast forward to nowadays, it only takes a computer and several clicks, and one is presented with a sea of information. Accessing materials is therefore no longer a daunting task (unless there is no internet connection); however, being able to select trustworthy and reliable sources is a challenge. As much as one can benefit from digital technology, McLuhan (as quoted in Jones & Hafner, 2021, p. 4) warns that “all tools bring with them different kinds of **affordances** and **constraints**.” He built his ideas on the theory of the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky. While observing how children learn, Vygotsky realized that “all learning involves learning how to use some kind of tool that facilitates interaction between the child and the thing or person he or she is interacting with.” According to McLuhan (as quoted in Jones & Hafner, 2021, p. 3), these “**cultural tools**” are of many kinds, either physical objects or abstract notions, like ‘systems of meanings or codes,’ such as “languages, counting systems, and computer code.” They are understood as “mediational means,” and McLuhan calls media “the extensions of man”; they enable us to learn new things, do new things, think in new ways, and express ourselves differently. Yet, on the other

hand, they also prevent us from all of the above; “while new technologies extend certain parts of us, they amputate other parts” (McLuhan, as quoted in Jones & Hafner, 2021, p. 4).

The Tug of War

The importance of teachers’ digital education and skills was put to the forefront (and tough tests) during the Corona (Covid-19) pandemic. The transition from face-to-face to online teaching and learning had to be fast and efficient, and it seemed to be the only option to continue the educational process without much interruption. On the other hand, students spent more time at their computers, not just for educational purposes but more so for socializing and keeping in touch with their peers. The times of isolation have left most of us relying on digital media to obtain information. However, the multitude of information sources has made us doubt and question the validity and accuracy of the information provided. It seemed the public has never been as divided in their opinion as before, which could be due to the sensitivity of the topic related to our health and wellbeing, as well as the numerous sources we could access to obtain information. Had the teachers not addressed the issue of media literacy with their students before, this was most certainly the high time to do so. Even though there are numerous approaches available for educators to use with their students to touch upon the issue of media literacy, there is, as Potter and McDougal state, “[...] the tug of war between critical pedagogues and both children and parents’ conservative positions over the politics of digital learning in the lifeworld” (2017, p. 112). One might add here that children may not have such “conservative positions” as regards digital learning; however, some parents and - unfortunately - teachers, as well, certainly do. Some still believe digital technologies with devices like phones and tablets are not welcome in classrooms since

worlds, determining what is plausible and doable and what is digitally manipulated due to their different comprehension levels and (in)adequate parental guidance. This is where educators help parents with their expertise and guide their learners with further assistance to help them protect their personal spaces, privacy, and, most importantly, their identity.

Slovene Media Literacy Symposium

For Slovene educators to obtain some critical insight into fast-developing digital media and literacy, 30 were given the opportunity to partake in the Media Literacy Symposium, which took place from April 21st to 24th, 2022. The event was sponsored by the U.S. Embassy Ljubljana and the Regional English Language Office, organized by IATEFL Slovenia, and it brought together teachers from all over Slovenia and from all levels of education, from primary to tertiary, which illustrates how important it is to start early when it comes to digital education of our children and how crucial it is to maintain this aspect of education throughout the whole vertical learning process. During the symposium, Nora Nemeth Tartsay touched upon the definition of media literacy, types of digital media, fake images and videos, and fake technology. She further presented tools for creating digital media, emphasizing creating art (avatars) and recreating famous paintings; she took us on a virtual art walk and taught us how to incorporate these ideas into our existing curriculum. Kevin McCaughey discussed the fundamentals of critical thinking and presented us with games (surprise, surprise; no, we are not talking about high-tech digital ones, but rather traditional board games) and suggested some writing activities for developing critical thinking. Laszlo Katona presented Perspectives and media, as it is essential to consider different perspectives and cognitive dissonance and reframing. When discussing science in the media, it was brought to our attention that the multitude of opinions without expertise can be treacherous for any digital media user. We were taught how to search for reliable scientific data and proof. Of course, no lazy clickers would be able to establish what is a fact and what is a hoax;

therefore, do your research diligently and thoroughly. The journalist, dr. Sonja Merljak Zdovc, who has established Časoris, an internationally awarded free online newspaper for children, compared traditional and social media; she discussed media literacy and the all-important role of the media and journalists in democratic societies. Hearing first-hand from someone who knows how social media works and how to spot disinformation, manipulation, misleading propaganda, and fake news was an eye-opening experience for most of us. She presented some case studies that illustrated her endless expertise and proved how easily ignorant users can be manipulated by the media.

Conclusion

The idea of literacy is no longer restricted to traditional texts found in (work)books but instead uses “multiple modes and various technologies” (Sowell, 2022, p. 16). This element of using authentic materials in the classroom brings along new dimensions of awareness for both educators, their learners, and parents, as many pitfalls of the digital world present educational challenges for all parties involved in the learning process, but particularly for younger learners, until they acquire an adequate level of critical thinking, reading and writing skills. Even though it may seem like these are the challenges of the modern digital age, the dangers of dis/misinformation, false news, and alternative facts, to name but a few, have been known for centuries. The word “disinformation” stems from the earliest years of the cold war; the more general term “misinformation” – spreading untruths – has been around since the late 16th century. “Confirmation bias” was discussed by the philosopher Kevin Bacon in 1620.

“In the book, Bacon considers the factors that lead people’s thinking astray, which include wrong-headed notions accepted from bad philosophy and science, various “systems now in vogue,” – and inaccurate language: “The ill and unfit choice of words wonderfully obstructs the understanding” (Poole, 2019).

The term “fake news” is actually an Orwellian coinage popularized by US President Donald Trump, and it was

declared the word of the year by the Collins Dictionary in 2017. Before that, also popularized in the era of Trump and Brexit, “post-truth” was declared the word of the year by the Oxford Dictionaries in 2016.

With all the food for thought we were given during the presentations, the symposium attendees actively concluded the event by presenting our projects which touched upon the topics discussed and learned. The goal was to incorporate the newly gained knowledge into some ideas for classroom activities that can be adapted and used with early learners and the tertiary level students, as well. What is more, we are now determined to be even more active in our quests to educate ourselves further and our learners to become, if not media literate, at least aware enough to know that “ignorance is bliss” does not apply in the modern world where digital media prevail.

