Chapter 7

Media Literacy in Early Childhood Education: Inquiry-Based Technology Integration

Faith Rogow

Introduction

Like pencils, digital technologies are tools. And like pencils, knowing how to use digital devices is an important part of being literate, but it isn’t enough. Technology now places at our fingertips access to unimaginable amounts of information and a nearly limitless audience. In this world, we need to expand the traditional “three Rs” to include reasoning and reflection. And we need to do so in ways that foster curiosity, creativity, and collaboration. That’s where media literacy education comes in.

Nurturing Thinkers and Makers: The Purposes of Media Literacy Education

For something that often wears the label “21st-century literacy,” the goals of media literacy education are surprisingly traditional: Give children all the power and benefits that come with being literate. The National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE) phrased it this way: “The purpose of media literacy education is to develop the habits of inquiry and skills of expression needed to be critical thinkers, effective communicators, and active citizens in today’s world” (NAMLE, 2007). To put it another way, media literacy is about helping children develop the life skills they need to become thinkers and makers in the multimedia environment that is their reality.

This doesn’t mean abandoning books in favor of electronics. It’s not a competition. After all, books are a media technology and a quick visit to a few websites makes it clear that one cannot be media literate without being print literate. But the reality of living in a digital culture is different enough from our recent analog/print-dominant past to compel an expansion of what we think of as literacy. Here are just a few of the changes that shape media literacy education:

- Digital devices now give us easy access to nearly unlimited amounts of information. People who don’t have the skills to navigate through that sea of data and transform it into usable knowledge will quickly lose their way.


In the digital world, even traditional “print” sources routinely combine text with images and audio. Just look at a current newspaper or a textbook. People who only attend to the printed words miss a considerable amount of the available information.

In the digital world, media are converged. Old arguments pitting television against computers or books against screens are irrelevant in a world where smartphones, laptops, and tablets function as music and video players and recorders, maps, magazines, textbooks, social networking hubs, games, clocks, cameras, and so much more. Children who have access to one thing have access to everything.

Unlike their analog predecessors, digital cameras are cheap, provide immediate results, and make it easy to create, reproduce, modify, and share pictures. This makes them accessible and developmentally appropriate for very young users in ways that older cameras were not.

Important aspects of our lives now take place in the digital commons. The Web’s participatory culture includes college courses, social networking and dating, political activism, fundraising, job applications, all manner of entertainment, research, collaborative classroom projects, commerce, and so much more (Jenkins, Clinton, Purushotma, Robison, & Weigel, 2006). If, as education visionary Paulo Freire proposed, literate people are able to engage with the world as well as the word, then literacy now requires the ability to use interactive online technologies.

**Competencies and Outcomes**

So what new skills does a person need to be literate in the digital world? If it has ever taken you several days to learn how to use a new phone, you understand the limits of simply teaching children how to use gadgets. Interfaces change so quickly that whatever young children learn now about using particular tools is likely to be outdated by the time they enter adulthood (or middle school!). So, simply using technology to teach, or encouraging children to use specific programs or devices won’t guarantee future literacy. That’s why media literacy education focuses on evergreen core competencies that apply across technologies (Scheibe & Rogow, 2012). These include:

- **Access**—Having physical access to high quality media technologies and content, and knowing how to use those resources effectively
- **Understanding**—Comprehending basic, explicit media messages
- **Awareness**—Taking note of the presence of media messages and their role in one’s life
- **Analysis**—Decoding media messages in order to think critically and independently about them
- **Evaluation**—Making informed, reasoned judgments about the value or utility of media for specific purposes
Media Literacy in Early Childhood

- **Creation**—Making media messages for particular purposes using multiple media formats
- **Reflection**—Contemplating how personal experiences and values influence reactions to and production of media messages; assessing the full range of potential effects of one’s production choices on oneself and others
- **Participation**—Initiating or joining in collaborative activities that are enabled by interactive media technologies
- **Action**—Taking meaningful steps to act on one’s insights about media messages

These competencies are infused with the same spirit of inquiry that early childhood expert Ellen Galinsky described in *Mind in the Making* (2010) when she named critical thinking as an essential life skill. They extend well beyond equipping children to use technology; they prepare children to succeed as lifelong learners in a technology-rich world.

They also extend beyond nominal “media literacy” initiatives or activities designed for the explicit purpose of reducing screen time, reforming media, or mitigating negative media effects. Media literacy education may produce these results, but they aren’t the goal. That distinction is important, because it changes what we actually do with children.

