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DIGITAL AND MEDIA LITERACY



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Digital and Media Literacy

Associate Professor Csilla Weninger
English Language & Literature
National Institute of Education

Digital media and technology increasingly permeate every aspect of our lives. In fact, for many of us, it is now difficult to imagine how we could work, play, oversee our finances or manage our social relationships without the array of digital tools and services available to us. Yet it is also true that technology has a tendency to develop faster than we have the time to appraise its impact on our young (and old), on our communities, on our environment. The anxieties we feel around losing out in the technological race may compel us to let technology drive social change, instead of starting with developing sustainable principles for how we can leverage technology to maximize human development. Our perspective on the exact role or place of technology in our social world is important because it will shape what counts as progress,

how we measure it, and who shares its benefits. Ultimately, the stance we take toward technology today will shape our imagination of possible futures. Digital and media literacy are crucial vehicles in this process as they can set the tone for how we see digital media and technology intertwine with our social fabric.

In this issue of *SingTeach*, contributors discuss digital and media literacy from a perspective that **foregrounds the social**. The Big Idea introduces digital and media literacy as a complex and deeply contextual **practice** and advocates a holistic approach for its development that engages students, teachers as well as parents. NIE Assistant Professor Victor Lim Fei's research has documented some of the ways in which this may be done, and in his article, he explains why it is so important for teachers to develop digital and media literacy through multimodal composition, digital play, as well as a focus on metalanguage. Associate Professor Antero Garcia from Stanford University in the USA broadens the social lens even further and invites us to think about digital citizenship: How can digital and media literacy facilitate civic identities in our online practices, and what can teachers do in this regard? We can see this idea put into educational practice through Serangoon Garden Secondary School's Applied Learning Programme (ALP) on *Researching Society through Media Literacy*. Ms Tan Shu Fen, Head of Humanities and Mr Mohamed Imran, Head of Design and Technology, co-leaders of this interdisciplinary ALP, explain how the programme is geared toward addressing societal issues through design-based collaboration while also fostering complex digital and media literacies. Teck Whye Primary School's *Media Whiz Kids* programme similarly tackles technology, design and communication from a complex and interdisciplinary point of view. Miss Gan Yeh Li, ICT Subject Head, and Mdm Nurul Huda Misman, a Senior Teacher in the English department, explain the holistic approach behind *Media Whiz Kids* and why it is successful in developing media literate youth. ■