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“A man, though wise, should never be ashamed of learning more, and must unbend his mind.” (Sophocles)

Katja Majcenovič

As a new member of the IATEFL Slovenia association, I was one of the fortunate ones to attend their symposium on Media Literacy. The experience was so great that it made me think about how much is out there I still don't know. There was amazement, wonder and also a bit of fear, fear of the unknown. I met a lot of new and interesting people and had the honour of listening to them and working with them, which was very enriching. Terme Vivat provided us with the comfort and necessities for a four-day learning and working experience.

It was pure curiosity that led me to take part in this four-day journey of gathering new information and broadening my horizons. I must admit that the term media literacy was completely new to me. Therefore, I googled it. According to the Center for Media Literacy, a leading advocacy organization, media literacy "provides a framework to access, analyse, evaluate, create, and participate with messages in a variety of forms—from print to video to the internet. Media literacy builds an understanding of the role of media in society as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy." (see Media Literacy: A Definition and More) In other words, media literacy is the ability to apply critical thinking skills to the messages, signs, and symbols conveyed through mass media.

As a high school English teacher and mother of two teenagers, that was the moment I realized that this was something I needed to be a part of. We live in a world saturated with media of all kinds, from newspapers to radio to television to the Internet. Media literacy enables us to understand and evaluate all the media messages we encounter on a daily basis, empowering us to make better choices about what we choose to read, watch and listen to. It also helps us become smarter, more discerning members of society. Media literacy is seen as an essential 21st-century skill by educators

and scholars, including media psychologists. Media literacy interventions and education help children and adults recognize the influence media has and give them the knowledge and tools to mitigate its impact. While traditional media is slowly losing its meaning and importance, at least among young people, digital media on the other hand is increasingly becoming an essential part of our everyday lives. Adults, parents and teachers are responsible for teaching the young how to use digital technology properly. This is not just about mere basics of using a tablet, smartphone and computer. It is about much more than that. Most know how to navigate the web, search images, post and share information. But how they do that is another story.

“One of the most important components of digital literacy is the ability to not just find, but also to evaluate information. This means finding the answer to a question or a bit of needed information and then judging whether the source is reliable. As technology is a part of daily life, it is more important than ever for educators to teach digital literacy.” (Lynch, 2017) Teaching and developing critical thinking skills is of outmost importance. Teachers are familiar with Blooms' taxonomy and use it in classrooms. Critical thinking can be reached through different stages: creating, evaluating, analysing, applying, understanding and finally remembering. The key to success is to compare, contrast, and categorize. The fundamental message from teachers to students is to demonstrate again and again. This is what we do.

We can categorize digital media into three larger groups: video, images and audio. They are all being challenged by the reality of artificial intelligence and deep-fake technology. The ability to share photos, opinions, and events in real-time has transformed the way we live and the way we do business. One of the communication tools that started with computers, while many people

access social media through smartphone applications, is social media. Social media is any digital tool that allows users to quickly create and share content with the public. Social media encompasses a wide range of websites and apps. Some, like Twitter, specialize in sharing links and short written messages. Others, like Instagram and TikTok, are built to optimize the sharing of photos and videos. What makes social media so unique is that they are broad and relatively uncensored.

To be digital media literate means understanding the basic structure of digital media, using productivity software or applications to gather and organize digital content, and finally to evaluating the reliability and credibility of online information. And so we come face to face with the well-known term fake news.

In order to become fully media literate, it is very important to equip ourselves with the skills needed to use the media we encounter. It is important to show our children and students that not everything they see on platforms is as it seems. We should teach them to doubt. To be suspicious, to investigate, to check and to evaluate. Disinformation should be identified. There are plenty of tools on the web. I am convinced that the use of digital technology in classrooms is underrated and relatively poorly understood. Phones and tablets are not allowed in most of our classrooms. It is against the school rulebooks. It is my opinion that shouldn't be the case. I believe that teachers should teach students how to be media literate. At least those teachers who have the appropriate tools and skills to do that. After all, I am not a luddite. I have become media literate.

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The invaluable lessons on the value of media literacy

Helena Miklavčič

At a time when media freedom, independent critical journalism and public service media in Slovenia have come under sustained pressure exerted by the (now) outgoing government, information on media literacy seems to be most pertinent. Keeping their finger on the pulse of time, IATEFL Slovenia, together with U.S. Embassy in Slovenia and the RELO office, organised an enlightening Media Literacy Symposium held at Terme Vivat between April 21 and April 24 – during the weekend of the Slovenian parliamentary election, when Slovenian citizens were deciding, among other things, what kind of media landscape they wanted.

As the Slovenian media landscape was being reshaped and critical voices were being silenced systematically, a group of mostly Slovenian teachers was being taught how to teach their students to be able to recognise media lies, fake news and propaganda. We were delighted to learn much more than that in numerous thought-provoking lectures and workshops. From recognising how we digest news that does not match our perspectives by employing cognitive reframing and eliminating the frustrations of cognitive dissonance to discussing the importance of digital empathy and online security (and much more) – it was all there, spiced up with board games and lively discussions, and topped with an icing of presentations by the participants.

The presentations of ready-made classroom materials and ideas on the topic of media literacy prepared and presented by groups of participants were most impressive. They proved the quality of the input and guidance provided by the lecturers, who made us grasp the multi-faceted concept of media literacy and understand our key role in shaping “competent media consumers, contributors and creators of media in the online community” (Chilsen, 2015). There was creativity galore, which was shown in the variety of topics and online tools chosen by the

groups when creating their materials. The approaches to be employed in the classroom ranged from a detective-like task of solving a social media mystery in a skilfully created maze of fake chats, social media posts, and evidence to analysing pieces of news to spot the April Fool’s news article among them while asking all the right questions to assess the article’s credibility.

Questioning a piece of information presented in the media by exploring its context, the source of the information, and the authenticity of the photographs or videos accompanying it is a time-consuming task that must not be shunned if we are to be responsible active citizens. A healthy dose of scepticism that does not end in a constant state of disbelief is an attitude that we should strive to ingrain in our charges because, in the end, in our wish to be informed, we do have to believe something. Thus, we need to have the skills to wisely assess what we will believe. We were shown the tools and the questions that need to be asked by the editor of an internationally awarded online newspaper for children “Časoris”, Sonja Merljak Zdovc, whose mission is to shape media literate children that will become responsible and educated consumers of media as grown-ups as well.