**Shifting Paradigms**

For many early childhood professionals, integrating media literacy education will require a paradigm shift. In the United States, the dominant paradigm governing the use of technology in early childhood education has been a medical one. Screen time is described using the language of addiction or disease, with warnings about “exposure” and pathologized outcomes like “play deficit disorder” (Levin, 2013). In this approach, the primary goal of interventions is safety.

Of course, safety is a bottom line for all early childhood professionals and because we’re all committed to the well-being of children, it would be inappropriate to completely abandon a medical paradigm. But for curriculum designers, this medical-based framing creates a pedagogical conundrum. When we design lessons or curriculum by “backwards mapping” (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) using safety as our objective, we invariably end up with screen time limits as the primary strategy, and often not much else. Case in point are the widely used child care licensing guidelines, *Caring for Our Children* (American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, & National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education, 2011), that define as poor practice any screen time greater than 30 minutes per week, irrespective of how screens are being used (Standard 2.2.0.3).

Media literacy educators share many of the concerns about media effects that are the basis for such recommendations. But as educators, we also know that just as you can’t help children become print literate by keeping them away from books, you can’t help them acquire the skills they need to become media
literate by keeping them away from screens. It’s not about championing the use of technology for its own sake, but rather, about recognizing that in an educational environment, the basis for technology integration should be sound pedagogy, not clock management. To put it another way, we can’t accomplish complex educational goals using only a medical model.

So while not ignoring health and safety concerns, curriculum designers use a different springboard. Rather than starting with the question “How do we keep children safe?” media literacy educators step outside the boundaries of a harm-or-not paradigm to ask, “How can we help children become literate in a digital world?” Because this question focuses on learning rather than risk avoidance, it opens up the rich array of strategies and activities that we typically associate with high-quality literacy instruction.

**Emergent Media Literacy**

For the same reasons that it is important to lay a foundation for print literacy starting at birth, it makes sense to begin media literacy as early as possible. On the surface, media literacy competencies might seem too sophisticated for infants and toddlers or even preschoolers. But like traditional literacy, we can establish an “ABCs” of media literacy—foundational skills and knowledge that are the building blocks for the complex capabilities we want children to develop as they grow (Rogow, 2002).

The six outcomes below are developmentally appropriate and achievable, even while remaining vigilant about the downsides of some media and technology. Media literate 5-year-olds can do the following:

1. Routinely ask relevant questions about ideas and information and use at least two different strategies for finding credible answers
2. Exhibit the habit of linking answers to specific evidence
3. Demonstrate knowledge that media are made by people who make choices about what to include and what to leave out (i.e., that all media messages are “constructed”)
4. Choose appropriate pictures to accompany a story or report they have created and provide a basic explanation for their choice
5. Create and share original stories and reports using images, sounds, and words
6. Identify media technologies as tools that people use for learning, communication, and persuasion, and that (with permission) they can use, too

Using NAMLE’s “habits of inquiry” and “skills of expression” as touchstones, we can craft educational practice that guides children toward mastery of these objectives. The pillars of that practice will be

- Modeling
- Questioning
Some pillars will offer more suitable opportunities than others for working with children at particular developmental stages. For example, basic modeling—that is, paying attention to what children see us do with media technologies—will be an especially important strategy in infant and toddler care, while decision-making activities mostly match the developmental stages of 4- to 8-year-olds.

**Modeling: What They See Is What They Learn** Modeling is more than just making consistently healthy or intentional choices about when and where we use media technologies—though as the 2012 joint position statement on technology from NAEYC and the Fred Rogers Center underscores, this is an important starting place (NAEYC & Fred Rogers Center, 2012). Just as native speakers don’t learn everything they need to know about language from listening to others, so-called digital natives (Prensky, 2006) don’t automatically learn everything they need to know about technology from their environment. So as we model, it’s important to explain what we’re doing.

For example, say that children notice an interesting bird outside the window and want to know more. A teacher who was concerned primarily about limiting screen time might do research herself and come back to children with the answers she found. But that robs children of the opportunity to engage in the research process and learn how technology can be used productively as a part of that process. That’s why a teacher employing media literacy education methods might kick off the inquiry process by making a list of children’s questions about the bird, and then asking, “How could we find out the answers to our questions?” Prompt the children to come up with a number of options (e.g., asking a parent, calling the zoo, looking in a library book) and then help them pursue as many of their ideas as possible. Later you can talk through which sources were most helpful and why.