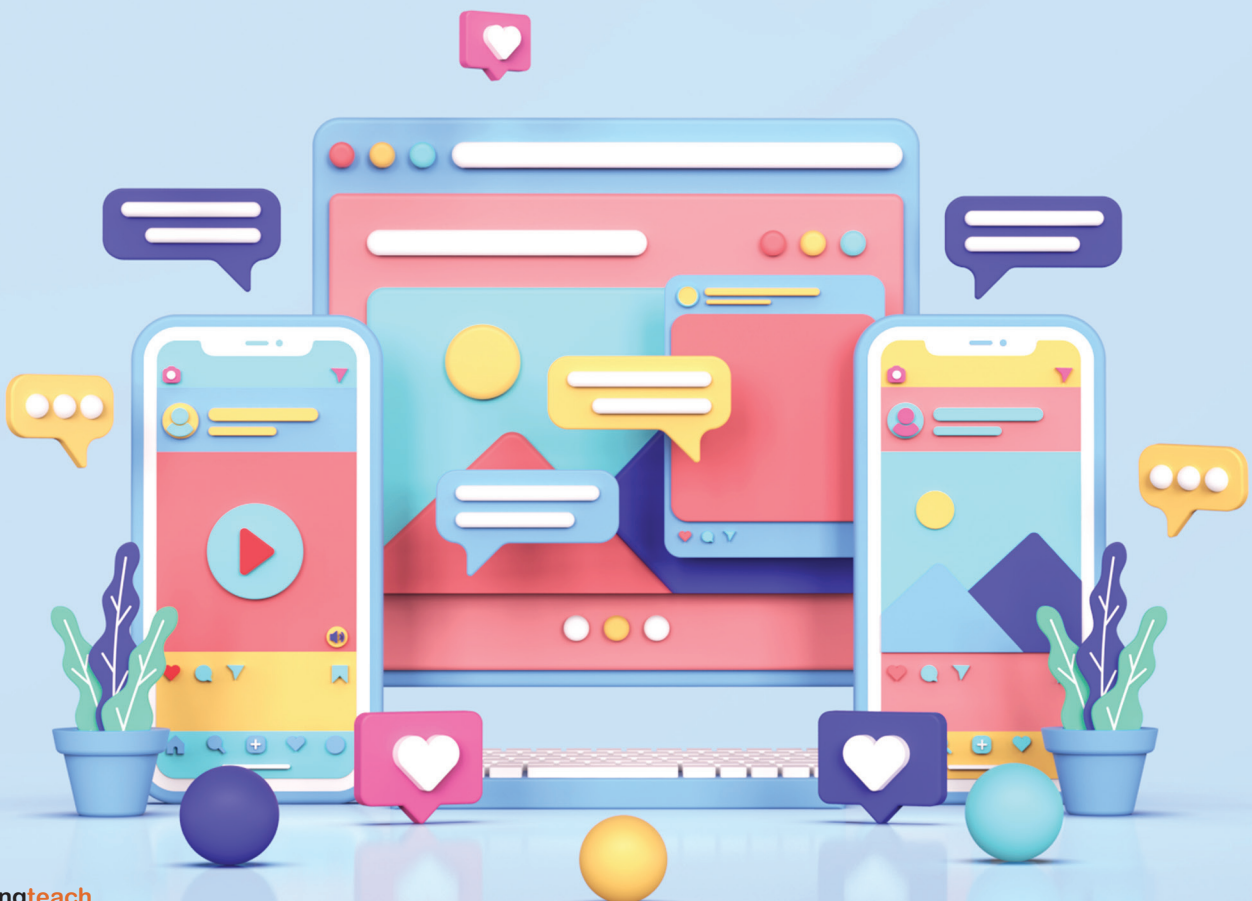


DIGITAL AND MEDIA LITERACY:

What About Them?



In the 21st century, it is insufficient for one to just be print literate; literacy today means communicating in a highly diversified and digital media landscape. According to the World Bank (2020), almost two-thirds of the world's population has access to the Internet yet many still struggle to use the information effectively and responsibly—this all depends on their media and digital literacy. Guest editor of this issue of *SingTeach*, Associate Professor Csilla Weninger who is also heading NIE's English Language & Literature Academic Group, shares with us more about the shift from media to digital literacy, and why being digitally literate is increasingly crucial in today's world.



From Media to Digital Literacy

“The notion of media literacy was born almost simultaneously with new technological developments in broadcast media about a hundred years ago. Today it is generally understood as the ability to access, analyse, evaluate and also create media in diverse form as a member of a community of users,” Csilla, whose research interests fall in the area of critical digital literacy, explains.

In the early stages of media literacy, educational initiatives emphasized building up students’ critical reading and viewing skills in order to counter the many harmful media messages they were frequently exposed to. However, with the emergence of the Internet in the 1990s and subsequent diversification of online platforms, this protectionist educational stance started to shift. More and more, scholars and educators thought of students in the more agentive roles of user and/or participant who were not just passively viewing and/or listening to media.

“This shift reflects the fact that these new forms of media transformed the communication flow from one-to-many (as in broadcast media) toward one of networks with nodes of what James Gee called ‘affinity spaces’. Today, the questions educators should ask in relation to digital media are ‘What does it take to navigate this networked digital terrain with competence, both for individual empowerment as well as for the greater common good?’” Csilla shares.

This evolution of media over the past century thus resulted in the change of definition of the term “media literacy” to also now include digital media. However, despite the shift from media literacy to digital literacy, one thing remains the same between the two: communication. “Rather than reading or writing, which focus on individual cognitive capacity, both media and digital literacy focus on communication, which stresses the social and interactive nature of engaging with media, digital or not,” Csilla adds.

