

Unit 2: Practical Applications of Media and Information Literacy

- **Aim:** to strengthen critical thinking and analytical skills to evaluate media and information critically. Civic engagement is also a concept included, highlighted as a skill tied to understanding media's role in shaping public opinion, participating in social discourse, and fostering informed citizenship

Critical Thinking: Analysing and evaluating media content to identify misinformation and make informed judgments.

Creative Production: The ability to create and share one's own media content to express ideas and perspectives.

Cross-Cultural Competence: Understanding and interpreting media from various cultural perspectives to avoid misunderstandings.

Computational Thinking: Using digital tools for problem-solving and information processing.

Communication: Effectively expressing oneself through different media channels.

Citizenship: Behaving responsibly in digital spaces and supporting democratic values

- **Key Topics:**
 - The 6C Model by Renee Hobbs, encompassing critical thinking, creative production, and digital citizenship

Based on the book Renee Hobbs identified six strands of media literacy theory:

- Arts and social activism
 - Awareness, form, content and context
 - Dialectic of protection and empowerment
 - Learning and literacy
 - Learning as a means to engage the head, heart, hands and spirit
 - Social nature of representation and interpretation
- **Activity:**
 - **Activity 2.1: Case Study on the 6C Model:** Participants analyse a fictional case of misinformation spreading in a community and brainstorm ways to counteract it using the 6C Model.
 - **Sample platform question :** In Maplewood, misinformation spreads about a housing development project, creating community tension. Identify loaded

language in a news article about the housing project, question the motives of the sources, and look for additional reputable information to verify claims.

Unit 2 Assessment:

- Based on a news article, **identify** any biased language or questionable claims.
 - <https://naturalnews.com/>
 - <https://mrctv.org/cnsnews>
 - <https://empirenews.net/>
- **Answer:** An article using terms like "controversial" or "divisive" without substantiation may be leading the reader to a biased view. Questioning the sources and verifying claims with reputable sources can clarify the truth.

Indicators for unreliable news sources:

- Authors are unnamed or lack credentials
- The headline seems hard to believe or sensational
- Found on social media, but not on traditional news sites
- Uses poor spelling or grammar
- Marked as “Sponsored Content” or “Advertisement”
- Sources are missing or vaguely described
- Contains name-calling or unfounded accusations

Indicators for reliable news sources:

- Authors work at a respected news organisation—or are recognized as subject-area experts
- The basic facts are consistent across different news outlets
- Website URLs end with .edu, .gov, .info, or a reputable .com
- Sources are cited and quoted
- It’s clear whether something is a fact or an opinion
- Photos are credited to a person or a news organisation

| Lesson Plan Evaluating News Sources | |
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| Module | Module 2 Unit 2 |
| Total Duration | 1.5 hours |

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| Materials | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Presentation slides on information literacy</i> ● <i>Handouts with criteria for evaluating information sources</i> ● <i>Worksheets for information evaluation exercises</i> ● <i>Internet-enabled devices for fact-checking exercises</i> | |
| Learning Outcome Matrix | <p>Knowledge</p> | <p><i>Understand information literacy principles, including source evaluation</i></p> |
| | <p>Skills</p> | <p><i>Apply critical thinking to identify credible information sources</i></p> |
| | <p>Attitudes</p> | <p><i>Foster a habit of verifying information before sharing</i></p> |
| | <p>Learning objectives</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Understand the importance of information literacy in assessing reliability</i> ● <i>Learn criteria to evaluate information sources effectively</i> ● <i>Develop habits of critical information analysis</i> |
| Introduction | <p><i>This lesson focuses on equipping participants with the tools and criteria to verify the reliability of digital content. It emphasises the need to assess the source, authorship, and credibility of information.</i></p> | |
| Theoretical Contents | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Explanation of information literacy, including fact-checking and evaluating the credibility of sources</i> ● <i>Importance of information literacy in combating misinformation</i> | |
| Learning Activities | <p>Presentation (10 minutes): Introduction to information literacy and criteria for reliable sources.</p> <p>Group Exercise (30 minutes): Participants review various types of digital content, such as blog posts, news articles, and opinion pieces. Using a worksheet, they evaluate the sources for credibility, authorship, and transparency.</p> <p>Research Activity (20 minutes): Groups select one piece of information and perform a fact-check using online resources.</p> | |