If children don’t already include the Internet as one of their sources, you can add it to the list: “We can also use the Internet to find out more about that bird.” Then describe what you do as you do it: “I’ll use my laptop to log on. What question should I type into the search engine?” Or “I’ll use my tablet to take a picture and then we’ll do an image search to see if we can find out what type of bird it is. I start by tapping this icon with the camera on it to take the picture and then touch this button to send the picture to our smart board. Next time you see something interesting, you can use the camera that is on the shelf in the play area to take your own picture and I’ll help you send it to the computer . . .”

Verbal play-by-play introduces key vocabulary and helps children see tablets and computers as tools that offer more than games or videos. It also provides opportunities to engage children in the practice of asking relevant questions.

Once you’ve keyed in a question or search term, explain the criteria you use to choose a particular source. As you scroll down the list of results, you can point and say, “Look at all the places that have answers! I’m going to look at the Audubon Society’s answer because they have been bird experts for a long time and
their scientists work to protect birds." Explaining how we choose trusted sources models the discernment children will eventually need to find credible sources themselves.

**Questioning: Creating a Culture of Inquiry.** Media literacy education builds on children's natural curiosity, encouraging their questions, helping them learn how to find credible answers, and also expanding the types of questions that they routinely ask about media messages. Of course, ultimately inquiry isn’t just about asking questions, it’s about asking relevant questions, which is why, in the last three decades, media literacy educators have developed question sets designed specifically to foster critical thinking about media messages.

The grid in Figure 7.1 provides one such question set that suggests categories of inquiry. The temptation is to pose these questions only when children encounter media with value messages we find objectionable. And, in fact, they can work quite well to help children look at such media with a more critical eye. For example, Ithaca College’s Project Look Sharp has created an inquiry-based nutrition unit that helps youngsters question cereal ads.

However, children get ideas about the world from all sorts of media, not just from commercial or screen media. If the goal is to instill inquiry as a habit, then we need to engage children in asking questions about all types of media—including books.

One way to add inquiry to read-alouds without taking a lot of extra time is to follow a predictive question with a question about evidence. After asking "What do you think is going to happen next?" or looking at a book cover and asking "What do you think this book is about?" follow children’s answers with "How do you know?" or "What makes you say that?"

For the youngest children, the answers are less important than simply establishing the expectation that their answers will be based on evidence. When children know that they are going to be asked for explanations, they attend to media differently (Rogow, 2011).

With preschoolers, we can also add vocabulary-distinguishing types of evidence. So we might point out to a youngster who provides a prediction based on having previously read the book, "You’re using evidence based on your experience." Or we might say to a child whose answer is based on the book’s cover illustration, "So your answer is based on observation and what you noticed in the picture." Careful observation and evidence-based answers link media literacy to science and prime children for higher-order thinking skills. Such links are possible because we are using a literacy-based approach rather than an inoculation approach.

Another way to develop the routine of asking questions is to plan regular opportunities to look at the media in children’s environment. A few times a week, choose one media example—a toy or food package, an ad for a movie that children have been asking to see, a t-shirt, a painting, a restaurant menu, a favorite app—anything that children are already encountering. Then play a game in which children try to generate as many questions as they can think of about the example.
**KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN ANALYZING MEDIA MESSAGES**
Adaptations for Early Childhood Education

**USING THIS GRID**—Media literate people routinely ASK QUESTIONS IN EVERY CATEGORY—the middle column—as they navigate the media world. Occasionally a category will not apply to a particular message, but in general, sophisticated "close reading" requires exploring the full range of issues covered by the ten categories. • The specific questions listed here are suggestions; adapt them or add your own to match your learning goals and children's developmental level. • Encourage children to recognize that many questions will have more than one answer (which is why the categories are in plural form). • To help children develop the habit of giving evidence-based answers, nearly every question should be followed with a probe for evidence: HOW DO YOU KNOW? WHAT MAKES YOU SAY THAT? • Help children expand their thinking by asking questions like WHAT ELSE DO YOU NOTICE? • And remember that the ultimate goal is for children to learn to ask questions for themselves.