Digital Literacy in Singapore Homes

As part of the Education Ministry’s efforts to strengthen digital literacy among youths in Singapore, the National

Digital Literacy Programme was launched in 2020 (MOE, 2020). The programme aims to equip students—at different stages of their education journey—with four digital skills: Find (search and evaluate information effectively); Think (discern the information as valid, reliable and authentic); Apply (use digital tools); and Create (produce digital products and collaborate online).

According to President Halimah Yacob, the national programme, which also helped every secondary school student to become owners of a personal learning device by 2021, has enabled students to have access to digital devices amid the COVID-19 pandemic (Ang, 2022). This means that a much higher number of young people will participate in a range of digital literacy practices outside of school.

“Schools have the responsibility to prepare students for life. Most importantly though, this responsibility is shared with parents and this is no different when it comes to digital literacy,” Csilla remarks. “Parents must be engaged *with* (though not necessarily *in!*) their kids’ life online. Parents of school-age children did not grow up with mobile Internet and social media, which means we do not have our tried-and-tested parental model for how to deal with kids’ digital access and activities.”

However, Csilla notes that parents can still show curiosity and encourage their children to talk to them about what they do, what they see and who they talk to, and as part of these conversations guide them to be discerning media users.

“Start this as soon as you place a device in the child’s hands! It is crucial that these conversations are built on trust and care rather than policing. By the time kids are teens, they will find a way to hide their activities from us if they want to,” she shares.

Challenges of Incorporating Digital Literacy in Schools

In the school setting, digital literacy ideally should not be something that is restricted to a single subject. “Certainly, technological skills can and should be fostered in ICT lessons. But even then, given our

complex definition of digital literacy (as also reflected in the MOE framework of Find, Think, Apply and Create), it would be best to not separate technical and other aspects of digital literacy," Csilla explains.

However, she also understands that digital literacy in itself is not a skill that can simply be taught and that doing so requires several considerations at the systems level. She highlights three main challenges of incorporating digital literacy in schools.

"First, because digital literacy is a relatively new phenomenon, the professional development of teachers needs to be ongoing. To address this, we now have Digital Literacy as a core course for our pre-service teachers to take at NIE."

The second challenge lies in the fact that digital literacy is not a decontextualized set of skills and as such, it becomes crucial that digital literacy is situated as a social practice within the context of the school. Csilla shares some questions teachers can ask themselves: *What are some meaningful uses of digital media for purposes of teaching and learning? How can we enhance students' digital literacy specifically in relation to enhancing their learning?*

The third and last challenge is that in a formal school context where subject knowledge, pedagogy and assessment are mostly print-focused, it becomes difficult to teach digital literacy. "As a result, we have to think big about the adjustments needed when it comes to effective school-based digital literacy education," Csilla says.

Understanding Students' Digital Literacy Practices

While there is a variety of research that focuses on media and digital literacy conducted at NIE (read more about a research study on multimodal literacy by NIE Assistant Professor Victor Lim Fei on page 9), Csilla feels that more can be done to understand students' perspectives and experiences with regards to their out-of-school and school-based digital literacy activities and competencies.

"There is a long line of research in literacy studies that has probed what is called the 'home-school'



divide," she shares. "I would love to see more research that maps in a more connected way how students navigate digital spaces in their different social contexts in terms of literacy. I think this would be valuable because it would provide us with a more holistic understanding of young people's lives online, their communicative practices, needs and aspirations from which to build informed curricular approaches to digital literacy instruction in schools."

At the end of the day, for Csilla, digital literacy is not simply a set of technical skills, nor a set of rules of "do this, don't do that", but rather a complex amalgam of competencies and dispositions intimately tied to identities, values and social groups that our students claim affiliations with. ■

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ABOUT THE GUEST EDITOR



Associate Professor Csilla Weninger is Head of English Language & Literature Academic Group at the National Institute of Education, Singapore. Her research interests include critical digital and media literacy and critical discourse/semiotic analysis. At NIE she teaches courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels in her areas of expertise.