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| <p>Assessment</p> | <p>Participants complete a quiz evaluating their ability to distinguish between reliable and unreliable sources. See quiz questions below*</p> |
| <p>Useful references and resources for further learning</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Information Literacy in the Digital Age" by Christine Pawley • https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/603440 • Renee Hobbs on Theories on Media literacy https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6Ah5bMfRFk • https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qghkUwL7XaQ&list=PLRAIWnbL7Z09Xh7tqXrlsWqgxZ0t1fWl • Cho, H., Cannon, J., Lopez, R., & Li, W. (2024). Social media literacy: A conceptual framework. <i>New media & society</i>, 26(2), 941-960. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/epub/10.1177/14614448211068530 (pdf version included) • Polanco-Levicán, K., & Salvo-Garrido, S. (2022). Understanding social media literacy: A systematic review of the concept and its competences. <i>International journal of environmental research and public health</i>, 19(14), 8807 https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/19/14/8807 (pdf version included) • Wuyckens, G., Landry, N., & Fastrez, P. (2022). Untangling media literacy, information literacy, and digital literacy: A systematic meta-review of core concepts in media education. <i>Journal of Media Literacy Education</i>, 14(1), 168-182. https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/jmle/vol14/iss1/12/ (pdf version included) • <i>Media Literacy explained in 3 minutes</i> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v7oVv1jXiWo • Biassed News articles examples(EXTRA ASSESSMENT with sources and guidelines): https://newseumed.org/curated-stack/recognizing-bias (requires registration but it's free) |

Question 1

You find an article on social media about a new government policy. The article has no author listed and comes from a website you haven't heard of before. What should you do next?

- A. Share it immediately since it seems interesting.
- B. Look for the same information on well-known news websites or official government sources.
- C. Trust it because it was shared on social media.
- D. Ignore it because you don't usually use this source.

Correct Answer: B. Reliable information on government policies is usually found on official websites or established news outlets.

Question 2

A health article claims that a certain herb can cure common illnesses but does not provide any scientific studies or evidence. How would you evaluate this source?

- A. Believe it if the article is popular or has many likes.
- B. Check to see if any credible health organisations, such as the World Health Organization (WHO) or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), have similar information.
- C. Share it with friends who might be interested in natural remedies.
- D. Assume it is correct because it promotes natural treatments.

Correct Answer: B. Reliable health information should be supported by scientific studies or credible health organisations.

Question 3

You find a news story with lots of spelling and grammar mistakes, and the website often posts exaggerated stories. What does this say about the reliability of the source?

- A. It may not be reliable, as professional news outlets typically check their articles for accuracy and quality.
- B. It is reliable, as mistakes are common in any publication.
- C. It doesn't matter as long as the story is interesting.
- D. It's reliable if it was shared by a friend.

Correct Answer: A. Reputable sources usually have high editorial standards, so frequent errors can indicate unreliability.

Question 4

A website claims to offer "exclusive" news on a breaking event, but the same information is not yet reported by any major news outlets. What should you consider before trusting this source?

- A. Assume it's reliable because it's exclusive.
- B. Wait until more established news sources report on the story.
- C. Trust it because smaller sites are often the first to report on breaking news.
- D. Ignore it because exclusives are always unreliable.

Correct Answer: B. Reliable news is often confirmed by multiple established sources before it is widely shared.

Question 5

You read an article about immigration laws that does not mention any sources or provide links to the original policy or legal documents. What's the best approach?

- A. Share the article since it sounds credible.
- B. Look for similar information on official government or legal websites.
- C. Assume it's accurate if it's written clearly.
- D. Rely on it only if it is shared by someone in your community.

Correct Answer: B. Information on immigration laws is most reliable when it's available on official government or legal sites.