**SAMPLE QUESTIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUTHORS &amp; AUDIENCES</th>
<th>MESSAGES &amp; MEANINGS</th>
<th>REPRESENTATIONS &amp; REALITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AUTHORSHIP</strong></td>
<td><strong>TECHNIQUES</strong></td>
<td><strong>CREDIBILITY</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who created this? or Who made up this story?</td>
<td>What do they want me to notice?</td>
<td>How do they know [what they are saying is true]? Is what they are saying true?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What does this want me to do?</td>
<td>How do they get me to notice what they want?</td>
<td>What is the evidence?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who are they talking to? or Who is this for?</td>
<td>What might someone think about this who is [insert a type of person, e.g., older than me, from a farm, a teacher, a pet owner, etc.]?</td>
<td>Can I trust this source to tell me the truth about this topic?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who paid for this? Who makes money from it?</td>
<td>What does the storyteller want me to think (or think about)?</td>
<td>Is this fact, opinion, a little of both, or neither?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does the storyteller want me to remember?</td>
<td>What else do I want to know and how could I find out?</td>
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<td>Is this good for me or people like me? Is it good for people who aren't like me?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How does this make me feel?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What could I do about [insert topic or message]?</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PURPOSES</strong></td>
<td><strong>INTERPRETATIONS</strong></td>
<td><strong>CONTEXT</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does the storyteller want me to remember?</td>
<td>What might someone think about this who is [insert a type of person, e.g., older than me, from a farm, a teacher, a pet owner, etc.]?</td>
<td>When was this made? Is it from a long time ago or now?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is this good for me or people like me? Is it good for people who aren't like me?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ECONOMICS</strong></td>
<td><strong>CONTENT</strong></td>
<td><strong>CREEDIBILITY</strong></td>
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<td><strong>CONTEXT</strong></td>
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<td>Is this good for me or people like me? Is it good for people who aren't like me?</td>
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<td><strong>RESPONSES</strong></td>
<td><strong>INTERPRETATIONS</strong></td>
<td><strong>CONTEXT</strong></td>
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<td>When was this made? Is it from a long time ago or now?</td>
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<td><strong>CONTENT</strong></td>
<td><strong>INTERPRETATIONS</strong></td>
<td><strong>CONTEXT</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>What does the storyteller want me to think (or think about)?</td>
<td>What might someone think about this who is [insert a type of person, e.g., older than me, from a farm, a teacher, a pet owner, etc.]?</td>
<td>When was this made? Is it from a long time ago or now?</td>
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<td>What is this?</td>
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<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7.1 Key Questions to Ask When Analyzing Media Messages: Adaptations for Early Childhood Education

*Courtesy of Faith Rogow*

Questions can be silly or serious. Expand their thinking by offering one or two of your own questions (perhaps from the categories on the Key Questions grid). With older children, you might choose one of the questions and brainstorm ways to find answers.
The more we model asking probative questions, the more likely it is that children will begin to copy us and ask questions themselves. With enough reinforcement, the questioning becomes a habit that they apply to both the media they use and the media they create.

**Decision Making: Let’s Give ’Em Something to Talk About.** For very young children, whose limited vocabulary and fine motor skills can inhibit complex communication, the highly accessible nature of digital media technologies opens up a world of rich expression. Carefully scaffolded opportunities to create media help children see tech devices as tools that can help them accomplish specific objectives.

Making media also happens to be one of the best ways to help people internalize the notion that all media are “constructed”—the concept from which all media analysis flows. In order for young children to gain an understanding of constructedness, we need to pair the use of technology with decision-making opportunities and conversations. Typical early childhood education settings are filled with such opportunities. For example:

- Invite children to label their own cubbies by asking, “What kind of picture would tell everyone that this is your cubby?” Help them take photographs—perhaps “selfies” or something else that would represent them. As children post their photos, let them share with one another their explanations for why their picture is a good self-representation. It is the sharing that will help children learn about themselves and the efficacy of their choices. For instance, the child who chooses a picture of Spiderman may find that he is one of many who love the superhero, so that might not work very well as a cubby identifier. Instead, he’ll need to find something about himself that is unique. Reflecting on how best to represent themselves lays the groundwork for later years when children will be establishing a digital footprint and making decisions about what to post on their social networks.

- When children make their own stories into books, help them reflect on their choices for the cover. Ask, “Why did you pick this picture (or title)? How does it help people know what’s in your book?” or “How does it make people interested in reading your book?” Then help children connect the lessons from making their own media to the media they use: “Just like you made choices about what to include on your book cover, the person who made this video/website/game/poster, etc., made choices. Why do you think they chose ____?”