Developing Students' Knowledge in Media Literacy through the Applied Learning Programme



The growing consumption of mass media, especially among young people today, presents a challenge for many educators in that each medium is distinct and unique, and most school curricula do not have a dedicated period to teaching media literacy. To address this, Serangoon Garden Secondary School designed their Applied Learning Programme, titled “Researching Society through Media Literacy”, to raise students’ awareness of environmental issues while also tapping on and building up their media literacy skills through the use of digital tools.

The Value of Applied Learning Programme

According to the Singapore’s Ministry of Education, the Applied Learning Programme (ALP) helps students connect academic knowledge and skills with the real world (MOE, 2022a). ALP aims to enhance students’ educational experience by providing opportunities for them to apply and transfer knowledge they have learnt in the classrooms to hands-on learning in real-world scenarios.

Through this initiative, students can appreciate the relevance and value of what they have learnt to develop a strong sense of motivation and purpose to acquire knowledge and skills, as well as to prepare them for the future.

At Serangoon Garden Secondary School (SGS), their ALP “Researching Society through Media Literacy” (RSML) is integrated into the different subjects and has an overarching theme that changes annually. This year, SGS focuses on the theme “Environment and Us”, which aims to encourage students to conduct research on an environmental issue that they can relate to through their subjects. In tandem with the Singapore Green Plan 2030, it seeks to nurture eco-stewards of the environment.

Researching Society through Media Literacy

“As students conduct their primary and secondary research on an environmental issue of choice, they tap on their knowledge and skills on media literacy to gather, make sense and organize information relevant to their issue,” Head of Humanities Department Ms Tan Shu Fen, who is overseeing the school’s ALP, shares. “After which, they then propose innovative solutions to address the issue and tap on digital tools to advocate their cause.”

The school’s ALP also draws on students’ creativity by utilizing the Design-Thinking process to come up with solutions that are beneficial to society.

Subject Head for Design & Technology Mr Mohamed Imran, who is also overseeing the ALP alongside Shu Fen, adds, “By utilizing the Design-Thinking methodology as a key approach in their research process, students learn to identify community challenges, understand the needs of the user, then proceed to work individually or in a team to prototype innovative solutions that meet those needs.”

Imran further explains that during the problem-solving process, students are able to cultivate 21CC skills such as civic literacy, global awareness and cross-cultural skills, critical and inventive thinking, as well as communication, collaboration and information skills.

Importance and Development of Media Literacy

We often think of young people as naturally savvy with technology—after all, today’s school-age children have grown up with mobile Internet. However, that does not mean educators have nothing to offer when it comes to digital literacy. SGS’s focus on media literacy in the ALP gives their teachers more opportunities to spark a greater sense of curiosity, as well as bring about increased levels of interest,

“ We are bombarded with a lot of information when we do our research online. We have to take time to curate and make sense of them before we propose solutions to the issue. ”

Kimberlin Quek, SGSS student (1 Respect)

commitment and ownership in the students' learning journeys by incorporating media tools.

Furthermore, a critical element of helping students to be more discerning in assessing information they encounter can be addressed through this focus. The ALP is also used to augment the Cyber Wellness in Character and Citizenship Education (CCE) curriculum, where it provides a platform for students to apply their cyber wellness knowledge and skills to harness the power of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for positive influence (MOE, 2022b).

"We define media literacy through two aspects," Shu Fen explains. "The first aspect is to develop students to be discerning users of media. Given the voluminous amounts of information available online, students need to pick up skills such as demonstrating effective and safe search techniques, organizing digital information and assessing the reliability of information."

This is illustrated during the research phase when students gather data and try to understand the problems that users are facing on societal issues. "In this age of social media, it is critical that our students are able to make sense and utilize information and media tools responsibly," she says.

The second aspect is to train students to be innovative and responsible creators of multimedia products in their own right. As creators of content, it is beneficial for them to know how to tap on appropriate media tools to create multimedia products to communicate their ideas effectively to their viewers.

This is exemplified when lower secondary students apply photography and videography skills that they have acquired in the student-led workshops to capture the users in action, conduct interviews, or to advocate their ideas. "Furthermore, at the advocacy stage, students are given opportunities to use digital tools to share their innovative solutions on media platforms such as *TikTok*, *Instagram* and *Facebook*," Imran adds.