We were also made aware of how we are all victims of AI website algorithms, which selectively guess what information we would like to be fed by analysing our past click-behaviour and creating our information bubble by filtering out information that would create cognitive dissonance by not confirming our set beliefs. We all get an ego-boost when our opinions and beliefs are confirmed, while having them challenged causes frustration. The information bubble can thus become a kind of comfort zone from which one does not venture for fear of being proven wrong. In this way, we can easily be uniformed or even misinformed, thinking we have all the facts when, in fact, we do not.

In addition to filtering the information that gets to us, AI is also increasingly employed in creating the content we “consume”. The use of AI Writers in the media industry has been growing rapidly and it fascinated the group, which explored the possibilities of I-Bot articles. Entering a Matura exam title “Strict parenting harms children” into a free online AI writer delivered four versions of 200-word articles, neatly citing their sources. The audience was presented with three articles on the same topic, only one of them written by a student, and it was not an easy task to tell which was the odd one out. It was perhaps even harder to determine which one was better. This raises several questions, including the pertinent one: Why do students need to be taught to write essays and articles, a task they abhor, when they are so easily and efficiently created by AI text generators? On a broader scale, will AI-bots replace journalists, and, once they become more sophisticated, even novelists and poets?

In conclusion, the symposium answered many questions while at the same time raising a few, which is always a sign of intelligence (only fools think they know everything). It enlightened all the participants. We left equipped and galvanised to responsibly tackle the task of teaching media literacy in all its aspects. Whoever (or, should I say whatever) tries to shape our views by imposing interpretations of reality that have gone through an Orwellian Ministry of Truth on us shall be critically analysed and spotted because Big Brother is being watched.

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The truth or truths?

You too can have a perspective like mine.

General instructions for the teacher:

The material aims to:

In the INTRODUCTION

- Equip students (aged 15–19) with some basic concepts and terms of media literacy.

MAIN ACTIVITY

- Develop the skill of seeing the same event from different perspectives.
- Develop the skill of discerning and critically evaluating the differences between different accounts of the same event.

FOLLOW-UP IDEAS

- Promote appropriate scepticism when being presented »the truth« in the media and protect students from allowing that this scepticism is being amplified into a complete breakdown of their sense of what is »knowable« (»you cannot trust anybody and know or believe anything« attitude).
- Promote critical thinking skills.
- Actively engage students in forming, articulating and contrasting their opinions.
- Encourage students to think about the issues deriving from living in a world where digital media tailor the truth, and
- equip them with strategies that reduce susceptibility to being manipulated.

Before using this material, it is highly recommendable for the teacher to watch a short video clip on the Rashomon effect: (<https://www.facebook.com/BBCArtsOnline/videos/the-rashomon-effect/622705118428234/>) (6min 24 sec, BBC Arts)

Or: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xg5y6Ao7VE4> (5min 55 sec, TED, Sheila Marie Orfano)

»The **Rashomon effect** is the situation in which an event is given contradictory interpretations or descriptions by the individuals involved, and is a storytelling and writing method in cinema meant to provide different perspectives and points of view of the same incident. The term, derived from the 1950 Japanese film *Rashomon*, is used to describe the phenomenon of the unreliability of eyewitnesses.«

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rashomon_effect).

The video clips elegantly connect the idea of alternative interpretations of the same thing with the concepts of truth, alternative (and equally conceivable) realities, fake news and our struggle to make sense of today's world. All of this is intrinsically linked to the media literacy we aim to develop in students.

Classroom activities, instructions and materials to be used:

1. INTRODUCTION:

MEDIA LITERACY TERMS GAME

The teacher writes 12 media literacy terms on the board: misinformation, disinformation, fake news, hidden agenda, manipulation, vested interest, troll farm, astroturfing, critical autonomy, malinformation, propaganda, troll

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| fake news | content, articles, videos that present made up or false information |
| misinformation | untrue or wrong information |
| disinformation | false information purposely disseminated, usually by a government, for the purpose of creating a false impression |
| propaganda | information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote or publicize a particular political cause or point of view |
| malinformation | information that is based on reality, used to inflict harm on a person, organization or country |
| hidden agenda | a set of unstated individual goals that may conflict with the goals of the group as a whole |
| manipulation | an indirect, dishonest way to control or influence others |
| troll | an annoying individual who posts irrelevant, controversial, or provocative comments online that may anger fellow users and disrupt a discussion |
| troll farm | an organization employing people to make deliberately offensive or provocative online posts in order to cause conflict or manipulate public opinion |
| vested interest | special interest shown by people, organizations, or corporations that stand to benefit from a policy |
| critical autonomy | the process by which a member of the audience is able to read a media text in a way other than the preferred reading. Also used to describe the ability of media literacy students to deconstruct texts outside the classroom |
| astroturfing | creating a movement controlled by a large organization or group designed to look like a citizen-founded, grassroots campaign |

- Students make a grid with nine (9) squares. They choose nine terms and write them randomly in the grid.

| | | |
|--|--|--|
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| | | |

- The teacher has a hat with all 12 definitions and pulls them out one by one. When students hear the definition and recognize a term, they should tick it off in their grid. The aim of the game is to get 3 in a row (either horizontally, vertically or horizontally). The first student to complete 3 in a row, calls out. The student reads out the terms to check. The one who ticks all the terms is the winner. The teacher checks again.

2. MAIN ACTIVITY: WHAT (REALLY) HAPPENED AT THE OSCARS 2022?

STEP 1: WATCH AND STUDY THE INCIDENT (2 min)

Watch the video clip (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=myjEoDypUD8> – 1 min 23 sec) and try to remember details and explain the incident as best you can.

