

Book Review

**De Abreu, B. S. (2019). *Teaching media literacy, Second Edition.*
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Students “have trouble judging the credibility of the information they encounter online.” To navigate the media successfully, they must have “the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, create, and act using all forms of mass communications” (p. xiii). The second edition of *Teaching Media Literacy* presents a way of thinking about becoming media-savvy beyond simply checking sources and relying on authoritative resources.

Belinha S. De Abreu (@belmedia), an international media literacy educator who served as an expert to the Forum on Media and Information Literacy for UNESCO’s Communication and Information Section, is the founder of the International Media Literacy Research Symposium. Dr. De Abreu has gathered a cadre of distinguished media literacy experts to help librarians and educators teach students how to think critically as they encounter news stories. Contributors to this volume take the issue of fake news head-on, including misrepresentations of facts, digital literacy, and the use of media literacy around the world “as a vehicle for social and political change” (pp. xxiii). Chapters 1-10 are written by De Abreu; each is accompanied by a reflection of the topic covered, authored by a media literacy scholar or practitioner.

Media literacy: the key to critical thinking (Chapter 1) introduces the reader to five core concepts and key questions:

1. All media messages are “constructed.” Who created this message?
2. Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules. What techniques are used to attract my attention?
3. Different people experience the same message differently. How might different people understand this message differently from me?
4. Media have embedded values and points of view. What lifestyles, values, and points of view are represented in or omitted from this message?
5. Media messages are constructed to gain profit and/or power. Why is this message being sent? (p. 6)

Based on UNESCO’s Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Teachers, Chapter 2 (*Media and information literacy crossover*) deals with the intersection of media and information literacy. In his reflection, *Conceptual convergence of media and information literacy (MIL)*, Marcus Leaning (professor of digital media education at the University of Winchester, UK) agrees that the UNESCO curriculum is thorough, but “does not go far enough. . . to address the information-saturated nature of contemporary youth culture,” perhaps intimating that a third edition of the text will be needed soon (p. 24).

Chapter 3 (*Perspective, perception, and point of view*) encourages the use of the T.A.P. model (text, audience, and production) as students “critically access, evaluate, and utilize the information that they find” (p. 29). Teacher and blogger Kathleen Currie Smith¹, provides the reflection for Chapter 4, *Fake news and alternative facts*. Smith explains that her students, digital natives, “have no knowledge of a world” devoid of electronic devices and “while they know how to snap, chat, share, and message friends, they lack any real knowledge of how the social media platforms work. . . . News literacy teaches students to both judge the reliability of information and understand their own responsibility to society as they create and share information” (pp. 44-45).

At the close of the reflection to Chapter 5 (*Digital citizenship, privacy, and digital leadership*) is a list of digital citizenship resources to promote student voice and student choice compiled by the mother/son digital citizenship team of Marialice B.F.X. Curran and Curran Dee. During her discussion of the International Society for Technology and Education (ISTE) standards for students and educators (Chapter 6, *Digital literacy*), De Abreu agrees with Michael Stephens², associate professor at the School of Information, San Jose State University, who advocates that we “drop the ‘digital’ and call them life literacies” (p. 61).

In Chapter 7 (*Technology as a tool for social inclusion and transmission*) De Abreu introduces the reader to several digital learning technologies theories: RAT (Replacement, Amplification, and Transformation); SAMR (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, and Redefinition); TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge); and Bloom’s Digital Taxonomy. Chapter 8 (*Equity vs. Equality*) considers equity and equality in the media and a reflection by Jimmeka Anderson (an outreach coordinator at the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, a part-time instructor at the Carolina School of Broadcasting, and founder of I AM not the Media) suggests using a analysis tool for evaluating “the depiction of cultural groups in the media” (p. 82).

Chapter 9 (*Global Connections*) underscores the interconnectedness of today’s global society. The final chapter of Part I, *Social justice and advocacy* (Chapter 10), highlights our participatory culture, the benefits derived through civic engagement, and advocacy. Reflector and theology teacher Michael Godbout suggests that teachers assign classroom exercises that cultivate “understanding and empathy.” These assignments should emphasize “the good qualities of the individual while the students also learn to accept the negative qualities” (p. 99).

While media literacy theory is important, and each essay and reflection contained in the first part of this volume addresses key concepts adequately, Part 2 of the work is not only more practical, but includes ready-to-teach lessons that are expertly crafted for *Providing media literacy education in the school library and classroom* (Chapter 11). Educators and school library media specialists can use Chapters 12-17 to introduce concepts related to media literacy as they apply to major media formats, including television, movies, photography/images, music and radio, advertising, and media production (including digital technologies). Each media format has several lesson plans associated with it. The construction of these lesson plans is consistent, with each indicating: the grade level for which it was originally developed; curriculum connections; media literacy connections; time frame required for activities associated with the lesson;

¹ <http://readresearchrestrepeat.blogspot.com/>

² <https://tametheweb.com/>

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what to do before you begin teaching the lesson; objectives of the lesson; materials needed for the activities; process, including specific questions to ask throughout the session; assessment; and reflection.

Perhaps the least imaginative portion of the book is *Resources for Teaching Media Literacy* (Part III), which is comprised of a glossary of terms (Appendix A); a timeline of media literacy education beginning in 1910 (Appendix B); a list of movies on the media (Appendix C); and a helpful list of associations and other entities providing media literacy resources on their websites. That said, if you think that teaching media literacy will benefit your students but are uncertain how to introduce the subject into your classroom, these lesson plans, additional activities, and references to consult may be just the ticket.