Keeping it "Lit" despite Challenges

In order to regulate the digital content that the students are accessing, and to make sure that they are utilizing the digital tools responsibly, the teachers conduct necessary training for students, scope and frame the project task with clear boundaries, and ensure effective facilitation.

"When we conduct our research, we have to be very careful to constantly check on reliability of the sources before we decide if we are going to use them."

Jolynn Heng, SGSS student (1 Respect)

However, ensuring that the programme remains relevant and engaging for SGS students is not without its challenges; the teachers themselves have to move beyond their digital comfort zone.

"As teachers, we keep abreast with the latest social media trends among the students and utilize them to engage with them," Imran shares. For the ALP presentations, students were allowed to create *Tik Tok* videos and use infographics created by *Canva*, a free-to-use online graphic design tool. "We would see the students' enthusiasm as they prepare the videos and infographics, even though they face the challenge of presenting their project in a short 1-minute video or A3 boards," Imran adds.

Through the ALP, the school also provides Education and Career Guidance (ECG) to students who are interested in media-related courses available in tertiary education. One of their partners is Nanyang Polytechnic, who often hosts some of SGS's students in their Media Studio on their campus.

At the end of the day, it is only SGS's hope to nurture students who are both media literate and environmentally conscious; one who is able to curate digital information and create multimedia products that could connect with their viewers to solve societal issues around them. ■

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ABOUT THE INTERVIEWEES



Tan Shu Fen (far left) is the Head of Department (Humanities) and Mohamed Imran (far right) is the Subject Head for Design & Technology at Serangoon Garden Secondary School. They have been overseeing the school's ALP for 5 years, and have been with the school for 5 and 5.5 years, respectively.



PUTTING *MULTILITERACIES* INTO PRACTICE IN THE CLASSROOM

What comes to mind when you hear the word “literacy”? Many may immediately think of the act of reading, writing and spelling, but with the advent of new technologies, literacy now encompasses a set of skills and strategies that go beyond traditional print media to include digital media as well. Writing, on-screen visuals and other modes often converge to communicate multiple meanings, prompting the reader to consider more than one interpretation of a text. Assistant Professor Victor Lim Fei, from NIE’s English Language & Literature Academic Group, talks to *SingTeach* about his research projects which have a key focus on multimodal literacy.

Students’ In- and Out-of-School Literacies

The age of digital interconnectivity has seen children and adolescents of today well adept at consuming, creating and sharing content across different social media platforms. Playing digital games and building virtual worlds can also be a means for them to socialize and interact with one another. These communicative practices are considered as “out-of-school” literacies, which refer to literacy practices used outside of school

settings and are less likely taught as part of the school literacy curriculum.

Assistant Professor Victor Lim Fei, from NIE, is interested in how to bridge such out-of-school literacies with what students are learning in the classroom. Defining multiliteracies as “the broadening of literacy beyond language learning to include other ways of communication, such as images, animation, sound and music”, he says that it is also about engaging students about their out-of-school experiences.

“A multiliteracies learning experience will thus have students engaging not just critically and cognitively with knowledge, but also emotionally and creatively through various ways of expression, performance and making,” he says.

“A multiliteracies classroom will focus on not just the learning of language, but will also give attention to how meanings are made multimodally.”

Multimodal Meaning-Making in the Classroom

Victor explains that multiliteracies is one of the pedagogical emphases of the English Language Syllabus 2020. The first phase of his research project, which was conducted in 2019, seeks to understand how multiliteracies are currently taught in the English Language classroom in Singapore schools.

The study found that multimodal texts, which refer to texts that combine two or more modes such as written language, spoken language, visual, audio, gestural and spatial, were commonly used in the English Language classroom. However, they were more often used as stimulus for reading and writing, and less for the teaching of critical viewing and effective representing skills.

“The objective of critical viewing is to help students develop the knowledge and skills to analyse and evaluate multimodal texts that use visuals,” he explains. “Although the explicit teaching of viewing skills was observed in some lessons, less attention was given to the explicit teaching of representing skills which can involve students’ creation of multimodal artefacts.”

