
Approaches to Media and Information Literacy Instruction in K12 Education

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Multiple disciplines and subject areas, as well as agencies such as NATO (Jolls, 2022) the United Nations (2022), and the Southern Poverty Law Center and Polarization and Extremism Research and Innovation (Dashtgard et al., 2022) have urged educators to incorporate media literacy skills into curriculum to address mis/disinformation and the impact of emergent and established online features such as social media algorithms and generative AI on evaluating and using information. As information literacy specialists who have expertise in search and evaluation, school librarians possess the skills necessary to navigate the emerging media landscape, especially when teaching in collaboration with classroom teachers. This presentation aims to review the literature as well as existing media and information literacy programs to identify the biggest concerns, the objectives of popular existing media literacy programs, and the gaps that exist between instruction and emergent concerns. Since we found the information overwhelming, we narrowed our scope to emphasize mis/disinformation and K12 instruction, focusing on two questions:

- How are people addressing concerns around algorithms and AI?
- How are people integrating media literacy into content area instruction?

So far we have found that implementation of media literacy is often on the functional or superficial level. For example, the focus for AI literacy is on prompt engineering and ethical citation, not the deeper level of AI literacy such as being able to evaluate AI tools to match research needs. There is also a call for critical literacy in research, with a bias towards generative AI and a mostly reactionary approach to mis/disinformation. These findings indicate a need to build foundational information literacy skills to support deeper, more critical AI literacy instruction.

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Biographies

Dr. Mary Ann Harlan is an associate professor at San Jose State University. She has fourteen years of experience as a K12 educator, and ten as a school librarian. Her research interests lie in the field of information practices.

Lisa Cheby, the Endowed Education Librarian at California State University, Northridge, has nineteen years experience in K12 education. Her research centers information literacy instruction, school libraries, and AI in education.