- Help children better remember the details of their experiences and engage in perspective taking by providing cameras to document a special event, field trip, or neighborhood walk. Add a decision-making component by providing a prompt like “Take pictures of anything you find interesting and also one picture of something that would be interesting to _____. Fill in the blank according to your needs. For example, if children are having issues with gender stereotyping, the prompt might encourage them to consider what
would be of interest to a boy or a girl (which would then be followed up with a conversation that could help them expand their thinking). Or you could encourage imagination by asking children to look at the world from the perspective of a favorite superhero or book/game/film/TV character (very much like they do when they take on roles during free play). Or make the prompt more concrete by asking children to “take at least one picture that is from the point of view of a dog.” Follow up with a guessing game to pick out which photos were through the dog’s eyes. If needed, use your own photos to provide examples of how a subject appears when you’re standing up or you are only a few inches from the ground. Alternatively, use scenes from a video with obviously tall and short characters (*Clifford, The Big Red Dog* works well). You can also use the photographs to practice sequencing, sorting, or as prompts for storytelling, reporting, or sharing the experience with families.

- Encourage family conversations by making a camera available to children so they can take photos at will about something important or interesting they did that day. Send the photo to the phone of the person who picks up the child so instead of asking, “What did you do today?” (which is too general for many young children to answer), a family member can “pass back” their phone and ask, “Tell me about this picture? What was happening?”

- To prepare for Family Day or Open House, involve children in making short videos about what happens on a typical day (Rogow, 2011). Engage them in conversations about what to shoot, as well as whether it is more truthful to simply record what happens on a given day, even if the day was unusual, or to re-enact events from their normal routine, even though it didn’t actually happen that day. Let them know that the decisions they are making are just like the ones that news reporters make, and help them notice the things during their day that they left out. Once they are aware of their own production choices, they can begin to understand that people who make the media they use also decide what to include or leave out.

- Combine language development with a lesson on production choices and diversity by having children record a retelling of a familiar story. Invite them to think about what various characters sound like. Is a mouse’s voice higher pitched than an elephant’s voice? Why would that be? Do the heroes speak with the same accent as the people in your family or community? How about the villains? What about nonhuman sounds? Would the rooster say “cock-a-doodle-do” if it lived in the Philippines or France? (Hint: the answer is no). How could children create sound effects for things that happen in the story like a car going by or an insect flying? It is possible to do this kind of storytelling without technology, but recording the performance makes for a richer learning experience because it provides motivation, invites experimentation and sustained attention (because it is possible to return to the work later and make revisions), and makes it easier to share the finished product.

- Use an image search to gather diverse pictures related to a topic that children are exploring. Then have the group choose one that would be the best
illustration for a summary of their work and ask them to explain their choice. Do they want a realistic photograph because it shows what they’ve actually learned, or perhaps a funny cartoon because people will want to know more about something that made them laugh? Any reasonable explanation is fine. At this age, it’s less about the answers than engaging children in the decision-making process.

• Teach media production vocabulary and concepts by engaging children in conversations about their drawings. Ask questions like, “If I was standing in your picture, what would I see if I looked up or to the side? What’s outside your frame?”

You can reinforce lessons about framing by connecting a video camera to a monitor and letting children move the camera to capture different parts of the room. If a camera isn’t available, cut a rectangle in an index card and have children hold it a few inches from their faces and look through the hole. Invite them to notice what is and isn’t included as they move their frame from side to side or closer to their eyes. The things they can see are in the “frame.” Encourage children to notice that the things outside their frame are still in the room—they are just choosing not to include them. Point out that media makers do the same thing.

Alternatively, you can have children use their full bodies to make frames. Teacher John Landis tapes a line on the floor and designates one side as “inside the frame” and the other as “outside the frame.” Then the class plays Simon Says with the leader directing players to place various body parts inside or outside the “frame.” He follows up with a game of hokey pokey with hands and feet in or outside the “frame” of the circle (Hobbs & Moore, 2013).

You can also use drawings to have conversations about sound: “If I was standing in your picture, what would I hear? Would I be able to guess the sounds from the things you included in your drawing?” Or, with older children, even about props: “How would I know that this is your mom and not someone else’s mom? What props could you include in your picture to show that this is your mom?” This kind of conversation not only introduces production vocabulary, but also sharpens observational skills as children reflect on the information conveyed by the objects that they include in their drawings.