Noting that there are limited opportunities for students’ multimodal meaning-making in many of the English



Language classrooms, he recommends that students should be given opportunities to construct knowledge through participating in collaborative learning activities.

"It is also important to use relatable learning resources, drawing on their prior knowledge and experience, and connecting what they learn in school with what they experience out of school," he adds.

Preparing Teachers for Multiliteracies Pedagogy

The second phase of the project, which was implemented from 2020 to 2021, adopted a design-based research approach with a goal to build up the skills of teacher leaders who can be advocates of the teaching of multiliteracies. The research team, together with the teachers, co-designed and developed a total of six lesson packages and one assessment package on multimodal literacy learning.

"We introduced teachers to the learning processes of encountering, exploring, evaluating and expressing as a framework to design for multimodal literacy learning. The aim is to strengthen teacher expertise in guiding students' interpretation of multimodal texts, as well as supporting their multimodal composing," he comments.

He reflects that more needs to be done as teachers will need further support in designing meaningful learning for their students. He believes that communities of practice are useful platforms for teachers to share ideas, resources and experiences on multiliteracies learning and teaching.

"Such ground-up initiatives can be complemented with professional learning such as pre-service training and in-service sessions. These will create more opportunities for teachers to demonstrate their confidence and competence in applying multiliteracies pedagogies," he adds.

Metalanguage to Foster Media Literacy Skills

How can schools foster media literacy and critical thinking skills? Victor emphasizes that for students

to critically engage with media, they must first be supported with the resources to not only understand, but also how to think and talk about the meanings made in the multimodal texts. Introducing a metalanguage, that is language to describe language, is an important aspect of this process.

"Beyond understanding how meanings are made, a metalanguage also provides teachers and students with a common vocabulary to have a dialogue on the shifts and changes in meaning across forms of texts," he remarks.

Equipped with a metalanguage, teachers and students can progress to analyse the texts at a deeper level. This can include questioning the point of view offered in the text and considering other possible perspectives that may have been absent, suppressed or ignored. For example, primary school students can explore alternative endings of a fairy-tale or experiment with what might have happened if the gender roles were reversed.

"Having a semiotic awareness of the ways meanings are made in the media text is necessary before students can identify the implicit values inherent in the text and make better judgements about the messages they are presented with," he contends. ■



Scan the QR code for more information on **how teachers can embed digital play in the classroom.**

ABOUT THE INTERVIEWEE



Victor Lim Fei is Assistant Professor with the English Language and Literature Academic Group at the National Institute of Education, Singapore. His research interests include multimodality in education, multiliteracies and digital learning. He serves as consultant with the World Bank on digital literacies projects.



Digital citizenship empowers us to be productive and responsible users of digital technologies while digital literacy allows us to be critical users of digital media. Associate Professor Antero Garcia—notable for his research in technology and gaming—from Stanford University in the United States of America shares more about how teachers can integrate both skills into their teaching and their students’ learning.

What Is Digital Citizenship?

At the risk of being a bit aloof, I’m not entirely sure I know what digital citizenship is at this present moment in the late summer of 2022. If citizenship is the state of formal affiliation with a particular territory, country, or community, in what environment does “digital citizenry” reside and what kinds of responsibilities are taken up by inhabitants in these spaces?

I realize this may sound like a pedantic response, so let me offer a bit more specificity. For better and worse, citizenry implies a community to which one maintains social ties. Those may not be felt deeply within a large country (such as the United States where I am writing this), and there are certainly fissures in how we connect and communicate.

A digital citizen is, perhaps, someone who has affiliation with others in and across digital domains and, perhaps, stewards safe and civil practices for other community members in these domains. This is about building trust, maintaining happiness, and reducing acts of harm for individuals in online spaces.

Oftentimes, digital spaces are seen largely as areas for the consumption of multimodal products such as texts, films, memes and social media posts. We (including my own research) point fingers at algorithms and large corporations for the insidious practices that

shape what happens in these online places. However, digital citizenry requires us to recognize not just the savviness required in how we consume and curate media for ourselves and others, but also how we produce new media products *constantly*.

