Insight Five: A snapshot of Media Literacy in Australian Schools

Jocelyn Nettlefold and Kathleen Williams
This report, the fifth in the Institute for the Study of Social Change’s *Insight* series, explores the challenge of teaching young people to separate fact from fiction in an age of online news manipulation.

It draws on a recent survey of primary and secondary school teachers across the Catholic, Independent and State sectors in Tasmania. It highlights concerns about students’ abilities to identify false news and identifies the urgent need for dedicated curricula, professional development and resources to encourage critical thinking in and beyond the classroom.

Authored by Dr Jocelyn Nettlefold from the ABC-UTAS Media Literacy project and Dr Kathleen Williams from the Media School at the University of Tasmania with support from the Institute for the Study of Social Change, the report also provides a detailed overview of recent research into news consumption trends in Australia and abroad as well as the proliferation of misinformation in the digital realm. Reflecting international evidence, the report focuses on improving media literacy as one of several multi-stakeholder cross-disciplinary responses to the rise of false news and problems arising from individually curated and filtered news feeds on social media platforms.

The report concludes with a series of recommendations for lifting media literacy levels among young people and the Australian community more generally, including better resources, training and support for school teachers to deepen understanding of the technical and social complexity of the internet.

**Key findings:**

— The majority of teachers surveyed (77%) feel equipped to guide students on whether news stories are true and can be trusted, but nearly a quarter of the teachers (23%) do not

— Overwhelmingly, teachers view critical thinking about media as important, but when asked how often they explore critical engagement with news stories nearly a quarter of the teachers surveyed (24%) said they rarely turned it into a classroom activity

— Constraints on teacher knowledge, time and resources are likely to be influential factors limiting the teaching of media literacy in schools

— The teachers, who were predominantly aged over 35, trusted the ABC greatly (65%) and tended to trust local newspapers, television and radio news and mainstream news websites, but reported low levels of trust in social media

  • With research showing Australians, particularly younger Australians, are increasingly relying on social media for news, this discrepancy between how teachers and students access news raises some issues

— Many teachers, particularly those at the secondary level, are deeply worried about students’ reliance on digital and mobile media for news

— There are inconsistencies across educational sectors about the teaching of media literacy under the Australian Curriculum

— More than two thirds (70%) of the Tasmanian teachers surveyed rate news as very important to them personally, while nearly half (45%) think that news is not very important for their students
Introduction

There is an urgent and growing need to understand more about the complexity of today's news and information environments, and how people can be better equipped to avoid misleading, manipulated and fabricated content.

While digital platforms may have enabled innovative journalistic practices and improved access to information, they have also released a torrent of propaganda, rumours and advertising masquerading as news at an unprecedented pace and volume. Adding to the complexity is the ability of digital platforms to automatically segment and curate media content shaped to an individual's interests and worldview.

As a result, policy makers in Europe and North America warn democracy is facing a crisis because of the systematic manipulation of data targeting of citizens without their consent, campaigns of dis- and misinformation and messages of hate. Ahead of Australia’s 2019 election, the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters wants to know if Australian polls are at risk of social media manipulation as seen in the United States and the United Kingdom. The committee is considering the extent to which automated, social media ‘bots’ may have targeted Australian voters and political discourse in the past, the likely sources of social media manipulation within Australia and internationally, ways to address the spread of deliberately false news online during elections and measures to improve the media literacy of Australian voters. This report avoids the term ‘fake news’ as the expression has been appropriated and used misleadingly, often by politicians and their supporters, to dismiss content they find to be disagreeable.

In 2018, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation entered into a partnership with the University of Tasmania for the ABC-UTAS Media Literacy Project led by Dr Jocelyn Nettlefold. The project is generating contemporary, evidence-based knowledge about media literacy in the age of digital platforms to help promote community discussion, policy debate and to inform content and educational resources for the public, particularly younger Australians. UNICEF’s State of the World’s Children 2017 report identifies that gaps in knowledge about children’s lives online, including the impact of connectivity on cognition, learning and social emotional development, make it more difficult to develop dynamic policies that address risks and make the most of opportunities (UNICEF, 2017).

So how do we navigate the news, now and in the future? These are critically important questions, as we need reliable, credible information to guide our personal, professional and political lives and to underpin democracy. The Digital News Report: Australia 2018 is part of a global annual survey of digital news consumption in 37 countries, commissioned by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at the University of Oxford. It shows the uptake of digital and mobile news consumption in Australia is increasing and those who predominantly access news via social media are shown to be less likely to be news literate than those who rely on traditional media or news websites/apps for their news (Park et al., 2018).

