What do Facts Have to Do with It?
Instructional Emphasis in the Stony Brook News Literacy Curriculum

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Media Literacy and “News Literacy” in the United States

By Michael RobbGrieco, 2012
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• “Global” vs. “Journalism School” News Literacy (RobbGrieco & Hobbs)
• Stony Brook University [School of Journalism] definition:
  – The ability to use critical thinking skills to judge the reliability and credibility of news reports, whether they come via print, TV, or on the Internet
    • Reliable information is actionable information-- it allows people to make a judgment, reach a conclusion, or take an action
• Other definitions:
  – Maksl, Ashley and Craft (2015) define news media literacy as the “knowledge and motivations needed to identify and engage with journalism” (29).
  – Fleming (2014) defines news literacy as the ability to access, evaluate, analyze and appreciate journalism.
## The Stony Brook Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>News</th>
<th>Entertainment</th>
<th>Promotion</th>
<th>Propaganda</th>
<th>Raw Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal</strong></td>
<td>To inform</td>
<td>To amuse or to engage people during their leisure time to attract their passive participants</td>
<td>To sell goods and services and talent/personalities by increasing their appeal to consumers</td>
<td>To build mass support for an ideology by canonizing its leaders and demonizing its opposition</td>
<td>To bypass institutional filters and distribution costs in order to sell, publicize, advocate, entertain and inform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Methods</strong></td>
<td>Verification, independence and accountability</td>
<td>Storytelling, performance, the visual arts and music</td>
<td>Paid advertising and public relations activities. Press releases, public statements, staged events, sponsorship, product placement, websites, viral videos, etc.</td>
<td>One-sided accounts or outright lies, relying on emotional manipulation through images, appeals to majority values and fallacious reasoning</td>
<td>Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, blogs, websites, chain email, text message forwarding, flyers, graffiti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Practitioners</strong></td>
<td>Reporters, photographers/ videographers, editors and producers</td>
<td>Actors, musicians, writers and producers</td>
<td>Ad agencies, publicists, public relations experts, government spokespersons</td>
<td>Political operatives and organizations</td>
<td>Anyone with a web connection, photocopier or a can of paint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcomes</strong></td>
<td>Empowers citizens by educating them</td>
<td>Distraction from or changed view of daily life. Reinforcement or critique of social norms</td>
<td>Increased sales of products and services or higher fees for talent being promoted</td>
<td>Helps a group seize or maintain power by influencing public opinion and motivating the public to take action consistent with its ideology</td>
<td>Outlet for self-expression, entertainment, promotion, advocacy, propaganda</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Stony Brook University, Center for News Literacy*
The Stony Brook Curriculum

• Journalistic “truth” is provisional
• Judging the reliability of sources:
  – Independent Sources Are Better Than Self-Interested Sources
  – Multiple Sources Are Better Than Single Sources
  – Sources Who Verify Are Better Than Sources Who Assert
  – Authoritative/Informed Sources Are Better Than Uninformed Sources
  – Named Sources Are Better Than Unnamed Sources
• Mnemonic Device: “I’M VAIN”
Study

- **Aim:**
  - Develop a multidimensional and multiperspectival framework to identify and assess instructional emphasis in a specialized approach to media literacy education.

- **Research Question:**
  - In relation to media literacy education, what is emphasized in the Stony Brook news literacy curriculum?

- **Method:** Qualitative case study
  - 28 interviews, 26 observations and 100s documents
  - Data were organized and analyzed in Nvivo

- **Analytic Framework**
  - Major approaches to media literacy instruction identified by Silverblatt, Ferry, and Finan (1999): Ideological, autobiographical, production element, nonverbal and mythic
    - Factual analysis category added to framework, based on data patterns and themes
  - Potter’s (2008) four domains of media literacy understanding: Cognitive, emotional, aesthetic, and moral
## Findings

### Figure 1: Media Literacy Analytic Matrix and Results

#### Approaches to Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Domains</th>
<th>Ideological</th>
<th>Autobiographical</th>
<th>Prod. Elements</th>
<th>Factual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetic</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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Resources

News Literacy in Europe
- Adam Mickiewicz University in Poland
- Apply now for summer 2016 institute

“Making Sense of News” MOOC
- Masato Kajimoto/University of Hong Kong
- 5,000 people/142 countries

• See “Media & Learning” newsletter article