How Can Teachers Foster Digital Citizenship in the Classroom?

Fostering digital citizenship in classrooms requires considering the productive practices of students just as intentionally as their consumptive practices. It requires focusing less on singular tools and more on the kinds of holistic contexts of online engagement. It requires a recognition that, even several decades into a digital and online pivot in our daily lives, most adults have poor digital practices; our relationships with technology, distraction and online engagement continue to cause emotional, social and political fissures within our communities.

Knowing we are so often wrong, means that the community we kindle in our classrooms must be built on communal trust—that we are all working together to be better digital citizens. This work requires knowing that sometimes, often even, young people will need to lead.

How Can Teachers Better Integrate Digital Literacy Skills into Student Learning?

I worry that digital literacy skills have become an add-on to a robust and overly-assessed set of curricula

in schools right now; that's certainly what I see in many U.S. contexts. Integrating digital literacy skills means being deliberate with these practices at every stage of instruction.

For example, when curating which texts are read, how might students identify products in online spaces that are useful—since a lesson on polynomials, or the scientific method, or literary analysis, or climate change all have countless valuable texts floating amidst the random detritus of online media? How might we set up classrooms for students to help discover such gems (at least some of the time)?

And, returning to a theme mentioned above, having students produce rich, digital products is imperative. That essay you might assign? Why can't it be produced as a series of explicated memes? How might you have students demonstrate their understanding of the periodic table of elements via *TikTok*? Could you re-enact a key moment in history as a set of group chat texts amongst “besties”? Again, you might be uncertain what these kinds of digital literacy skills look like for kids these days. This is why we need to ask students and create an environment where they feel safe responding and taking risks in expressing their genius.

What Types of Support Do Teachers Need in this Pedagogical Shift to Include Digital Literacy?

Teachers need reassurance that they won't be penalized for following students down the roads of online engagement that they like to explore. If teachers are going to respond to the current contexts of students today, they need to know they have the safety to do so and the trust of school leaders to use their expertise.

Teachers also need time to learn and to explore how digital literacy practices are shifting—many of the assumptions about credibility and fact-checking in online contexts have changed substantially in the past few years.

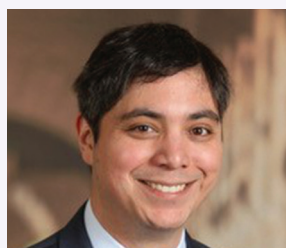
Finally, teachers need to have the ability to communicate and create with one another. One of the best things about being a teacher is sharing a passion and expertise for learning and particular subject matter. Teachers can create curriculum, public-facing explanations, and co-constructed texts with their colleagues and students if we provide the space and environment that encourage them to do so. The teachers I work with are often hungry for the opportunity to innovate. Schools need to let teachers explore and try out new ideas alongside their students. ■

The Do's and Don'ts of Incorporating Digital Media (Literacy) into the Classroom

Three Simple Things

- ✓ Focus less on individual tools and more on general practices.
- ✗ Don't let technology get in the way of your human relationships. Learning is grounded in community and our engagement with one another—if you spend too much time invested in tools, gadgets and apps, you are spending less time on your students.
- ✓ Most importantly, have fun and make sure you create space for your students to also have fun!

ABOUT THE INTERVIEWEE



Antero Garcia is Associate Professor at Stanford University's Graduate School of Education. He studies how technology and gaming shape youth learning, literacy practices, and civic identities. Prior to completing his PhD, Antero was an English teacher at a public high school in South Central Los Angeles. His two most recent research studies explore learning and literacies in tabletop roleplaying games like Dungeons & Dragons and how participatory culture shifts classroom relationships and instruction.



Nurturing FUTURE-READY DIGITAL LEARNERS through MEDIA-MAKING

Teck Whye Primary School's "Media Whiz Kids" programme consists of a series of media-making activities included in the school curriculum and it is also offered as part of the school's co-curricular activities. The programme aims to equip students with media literacy and critical thinking skills that can help them navigate through a variety of digital environments. Two teachers from the school share with us more about the programme and why they think those skills are important.