Recent research on the proliferation of misinformation online points to the need for more education of citizens, greater transparency of media practices and wider research through a collaborative, multidimensional response involving a variety of stakeholders, including journalists and media organisations (see Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017). Initiatives aiming to combat unprecedented levels of mis- and dis-information go hand in hand with efforts to help build trust and credibility in journalists, journalism and the media.

Along with fact-checking efforts, media literacy, defined as active inquiry and critical thinking about the messages we receive and create (Hobbs and Jensen, 2009, p. 7) is frequently proposed as part of the solution to the problem of false news. The simple yet contested (see boyd, 2018) premise is that if we learn about how websites, television, newspapers, social media, radio shows, games and apps are constructed, we will develop critical perspectives about what is quality content and what is not. Yet as Bulger and Davison (2018) point out, this puts the responsibility on the individual, rather than approaching problematic information as a structural problem, which is boosted by the economic models of online content. Some researchers argue media literacy may have no effects, or potentially deleterious ones (Marwick, 2018). Others write that knowledge about media industries, media content, effects, the real world and the self must become essential elements of measuring an individual’s news media literacy (Maksl et al., 2017). A review of contemporary literature tells us:

Understanding media literacy and problematic information is complicated by constant changes in the field, particularly the evolution of technologies like ‘deep fake’ software, which enables sophisticated video trickery.

— Media literacy resources can expand the trust-building function of journalism and the media by providing gateway transparency and guiding news consumers and audiences towards reliable information.

— There is an urgent need for ongoing evidence-based guidance at a cross-national level about equipping and empowering people in the fast-changing world of news and information sharing.

— Efforts need to be tailored for communities in question. Therefore, more research is required in Australia into how citizens verify information, the impact of fact-check services and how age-specific and ‘explainer’ content may help build media literacy knowledge.

— The concept of media literacy needs to be approached in new ways, at the school level and in the community, raising awareness of the use of computer algorithms to manage and distribute content, the ability for automated data targeting to drive polarisation, the role of bias and analysis of emotional responses.
Most of this generation of children and adolescents have never known life without digital media. Those under 18 years of age account for an estimated one in three internet users around the world. Almost all Australian teenagers, two-thirds of primary school-aged children and one-third of pre-schoolers now have access to their own tablet or smartphone. At home, teenagers spend the most amount of time of any age group on a screen-based device: almost 44 hours on average a week (RCH National Child Health Poll, 2017). A growing body of evidence indicates that children are accessing the internet at increasingly younger ages and smartphones are fuelling a ‘bedroom culture’, with online access for many children becoming more personal, more private and less supervised. There are various approaches designed to empower youth to use, evaluate and create digital media, and to also protect them from potential threats online, such as sexting, cyber-bullying or targeted advertising.

At school, the abundance of opportunities to create, consume and communicate content through digital and traditional media brings exciting benefits including improving cognitive skills such as literacy, visual attention and executive functioning (Blumberg et al., 2017). Yet digital connectivity can also disrupt learning. The use of smartphones in school grounds is currently under review in New South Wales, potentially leading to a ban (Lu, 2018). Some experts blame mobile phone distraction for lowering Australian student performance in international assessments, while other researchers say they are necessary for new learning opportunities, participation in the workforce of the future, socialisation and access to therapeutic interventions (Heizer, 2018).

There is emerging evidence that students need more help with media literacy, at school and at home. Last year, Australia’s first nationally representative survey on how young Australians aged 8-16 consume, experience and verify news in Australia (Notley et al., 2017) found they consume news regularly from a variety of sources but most are not confident about spotting false news online. The research also found that while students value the news, they receive infrequent lessons about how to critique news media. Just one in five young people said they had received lessons at school in the past year to help them work out if news stories are true and can be trusted (20%). The research concluded that media education opportunities should be more frequently available in schools to ensure young Australians meaningfully engage with news media (Notley et al., 2017).

“Being information literate is one of the most under-rated skills being taught in schools and homes. Many people are very complacent about their information sources and hence, can be easily influenced/ manipulated.”

Primary school teacher, regional Tasmania.

**Media literacy: combining protectionism and empowerment**

**Mounting pressure for more media literacy in Australia**

Several submissions to the 2017 Senate Select Committee inquiry on the Future of Public Interest Journalism also suggested the Commonwealth should be more proactive in looking to strengthen digital media awareness and media literacy at all levels of the education system (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018). A key recommendation was for the Commonwealth to work with the six states and two territory governments through the Council of Australian Governments to determine how areas of the Australian Curriculum may be improved to assist students enrolled in a diversity of schools across Australia. The Foundation of Young Australians argues that we need to build digital skills and literacy alongside skills in problem solving, communication and creativity. This would equip future employees with interpersonal and emotional intelligence, the ability to handle the ‘covert’ and ‘amplifying’ impacts of automated journalism and information and develop their appetite for lifelong learning necessary for the future of work (McPherson, 2017). If teachers are to provide their learners with effective media education, they should be sufficiently media literate themselves and have required competencies to promote media literacy among learners (Simons et al., 2017). Therefore, in one of its 2018 studies, the ABC-UTAS Media Literacy Project sought to understand more about how Australian teachers consume news media and how they view the importance of media literacy education in their classrooms. How do they engage students in these contexts? What do educators need?