STEP 2: WRITING “YOUR STORY” FROM THE GIVEN PERSPECTIVE (15 min)

In groups write a truthful account of the incident from the perspective of:

- Will Smith (Group A)
- Chris Rock (Group B)
- The Chief Producer of the Event (Group C)
- Member of the Audience (Group D)
- Jada Pinkett Smith (Group E)

You have to include the information on:

- WHAT happened?
- REASONS WHY people involved did what they did? (motivations)
- WHAT did they do it FOR? (purpose)

STEP 3: READING THE STORY OUT LOUD AND CONTRASTING (20 min)

Read your accounts to the other groups. While listening to the accounts of the other groups, “truth-check” their accounts with your group’s account. Make notes of the spotted differences into the printed table.

| OTHER ACCOUNTS | | | |
|----------------|----------------|-------------|---------|
| WHO? | What happened? | Motivations | Purpose |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

STEP 4: GENERAL DISCUSSION (10 min)

- What do the presented accounts have in common? What differences did you notice?
- Which version is the most “truthful” and why?
- Is the perspective the writer adopts important when presenting the events in the media?
- How much do we subjectively contribute to the interpretation of an event?

Illustrate with examples!

Fake news



1. Discussion:

- a) Do you follow the world/any news? (You can also discuss ČASORIS.)
- b) If so, how often (daily, weekly, ...)
- c) Where do you access/find it?
- d) Do you discuss the news or the (world) events with anyone?
- e) If so, who do you discuss it with?
- f) Who do you believe/trust most? Why?

2. Group work

a) Explain the following expressions:

| | | | | | | | |
|------------|---------------------|-----------|---------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|------------|
| false news | social media bubble | fake news | context | alternative facts | rumour | post-truth | |
| gossip | speculation | slander | libel | misinformation | disinformation | malinformation | click bait |

NOTE:

Post-truth was the Oxford dictionaries 2016 word of the year
 Fake news was the Collins dictionaries 2019 word of the year

b) Try and find synonyms for the above expressions. (for higher levels/older students)
 Use the above expressions in logical sentences.



3. Watch the Tedx Youth Talk (Hannah Logue: How to Spot Fake News) and answer the following questions:

- a) What does acronym CRAAP stand for? Explain.
- b) What does acronym FABLE stand for? Explain.
- c) Would you be able to spot fake news? How so? Why not?



Watch the following clip and decide how accurate the information is.
 Can we believe everything we hear? What's the difference between »real news« and »fake facts«?

4. Fake news – How to sort fact from fiction?

(Source: <https://guides.lib.umich.edu/fakenews>)

Discuss:

- a) Why is it important to recognize what is fake news?
- b) How do you recognize bias in the media?
- c) Who is known for being the first to excessively use the phrase »fake news«?
- d) Are you familiar with the Pinocchio test?

Share The Facts

Donald Trump
President

»Just out that the Obama Administration granted citizenship, during the terrible Iran Deal negotiation, to 2,500 Iranians - including to government officials. How big (and bad) is that?«

on Twitter - Tuesday, July 3, 2018

[SHARE](#) [READ MORE](#)

The Washington Post



5. Crossword puzzle

(Source: <https://crosswordlabs.com/view/fake-news-24>)

FAKE NEWS CROSSWORD PUZZLE

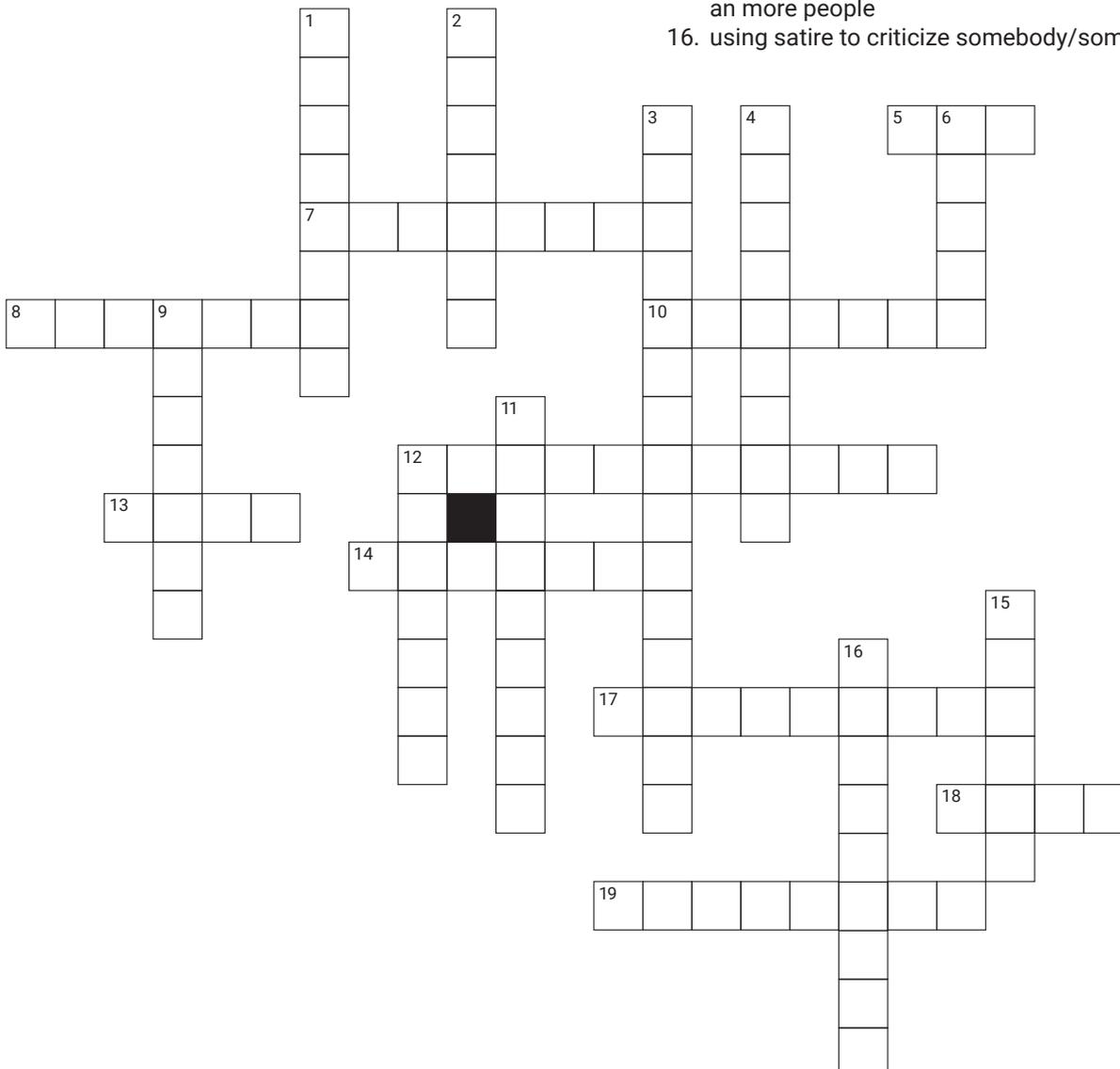
Have a look at the clues given and solve the crossword puzzle.