When we put technology into children’s hands, we position them as communicators and artists, rather than as powerless or naive consumers. When we add inquiry, we help them achieve the “skills of expression” they need to be literate in an ever-changing digital environment.

**Integration: Making it Routine.** Media literacy education is at its best when both inquiry and technology are seamlessly integrated into a child’s day. This can be as simple as requiring children to articulate their plans for using a tablet before handing it over during choice time or providing easy access to tools like cameras so children can record at will things that they deem worthy of documentation.

Vivian Vasquez’s description of children’s “Tomato Trials” provides an excellent example of more complex integration (Vasquez & Felderman, 2013).
Building on kindergartners' interests in growing tomato plants, Vasquez starts the project by asking, "How could we find out about growing tomatoes?" Note that instead of simply telling children what to do, she offers them the chance to think about where to find credible information.

The children decide to do an online search and to ask people in their lives who garden. Online they encounter a device in which plants grow upside down. The children are intrigued by a commercial for the device and decide to test the ad's claims by growing their tomatoes in both the traditional way and with the special hanger.

They are also intrigued by a phrase from the ad—"back-breaking work"—and by the ad's implication that such work was "manly." To make sense of the unfamiliar phrase, they acted out the scene, discussed the gender stereotype, and ultimately decided that the stereotype was "unfair." Later they would act out alternatives to the ad, using new (and more accurate) information they had learned about growing tomatoes. As their plant experiment continues, the teacher helps the children use a word cloud to compare websites. The results help them determine the credibility of each site.

In this example, activities involving and not involving technology flow naturally into one another, and technology is used—with intention—to do tasks for which it is particularly well suited (like research and word cloud comparisons). Inquiry, critical thinking and language development are woven into everything. This is what high-quality media literacy education looks like in practice.

Conclusion

Some advocates suggest that because children encounter so much media outside of child care or school, early childhood educators should provide balance by avoiding use of screen technologies (Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood, Alliance for Childhood, & Teachers Resisting Unhealthy Children's Entertainment, 2012; American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education, 2011). Media literacy educators look at that same increase in the use of electronic screens and come to a different conclusion: It is precisely because our culture surrounds us with media that we need to model healthy and productive ways to integrate digital media technologies into our lives.

Developmentally appropriate practice would suggest that with technology, as with everything else, we need to let children know what they can do, not just what they aren't allowed to do. If we want children to understand that digital media technologies can be used for art making, learning, and communication, as well as entertainment, we need to demonstrate those possibilities. And if we want them to think critically about the values that media convey, we need to show them how to ask and find answers to relevant questions. By making technology integration about inquiry rather than inoculation and skill acquisition rather than acquiescence to a sales pitch, media literacy education provides a pedagogical path to those ends.
Teacher Takeaways

- Develop effective media literacy lessons and methods that help children develop the “habits of inquiry” and “skills of expression” they need to succeed in a digital world
- Understand that because our culture surrounds us with media is precisely why we need to model healthy and productive ways to integrate digital media technologies into our lives
- Model technology integration based on sound pedagogy rather than clock management
- Give children opportunities to make media to help them internalize the notion that all media are “constructed”—the concept from which all media analysis flows
- Teach critical thinking by actively involving children in decision making and reflection about the media they create and consume
- Help children learn to ask questions for themselves, by routinely modeling how to ask—and find answers to—relevant questions about the media you and the children use and create (not just about media that adults find objectionable)

Position Statement Alignment

Early childhood educators who are informed, intentional, and reflective use technology and interactive media as additional tools for enriching the learning environment. They choose technology, technology-supported activities, and media that serve their teaching and learning goals and needs. They align their use of technology and media with curriculum goals, a child-centered and play-oriented approach, hands-on exploration, active meaning making, and relationship building. They ensure equitable access so that all children can participate. They use technology as a tool in child assessment, and they recognize the value of these tools for parent communication and family engagement. They model the use of technology and interactive media as professional resources to connect with colleagues and continue their own educational and professional development.

NAEYC & Fred Rogers Center (2012), p. 10

References


**Resources**

- Insightsers Educational Consulting, www.insighterseducation.com
- Project Look Sharp, www.ithaca.edu/looksharp/
- *Mind in the Making*, www.mindinthemaking.org
- NAEYC/Fred Rogers Center Joint Position Statement, www.naeyc.org/content/technology-and-young-children
- National Association for Media Literacy Education, www.namle.net

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