**Figure 1 – Cartoon by Matt Golding, courtesy of the Museum of Australian Democracy.**
Approaching media literacy in schools

Regardless of what is happening at home, schools bear a major responsibility to prepare students to use media appropriately, from regulating the use of devices such as smartphones in the school yard (or not) to providing opportunities for pupils to creatively use media and expand their knowledge of current affairs. Promoting the media literacy of students is seen by some scholars as part of the pedagogical mission of education, similar to traffic initiation, sustainable education, social training and other aspects of global life (Simons et al., 2017). It is argued teaching and learning needs to be refocused across the curriculum on foundational questions about ethics in digital culture, with classroom practice reframed around critical digital literacies like the interrogation of the forms and contents, practices and consequences of digital communications and current issues regarding everyday actions and their consequences, corporate and state surveillance, privacy and transparency, political and economic control and ownership (Luke et al, 2017).

While the unfolding era of automated journalism, with social media ‘bots’, may promise creativity and efficiency, it also presents the potential for greater misinformation and manipulation. As Nic Newman writes: ‘In the years to come we’ll no longer just be asking what is true, but whether information is even being generated by a human’ (2018, p. 46). Several studies into how adolescents make sense of their environment (Haddon & Livingstone, 2018; Livingstone et al, 2011) suggest adolescents have considerable grasp of the complexity of online interactions yet appear to have seemingly simplistic technical descriptions of the internet. In a study of cognitive developmental differences in digital contexts, Bordoff and Yan (2017) found that while understanding the internet’s technical and social complexity improves with age, older adolescents and adults still show, for the most part, an incorrect comprehension. This has ramifications for how they engage with others online, what personal information they may share, and by whom and how they are informed.

A great deal of scholarship to date has focused on how technology-mediated interactions impact youth development, including mental health, aggression and other behaviour problems. While cognitive development via screen-based media has been a relatively neglected topic in the literature and in the popular press, leading US media literacy scholar Renee Hobbs writes that the intersection of cognitive and affective domains and the role of teacher motivations in shaping the learning outcomes is opening new opportunities to advance the field (Hobbs, 2017). Luke et al. (2017) write that ‘the educational challenge raised by digital culture is not one of skill or technological competence, but one of participation and ethics’ (p. 251). Others suggest children and youth would benefit from more direct instruction on how the internet works, how misinformation can be spread by social media, and why they need to evaluate information retrieved from various websites (Powers et al., 2018).

In more than 50 countries where stakeholders organise initiatives to promote the use of media in education, the acceptance and success rates of such programs depend on the role and actions of the teachers to promote media literacy in education, their competencies in the field and teachers’ beliefs about the importance of the topic (Simons et al., 2017). UNESCO’s Media and Information Literacy Curriculum provides a framework for educators worldwide to implement media literacy curriculum in school contexts where it is possible, often within other curriculum frameworks such as Arts, English and Social Studies. Direct instruction in media literacy is not a required component of the curricula in many American schools, though support for media literacy education has grown significantly with teachers and teacher educators alike advocating for its inclusion in programs and curricula (Meehan et al., 2015). In the UK, media literacy training has been incorporated in secondary schools for more than 60 years. Australia has a framework for media literacy education through the Australian Curriculum, Media Arts, which complements and extends the rationale for the Arts learning area. This curriculum constitutes one of the world’s first attempts to mandate media literacy education for all students in pre-school to year 6, and to provide a scope and sequence beyond these mandatory years, up to year 10, providing teachers with support to ask critical questions about news accuracy, believability, bias, misrepresentation and ethical practice, as well as opportunities for students to make their own news stories. Through the complementary Digital Technologies Curriculum, the Australian Curriculum also focuses on information and communications technologies. However, if only a fifth of Australian high school students are learning how to check sources and verify the news, as Notley et al’s (2017) study suggests, there are important questions about what resources and training are required to better support teachers and students.
In this Tasmanian-based study, an online survey was designed for teachers at Independent, Catholic and State schools to understand more about teachers’ own news media usage, their perceptions of the importance of news and media literacy to their students and their approach to media literacy in the classroom. Teachers were asked to identify whether they were from metropolitan or regional Tasmania, and if they taught at primary or secondary levels or held a specialist teaching position. Questions were also asked about age, gender and number of years’ experience in the teaching profession. The survey was divided into two key parts. The first section asked 8 questions about the teachers’ media usage and the second section had 16 questions about news in the classroom.