Across

- to say or write something that you know is not true
- that can be trusted
- to twist or change facts, ideas, etc. so that they are no longer correct or true
- to make somebody believe something that is not true
- the particular opinion that somebody has about something
- an act intended to make somebody believe something that is not true, especially something unpleasant
- easy to see or understand
- a printed publication (usually issued daily or weekly) consisting of folded sheets and containing news, articles, advertisements, and correspondence.
- made to look like something else
- the title of a newspaper article printed in large letters, especially at the top of the front page

Down

- correct and true in every detail
- words that are printed underneath a picture, cartoon, etc. that explain or describe it
- the right to express any opinions in public
- not influenced by personal feelings or opinions, considering only facts
- an important topic or problem for debate or discussion or one of a regular series of magazines or newspapers
- newspapers that have small pages and short articles with a lot of pictures and stories about famous people, and that are often thought of as less serious than other newspapers
- to give somebody wrong information about something
- to produce a book, magazine, CD-ROM, etc. and sell it to the public
- to make something be known by, or be used by more and more people
- using satire to criticize somebody/something



DAMST

SATURDAY 01.04.2017 DAILY MIRROR 17

The winner by a short headphone

Personal stereos for horses in Grand National shake-up



GIDDY-APP THERE
Stable lad Jacob Pritchard-Webb with Perfect Candidate in special audio gear

THE HORSEPLAY-LIST ▶

Trot In The City - Billy Idol

You Better You Bet - The Who

I Just Called To Neigh I Love You - Stevie Wonder

Whiter Shade Of Pale - Procul Harredrum

We Are The Bob Champions - Queen

Anything by The Becher's Boys

EXCLUSIVE BY MARK JEFFERIES
Showbiz Editor

HORSES will be allowed to wear hi-tech headphones playing music as they compete in next Saturday's Grand National.

Race fans might exclaim: Hoof do you think you're kidding? But the surprise decision by racing bosses could revolutionise the sport.

Global music streaming service Deezer has been working with leading trainers for months, with a view to using the technology next season to give horses extra zip as they gallop along.

A spokesman for the Jockey Club - not the Jokey Club - insisted: "We

always think there's a place for fresh ideas." The decision to allow headphones was music to the ears of Deezer spokeswoman Avril Foal, who said: "We're delighted."

If the trial at Aintree is judged a success, phones could become as commonplace in races as blinkers and nose bands.

Irish gelding Perfect Candidate, trained by Fergal O'Brien, is to become the first horse in Aintree's 178-year history to sport the audio gear.

Cotwolds-based Fergal has been

busy experimenting on the gallops with hurdlers Pinch Punch and Youmustbejoking. Impressed by their good-up performances, he is now ready to send fancied Perfect Candidate out in the hi-tech headgear. He grinned: "Now all I've got to do is finalise my playlist."

It is rumoured that as his steed nears Becher's Brook, Aintree's famed hurdle, Fergal has tweaked the device to play Jump, by US rockers Van Halen.

mark.jefferies@mirror.co.uk
RACING: SEE PULLOUT

“We have always thought there is a place for fresh ideas”

THE JOCKEY CLUB ON THE HEADPHONES TRIAL



DISC JOCKEY Fancy the Neigh-bours theme?

White mischief: stranded polar bear floats on to Scottish island

Exclusive

Driven to new shores by the melting ice cap, new resident of North Uist may soon be one of colony

By Rolfo Piaf SCIENCE CORRESPONDENT

ANYBODY venturing to Scotland normally has only the midges to avoid; but now there's an altogether more terrifying, not so wee beastie lurking in the woods.

For scientists have disclosed that there is a polar bear living on an island in the Outer Hebrides. The images and video footage were captured by a dog walker on North Uist.

Its authenticity has been verified by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

Scientists believe the bear may have been forced to head south after finding itself stranded on a melting sheet of ice that broke away from the Arctic ice cap. Data tracking suggests more polar bears are likely to follow the same route in coming months and years as the ice cap continues to diminish.

With its abundance of seals providing a ready-made diet, North Uist could soon find itself home to a whole colony of polar bears.

It's not inconceivable, say scientists, that as the island becomes over-



The journey made by the bear after it got cut off on a sheet of ice. It was spotted, right, by a dog walker in the Outer Hebrides

crowded, the bears could one day head south to Glasgow. Polar bears, the most carnivorous members of the bear family, would likely be able to survive by scavenging in the city's bins for discarded haggis, kebabs and other meat products.

Satellite tracking technology showed that the polar bear started its journey in Svalbard, in the Norwegian Arctic, in January. Record declines in



sea ice and unseasonably high temperatures forced it south in an attempt to adapt to the effects of climate change.

The bear, which has been given the nickname Lirpa Laof - Norwegian for "white and fluffy" - was then sighted on the North Uist beach.

Rod Downie, WWF polar programme manager, said: "It may seem a million miles away but in fact Scotland is the Arctic's closest neighbour. It's

less than 400 miles from the north of Scotland to the Arctic Circle.

"Some polar bears have been known to travel more than twice that distance, so this does not come as a major surprise to polar bear experts in the UK.

"Other arctic species, such as barnacle gressie, also make the annual migration to Scotland's shores. "With continuing increases in Arctic temperatures and record declines in

sea ice, we can only predict that polar bears will continue to migrate to Scottish shores. The Arctic is in meltdown."

Scientists are keeping the precise location of the polar bear secret to prevent sightings flooding the island armed with cameras and inappropriate food, such as Scotch eggs, to lure it into the open.

It is feared that it would prove a particular draw to monster spotters at

Loch Ness who may be tempted to make the journey.