Miss Gan Yeh Li

Subject Head (Information and Communications Technology)
Teck Whye Primary School

What are some of the activities that students from the "Media Whiz Kids" programme engage in and how are they assessed?

As part of the "Media Whiz Kids" (MWK) programme, students from Teck Whye Primary School (TWPS) have to participate in activities that require them to develop media contents and products which can be in the form of videos, computer games and 3D prototypes. These activities provide students with the opportunity to apply media literacy skills in authentic and meaningful situations.

When our students participate in the programme, they will alternate between the roles of being a creative media producer and a critical media consumer. Our teachers will facilitate discussions to help the students

determine the purpose of their media message, their target audience and the techniques they choose to use for their content or product. Teachers will encourage students to consider the ethics behind their decisions and messaging. In a way, the MWK programme provides teachers with the opportunity to instill ethical values in students as they create content for their audience.

Media literacy skills are soft skills that can be assessed through discussions and conversations. So, students in the MWK programme will engage in self-reflection exercises and receive feedback from peers and teachers about their products. These exercises will help them to think critically and identify areas for improvement.

The Infocomm Media Club, offered as a co-curricular activity (CCA) in our school, is placed under the umbrella of the MWK programme. Our club members are given opportunities to apply their media literacy skills at external platforms such as MOE's "Our Schools, Our Stories" photo and video contest, the Singapore Youth Festival, the annual Sony Creative Science Award competition as well as the National Thinkers Challenge. These external programmes help to hone students' media literacy skills further.

In your opinion, why is media literacy important?

I feel that media literacy plays a very important role in the media-saturated world we currently live in. Today,

content powered by sophisticated technologies may make it difficult for media consumers to discern facts from opinions or truth from lies. Horror stories of people falling for online scams and children following dangerous *TikTok* trends have made it evident that media literacy is an essential skill for both adults and children.

As educators, we play a significant role in nurturing critical thinking skills and instilling the right values in our students. We hope that these efforts will help

students become wiser users and responsible content producers of media. This is one of the ways TWPS prepares our students to be future-ready digital citizens.

A majority of youths today have an active presence on social media and some even aspire to be the next top influencer. However, they may be unaware of the dangers and pitfalls the digital space poses. I am convinced that media literacy is an important skill that could help students better navigate through the complexities of this digital world.



Mdm Nurul Huda Misman
Senior Teacher (English)
Teck Whye Primary School

What are some of the skills you hope to nurture in students when they attend the “Media Whiz Kids” programme?

One of the outcomes we hope to achieve is to nurture confident communicators who will engage others with respect. We also aspire to help every Teck Whyean speak and write confidently, and to encourage mutual respect in any and every interaction they have.

This would entail:

- Being confident in putting across ideas in speech and in text through digital and non-digital platforms.
- Being able to harness various tools and media channels to communicate effectively and make a positive contribution to society.
- Being respectful in all communication engagements even when opinions or views differ.

In the hope to enhance Teck Whyeans’ media literacy skills, the school has introduced a variety of Applied Learning Programme (ALP) media-related lessons for English, Mother Tongue and the Aesthetics subjects. There are several media-making activities curated for CCAs, such as the Infocomm Media Club and English Culture & Language Club, with the aim to sharpen students’ media-literacy skills. We want to ensure that our students are not only critical media consumers but also creative media producers who can meaningfully participate on digital and non-digital platforms.

In your opinion, why is media literacy important?

We are living in a world where interactions with the media are more prevalent than ever. These days, children are exposed to various forms of media at a very young age. In schools, educators and students use media extensively to enhance teaching and learning. It is safe to say that we leave behind our digital footprints much more than our carbon footprints.

Hence, media literacy is definitely a vital skill every individual needs to possess. The ability to be discerning readers and critical thinkers as well as the capacity to recognize different points-of-view and respect others’ opinions are necessary in today’s highly inter-connected world. As an educator, I see the need to equip our students with these skills to understand the messages they are receiving and the ethical ways for producing their own media. ■

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