



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on November 28, 2023

Education’s “Media Literacy”: The Left’s Latest Brainwashing Effort?

“Media literacy” sounds like something no one should oppose. Who, after all, wants people illiterate in any respect? But it turns out that while media literacy is trumpeted as a way to sleuth Truth, it’s really a Trojan horse.

According to the [Center for Media Literacy](#) (CML), media literacy “is the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and create media in a variety of forms.”

“Media Literacy is a 21st century approach to education,” the CML elaborates. “It provides a framework to access, analyze, evaluate, create and participate with messages in a variety of forms — from print to video to the Internet. Media literacy builds an understanding of the role of media in society as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy.”

If that sounds good enough to be the stuff of legislation and education, know that it has already been made so. “Since 2016, ten states controlled by Democratic legislators, and three run by Republicans, have passed ‘media literacy’ laws,” [reported](#) RealClear Investigations (RCI) in March. This legislation mandates this “training” in schools. The problem? RCI elaborates:

Media literacy advocates such as Erin McNeill, President of Media Literacy Now, say the goal is to teach students “how to consume information, not what information to consume.”

But other educational experts see information and media literacy as inherently political, or minimally ripe for politicization.

The “guise of ‘media literacy,’” writes John Sailer, a senior fellow at the National Association of Scholars, “often functions as a trojan horse, casting certain political views” — conservative ones, say critics — “as prima facie wrong and biased.”

In reality, avers [commentator Monica Showalter](#), media-literacy education is “NewsGuard in the classroom.” NewsGuard, which is much like Media Matters (currently being sued for defamation by Elon Musk), is an entity that purports to be able to rate the “reliability” of news and information sources but which [has itself a strong left-wing bias](#).

In point of fact, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) announced last year that it had forged a national partnership with NewsGuard “to protect and champion legitimate journalism and fact-based



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reporting,” as the AFT [put it](#). Now we know who’ll be helping with classroom “media literacy.”

Speaking of which, California (big surprise) is among the states that, starting next year, will legislatively require government-school students to take media-literacy courses. As the *Los Angeles Times* [reported](#), “We have a responsibility to teach the next generation to be more critical consumers of online content and more guarded against misinformation, propaganda, and conspiracy theories,” said Assemblyman Marc Berman (D-Menlo Park), who authored the law.

“Sounds fine and dandy given the younger generation’s interest in TikTok,” notes Showalter, “but get a load of what they really mean by that [misinformation], down in the last paragraph of the story”:

“As we’ve seen too often in the last decade, what happens online can have the most terrifying of real-world impacts,” Berman said. “From climate denial to vaccine conspiracy theories to the Jan. 6 attack on our nation’s Capitol, the spread of online misinformation has had global and deadly consequences.”

Unmentioned are some other “real-world impacts.” Sixteen percent of Biden voters said they’d have reconsidered their vote had they known about the Hunter Biden laptop story. But the mainstream media claimed it was Russia disinfo and censored it — until, conveniently, after the election. The media also stated that Trump colluded with Russia to win the 2016 presidential contest, the Wuhan lab-leak theory (Covid) was conspiracy-oriented fiction, the Covington Catholic kids racially targeted American Indian activists, and hydroxychloroquine and ivermectin are ineffective against Covid and dangerous. The purveyors of these lies, however, aren’t what the media-literacy crowd wants you to SIFT.

What’s SIFT? The acronym — whose second and third letters are abbreviations for “Investigate the source” and “Find better coverage” — relates a process taught to students by which they can do their own research and, ostensibly, find valid information. Mike Benz, executive director of the Foundation for Freedom Online, warned about it and media literacy generally in the following video.

This led to an interesting exchange (below) between Benz and a critic on X, a man going by the handle “Az” and claiming to be a “former intel officer turned hacker” (ahem).

While Az disputed that “media literacy” would be used to warn people away from dissenting voices, this prescription has already been made. In a 2021 *New York Times* [piece](#) titled “Don’t Go Down the Rabbit Hole,” the paper warns against being “overloaded” and “overwhelmed” with information; it writes that “the best way to learn about a source of information is to leave it and look elsewhere, a concept called lateral reading.”

Whom should you avoid and where should you look? The *Times* provides an example: an Instagram post by Robert F. Kennedy Jr. on vaccines.

Citing SIFT and its *creator*, Washington State University Vancouver professor Michael Caulfield, the paper wrote that in “15 seconds, he navigated to Wikipedia and scrolled through the introductory section of the page, highlighting with his cursor the last sentence, which reads that Mr. Kennedy is an anti-vaccine activist and a conspiracy theorist.”

“Is Robert F. Kennedy Jr. the best, unbiased source on information about a vaccine?” Caulfield then said. “I’d argue no. And that’s good enough to know we should probably just move on.”

Yes, don’t even consider what Kennedy has to say. Trust Wikipedia.



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Obviously, ferreting out Truth can be difficult; there's no simple, magic formula the average person can use to do so. But what's missing from this conversation — on "both" sides — is just that: emphasis on *Truth*.

I've always been skeptical of calls to teach kids "critical thinking," especially since the word Truth is generally absent from these appeals. Instill in children a belief in and love for Truth, and they'll seek it — and often find it. Allow them to wallow in our time's rampant relativism, and they'll make emotion their arbiter and embrace what feels right.

Oh, by the by, the SIFT method is modeled "after the way professional fact checkers assess information," the *Times* also informs. Well, well, that speaks volumes, doesn't it?



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