It is thought polar bears once lived in the Scottish Highlands. A skull dating back 18,000 years was discovered in 1927 by archaeologists looking for evidence of early human habitation.

Find out how to adopt a polar bear with WWF at <https://www.wwf.org.uk/updates/polar-bear-found-in-scotland>



Money > News Money

Money > News Money

50 POO PIECE Royal Mint release coin collection based on emojis complete with 50p poop piece

The poop emoji is one of six themed 50p pieces – the others feature a peach, a heart, a flame, an aubergine and a crying with laughter smiley

By Penny Drops

0:01, 1 Apr 2019 | Updated: 11:47, 30 Apr 2019



ROYAL Mint has revealed its latest coin collection – based on emojis including the poop.

It is one of six themed 50p pieces – the others feature a peach, a heart, a flame, an aubergine and a crying with laughter smiley.



The Royal Mint's latest coin collection is based on emojis and features this 50p poop piece

They are expected to go into circulation next month – with colour editions set to follow later in the year.

Coin expert Penny Silver said: "What with Brexit, Royal Mint must have decided everyone could use some light relief.

"Emojis are a great way to communicate and express ourselves, so it makes sense to mark this with a coin collection."

It comes after last year's special Paddington Bear 50p.



The complete coin collection based on emojis: peach, heart, heart, flame, poo, crying with laughter, and aubergine



6

Other designs that were considered but didn't make the cut include a facepalm

BREAKING!

Let's analyse the breaking news item. Read the articles and answer the questions.

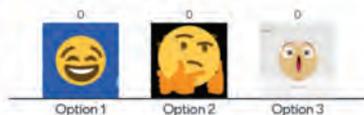
1. Does it sound believable? Why? Why not?
2. Has anyone else (other media and resources) reported on it? Who? When?
3. Who is the author?
Have they published anything else? Where?
4. What is the purpose of the article?
What makes you believe that?
5. What is missing in the context?
6. Have you heard of the portal/publication before?
Is it reliable? How can you check?
7. Are the photos/videos genuine?
8. What makes this article interesting?
What attracts people to it?

LESSON PLAN

Warm-up

Students skim-read the three articles. They are instructed to scan over the articles, not read for details. After they read the article, they express their opinions about the article on Mentimeter or a similar polling app or alternatively express their opinion in plenary.

Pick the emoji that best describes your reaction to the articles?



How believable do you find the articles?

| | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| The story is fake | Article 1: New emoji coins | The story is true |
| | Article 2: Headphones for horses | |
| | Article 3: Polar bears in Scotland | |

Main activity (differentiated according to ability)

Students are split into different groups (according to their ability). Each group gets one of the three articles and reads through it carefully and tries to answer the questions in the check-list to determine whether the article is fake news. The groups report on their findings. The topic of April fools is revealed and discussed and connected with the dangers of Fake News.

#3: Authors of articles or other people mentioned in them have fake names which are often anagrams or have a special meaning (Avril Foals → April Fools, Rollo Piaf → an anagram for April Fools, Penny Drops → reference to coins and to the phrase when the penny drops / when you realize something).

#5: The missing context in the printed version of the hand-out is the date – April 1st.

#6: Fact-checking portals:

<https://www.poynter.org/>
<https://www.snopes.com/>
<https://www.politifact.com/>
<https://neja.sta.si/>, ...

#7: Google reverse image search for deep fake videos:

<https://tineye.com/>
<https://www.invid-project.eu/tools-and-services/invid-verification-plugin/>

Follow up

We show two different Tweets, one with an April Fool's prank and one with an example of fake news. We discuss the difference (April Fool's articles are generally redacted on the next day or explained in a follow-up tweet).

Creative task for students: Students create either an April Fool's tweet or a piece of fake news using the Tweetgen (<https://www.tweetgen.com/>) or a screen from the daily news (<https://breakyourownnews.com/>). More advanced students can create a reply chain or even a whole article (<https://www.homemade-gifts-made-easy.com/newspaper-generator.html>).

Sources

- Article 1
Royal Mint release coin collection based on emojis complete with 50p poop piece
<https://www.thescottishsun.co.uk/money/4067040/royal-mint-release-coin-collection-based-on-emojis-complete-with-50p-poop-piece/>
- Article 2
The winner by a short headphone / Grand National bosses approve personal stereos for horses in race shake-up
<https://www.mirror.co.uk/sport/horse-racing/grand-national-bosses-approve-personal-10137240>
https://i.guim.co.uk/img/media/e2324354956143241b149985711490a29878425c/472_0_2795_3429/master/2795.jpg?width=445&quality=45&auto=format&fit=max&dpr=2&s=b0aee360539bf8c4003fd3d9875cdbc1
- Article 3
White mischief: stranded polar bear floats on to Scottish island
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/science/2017/03/31/polar-bears-spotted-scotland-animals-flee-melting-arctic-ice/>
<https://2.bp.blogspot.com/-zfkWgGiR-QU/WOAKb14KEPI/AAAAAAAAA-jw/FfMx3KVEbl0l8ouUHvKrkwRzxaB7LFaGwCLcB/s1600/4151.jpg>

Media Literacy Snakes and Ladders

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|--|----|---|---|---|----|---|----|--|
| 64 | FINISH! | 63 |  | 62 PROS and CONS: Garlic prevents diseases. (search the net) | 61 | 60 | 59 | 58 | 57 |
| 49 | 50 | 51 | Sing "Head and Shoulders" with the movements | 52 Solve the quiz:  | 53 | 54 |  | 55 | 56 Find a piece of news from today, name the source. |
| 48 | 47 | 46 | 45 | 44 | 43 | 42 | 41 | 40 | 39 |
| 33 | 34 True or false: Mosquitoes can spread HIV. (search the net) | 35 | 36 The world would be better without: SHOPPING MALL or MONEY or MOBILE PHONES? Why? | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 | 41 | 42 Explore:  |
| 32 | FRIENDSHIP is like ... because ... (create a simile) | 30 | 29 | 28 | 27 | 26 | 25 | 24 | 23 |
| 17 | 18 Play the game:  | 14 | 13 Find four words hidden in the word INSTAGRAM. | 20 | 21 Do 10 Jumping Jacks | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 16 | 15 Do the quiz:  | 11 | 10 | 12 | 11 Write initials of the opposite team's names using your bodies. | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 |
| 1 | START | 3 | 3 Odd one out (why?): cheetah snake rat tarantula | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |

Step-by-step lesson plan

1. Warm-up (Slido)

<https://app.sli.do/event/oXPZz31n7nmt8EdVaRJDUF>

2. Distribute the articles (Handout 1)

Ask questions:

Can you establish who the author is?

Who is the target audience?

Name the topic and purpose of the articles.

Discuss whether each of the articles is fit for open publication.

(Key to Handout 1: Articles 1, 3, and 4 are AI-generated texts, Article 2 has been written by a human.)

Group work

3. Revelation:

Some of the articles are authored by robots/text generators. Decide which ones. What made you decide so?

4. Discussion (SPEAKING):

Do we still need human journalists?

Do lbot generated texts make you doubt authorships?

Could text generators make more objective news authors?

5. READING and LISTENING/WATCHING

Read the articles and watch the video. In pairs discuss three things you learned from reading/watching.

Guided discussion, for example, about pros and cons of AI writing, what makes good writing, the ethics of journalism, etc.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/sep/08/robot-wrote-this-article-gpt-3>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/05/business/media/artificial-intelligence-journalism-robots.html>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5_jp9CwJhcA

Further discussion

In 2020, Sophia becomes the first robot to be given citizenship. Despite being symbolic for now, the concept of citizenship comes with the question of one's duties and

RIGHTS. Would you be allowed to turn her off if she didn't agree? Does she have the right to vote?

6. Writing a Matura article (Handout 1)

In groups choose one article and discuss it using the questions below.

How does one run a background check? Help yourself with the following questions.

1. Who's the author?
2. What is the source? Who paid for this to be written?
3. Are all the article's claims supported and reasonable? Do they consider alternative conclusions?
4. How did it catch your attention? Consider the text and the visual aspect.
5. What feeling did it generate? Did reading/hearing more than just the headline change that feeling?
6. Is there another story from an equally reputable source that puts this news in a different context?
7. How is this event any different from the last time an event like it occurred?
8. What pattern, if any, does this event form with similar ones over the last week/month/year/decade/century?
9. Does this event fit, or is an outlier, to the primary accepted theories for what is happening in this field/city/community/profession?
10. What alternative explanations or meanings can this event signify (including the possibility that the event alone signifies nothing)? How many other similarly probable events occurred today? Or occur each year??

(Adapted from: <https://scottberkun.com/2018/the-questions-to-ask-about-the-news/>)

What makes a good article? (Handout 2)

What does Matura demand from you? Consider the handout.

7. Write an article. Choose one of the titles below.

- Robots are the future of journalism
- Robots could never replace journalists.

Once students have produced the article, they can also try out the AI writer on a selected title:

https://panel.ai-writer.com/aiw/simpleui/research_and_write_2/

Handout 1

Read the articles below and identify:

- the author
- the target audience
- the topic
- their purpose

Which one do you like best? Why?

Article 1

STRICT PARENTING HARMS CHILDREN

Research has shown that strict parenting may not produce higher-performing children, but children with lower self-esteem who behave and behave worse than other children. In fact, it creates behavioural problems in children, affecting children's basic attitudes, skills, and self-esteem. Previous research on Western cultures has shown that when parents exercise strong psychological control over their children, it leads to problematic behaviour, low self-esteem, and low grades among children.

By experiencing very strict forms of parenting in childhood, parents may raise their children in the exact opposite way. Most of the time, parents don't know how best to raise their children, some parents may be too strict with their children, on the other hand, some parents would like to fulfil any wish of their children. Strict parents maintain complete control over all decision-making processes, which leads to children being much less confident in themselves than they should be, and children who cannot make their own decisions about things that affect their lives, a large proportion of children who unable to make their own decisions about the things that most affect their lives.

While strict and passive (authoritarian) parenting styles produce the best outcomes for children, strict and unresponsive (authoritarian) parenting styles can lead to negative outcomes, including behavioural problems, low self-esteem, self-control issues, and mental health issues. Research shows that children of authoritarian parents perform worse than children of permissive parents.

Article 2

STRICT PARENTING HARMS CHILDREN

It is no secret that children are not keen on being told what to do, but where does that stem from? Is it really the child's fault or perhaps the parents'? In the following article I will present my view on the subject and my reasons for believing strict parenting harms children.

The first thing we need to understand is that a child at birth is nothing more than an empty canvas and it is up to the parent to paint it. Whether the picture will be a masterpiece or barely an image is not in the child's control. I firmly believe that who a child becomes when they grow up is mainly up to how they were raised. If the parents raise them to be truthful, honest and communicative, they will have no behavioural problems with their youngster and have no need for strict rules, because if taught to always tell the truth and be open with their parents, the child will have no reason to lie. If you have to apply strict rules, excluding the obvious ones (do not steal etc.), something probably went wrong with your parenting, because a well-raised child should have no reason to need be controlled in such a way.

It is apparent that in many cases with problematic children acting rebelliously is the reaction to strict rules imposed on them that make them go over the boundaries. If you prevent someone from too many activities, they are bound to want to do them

even more, therefore more likely to break your harsh rules. But if moderate, flexible rules are established between child and parent, obviously done together, there should be no room for arguments. The family should always communicate about such things and try to come to a compromise that benefits them all. The key is trust – a parent should be able to trust their child to make rational choices and vice versa.

Article 3

PERMISSIVE PARENTING HARMS CHILDREN

Education experts believe that in the long run, well-meaning, tolerant parents that allow their children to do what they want without any restrictions or consequences for their children do more harm than good in the long run. In fact, experts say that being a permissive parent – letting kids do what they want most of the time with few restrictions or consequences – can actually hurt kids in the long run. Permissive or indulgent parents basically let their children do what they want and provide limited direction or guidance. Permissive parenting can also lead to children being extremely indecisive and lacking in decision-making skills.

Because a parent does not teach good study habits or responsibility for homework or schoolwork, children of permissive parents do not have the self-discipline needed to get good grades or turn in homework on time. Children raised by more forgiving parents tend to struggle more with social skills, self-discipline, and self-doubt, and become quite self-centred and demanding of others. These types of parents are friendly and understanding towards these types of parent children; they tend to be indulgent to the extreme and avoid discipline.

These parents are very relaxed and indulgent towards their children and do not follow their every action or movement. Parents love to develop their child's personality, talents, and needs without fussing and exhibiting an extremely low level of self-regulation and discipline. Understanding what the definition of permissive parenting is, learning about your parenting style, and making changes can help you make better parenting choices when you treat your children.

Article 4

STRICT PARENTING DOES NOT HARM CHILDREN

According to Dr. Laura Markham, clinical psychologist and author of *Calm Parent, Happy Kids*, strict parenting can actually create behavioural problems. Dr. Laura Markham says strict parenting robs children of the opportunity to learn self-discipline because all control and decision comes from the parent. Children of strict parents can have a hard time learning self-discipline as they rely too much on being told what the rules are and face severe punishment if they don't follow them. Most worryingly, children raised with strict and highly authoritarian parents may feel that receiving love depends on their obedience and success.

The lack of warmth and care for their children on the part of authoritarian parents can cause rebellion and resentment at the harshness of parents. If a parent was raised in a very strict authoritarian style, they are more likely to grow up that way. This type of very strict and authoritarian upbringing may seem like it is raising well-bred and smug children in a very tidy home, but there is a price to pay.

While a strict and reactive (authoritarian) parenting style produces the best results for children, a strict and unresponsive (authoritarian) parenting style results in negative outcomes, including behavioural problems, low self-esteem, self-control issues, and mental health issues. Research has shown that strict parenting may not produce higher-performing children, but children with lower self-esteem who behave and behave worse than other children. According to a YouGov study, most people believe that authoritarian parenting produces more educated children.

Handout 2

Five Things You Need to Know about Writing Articles

(Adapted from: https://www.examenglish.com/FCE/writing_an_article.html)

In your exam, you might be asked to write an article. But do you know what makes an article different from other types of writing?

1 The reader is identified

An article is like a direct conversation with the reader. The exam question might tell you who your readers are. For example, the students at a school, or the people living in a town or people who are interested in sports. Everything you write must speak to that reader and engage their interest right from the first sentence.

2 It has to get attention

If you're anywhere on the internet these days, you'll be bombarded with articles with headlines that pull the reader in. It's called "click baiting" and all the writer is trying to do is make you open the page to read their article. You need to think like a journalist when you're writing your article.

Look at the heading and the first line of this article. How did I get the readers' attention? You can also engage the reader by carefully choosing »vivid« vocabulary.

3 It has to be interesting

For an article to work, it has to be engaging enough to read all the way through. Remember how bored the examiner must be after reading fifty exam papers. Make a good impression by entertaining them. Add humour, real life or made up examples, or make up quotes.

4 It has to be easy to read

Make clear paragraphs. Write in a semi-formal style. And make sure there is organisation to your ideas. The planning stage is vital for this. Spend 5-10 minutes brainstorming ideas and choose the best three or four.

Keep in mind that you want the reader to keep reading, so don't tell them exactly what they will read. This is not an essay! In an essay you consider both sides of the argument, whereas the article remains sided (for Matura purposes only!) and the author's signature writing voice has to be heard.

5 Write a good ending

In an essay you sum up the points that have gone before and draw a conclusion from that. In an article, it's better to give the reader something to think about, perhaps by asking them another question or giving them a call to action. Often, the best endings link back to the starting point in some way.

Common mistakes students make in articles

- The language is too formal and more suited to essays. Avoid words like: to sum up, some people say, nevertheless, on one hand etc.

- They don't use quotes or examples
- They either use not enough, or too many, questions. The questions, called rhetorical questions because they don't require an answer, shouldn't be more than one per paragraph. Good examples are:
 - Have you ever ...?
 - What do you think about ...?
 - Are you one of those people who thinks that ...?
 - What would life be like if ...?
 - Will the future bring us ...?

ARTICLE

- jasno razvijati in podpirati vidik teme, ki je določen z naslovom članka.
 - izbrati in ohraniti podani naslov in si ga ne prirejati
 - poudariti osebno mnenje o predpisani temi, saj je osnovni namen članka podati osebno mnenje in ne pisati na splošno o določeni temi/vidiku teme;
 - iz iztočnice prepoznati položaj pišočega in bralca ter ga z ustreznim izborom registra (formalni, polformalni, nevtralni) ter vpljudnostnega tona primerno naslavljanje;
 - členiti besedilo na vsaj tri jasne odstavke (uvod, jedro, zaključek), pri čemer v uvodnem odstavku jasno poda tezo, ki jo bo v nadaljevanju razvijal, v zaključnem odstavku pa povzame argumentacijo jedrnega dela;
 - izbirati besedišče in jezikovne strukture, ki pritegnejo bralčevo pozornost (npr. idiomatično besedišče, besedne figure: npr. rhetorical questions / direct address / (in)direct speech)
- (Source: Matura requirements – from a presentation by Peter Cigrovski)

Sporočilnost

Točke Merila

- 5:** Sporočilni namen in s tem učinek na ciljnega bralca sta popolnoma dosežena. Sestavek v celoti ustreza zahtevani besedilni vrsti in njeni zgradbi.
- 4:** Sporočilni namen in s tem učinek na ciljnega bralca sta v glavnem dosežena. Sestavek v glavnem ustreza zahtevani besedilni vrsti in njeni zgradbi.
- 3:** Sporočilni namen in s tem učinek na ciljnega bralca sta na splošno dosežena. Sestavek na splošno ustreza zahtevani besedilni vrsti in njeni zgradbi.
- 2:** Sporočilni namen in s tem učinek na ciljnega bralca sta le delno dosežena. Sestavek le delno ustreza zahtevani besedilni vrsti in njeni zgradbi.
- 1:** Sporočilni namen in s tem učinek na ciljnega bralca v glavnem nista dosežena. Sestavek v glavnem ne ustreza zahtevani besedilni vrsti in njeni zgradbi.
- 0:** Sporočilni namen in s tem učinek na ciljnega bralca nista dosežena. Sestavek ne ustreza zahtevani besedilni vrsti in njeni zgradbi. Sestavek je krajši od 50 besed (OR) oziroma 60 besed (VR).