Ethics approval was sought by the co-authors from the University of Tasmania before all school sectors were approached to participate; the Tasmanian Department of Education (DoE), the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office (TCEO) and Independent Schools Tasmania (IST). Separate research applications were also lodged and approved by DoE’s Educational Performance and Review unit and the Director of the TCEO. The educational bodies issued a request to respective school principals to circulate the survey link to teachers. It is not known how many complied. The survey was open for six weeks from 2nd February 2018. While 172 teachers started the survey, 97 completed it in full and took an average of 13 minutes to complete the questions.

Just over half (51%) were from Hobart (Tasmania’s capital city), with the remaining 49% located in Launceston and regional parts of the state. Teachers in the Catholic system accounted for more than half the respondents (57%), with the remaining split between the State (23%) and Independent sectors (21%). Most of the teachers (38%) had more than 20 years’ experience in the profession. The majority (61%) of respondents taught at the secondary level. Three quarters of the teachers were older than 35 years of age, mostly aged between 35-49 (47%), while 30% were older than fifty. A large majority of the respondents were women (71%).

Before analysing the data, the researchers wish to stress that media literacy education for children and adolescents should not be seen by the public as the sole responsibility of teachers and schools, which a Hobart secondary school teacher says is a common expectation and source of pressure:

“Schools are only part of the picture. Could someone please research how many times ‘they should teach this in schools’ is in the news? I would, but I’m too busy trying to keep up! We need to go beyond what happens in schools and equip families to serve up critical thinking and media literacy as part of their daily diet.”
As a recent report prepared for the NSW Department of Education highlights, education, like most social domains, is structured by an array of stakeholders contributing in different ways. The report suggests Australia’s education effort would benefit immensely from closer engagement with employers in the private and public sectors, and community organisations (Buchanan et al., 2018).

The teachers mostly rated the importance of news to them personally as very important (70%) and somewhat important (29%) (see Figure 2). On how important news is for their students, nearly half (45%) think that news is not very important for their students. However, 10% consider news is very important to students and 34% consider it somewhat important. This is consistent with student insights from a 2017 survey in which 44% of students said that following the news is important to them, they consume a lot of news regularly from many different sources and engaging with news stories makes young people feel happy, motivated and knowledgeable (Notley et al., 2017). While the Digital News Report: Australia 2018 lacks data from those aged under 18, it does show those under 35 treat news as social content with news consumption embedded in other social media and online activities, involving sharing and self-curating (Park et al., 2018).

These trends suggest more needs to be understood about the social aspects of news curation and consumption in Australia.

Topics of most interest to the teachers were breaking news (86%), followed by news on education (84%), current affairs and local community issues. Overall, they use multiple sources for news, on average using 3.6 different news platforms – mostly newspapers (62%), news websites (62%), social media (49%), commercial television (52%), commercial radio (19%) and search engines (53%). The multiple services of the ABC were used by 79%. As there is positive correlation between news literacy, frequency of news use, and interest in news (Park et al., 2018), this frequency indicates high levels of news literacy among survey respondents.

Nearly a third of respondents use fact-checking services to ascertain the accuracy of news, several nominating the Washington Post’s Factchecker and RMIT-ABC Fact Check. Cross-checking of sources is the teachers’ favoured way to check the accuracy of news.

Given the demographics of the survey cohort, the teachers’ reliance on offline resources appears consistent with contemporary research showing local or regional newspapers remaining important as traditional news brands, particularly among women and older audiences (Park et al., 2018) and again highlights a strong generational divide in consumption habits as younger news consumers (aged under 35) are more likely to access online news via social media, search engines or apps (Park et al., 2018).

While the majority of teachers surveyed (77%) feel equipped to guide students on deciding whether news stories are true and can be trusted, nearly a quarter of the teachers (23%) report they are not able to provide this guidance. One teacher observes that the habits of younger news consumers (aged under 35), who are more likely to access online news via social media or search engines or apps, are having an impact in the teaching workforce.

“Levels of media literacy among younger teachers and those who no longer read newspapers and magazines tends to be low. My observation is that online news readers read shorter articles and fewer word counts, this would be interesting to research.”

This observation is supported by research (Park et al., 2018), which has found those who mainly access news via social media are less likely to be news literate than those who rely on traditional media or news websites/apps. The data therefore raises questions about professional development and approaches to teacher education.
Trust in news

Strong predictors of trust are the number of news sources a consumer uses and a reliance on traditional brands (Park et al., 2018), with ABC News (online and offline) ranked the most trusted news brand overall by teachers surveyed. They also reported strong levels of trust in local newspapers, with 64% reporting they trusted them and 10% reporting they trusted them greatly, consistent with trends for trust to be highest in established news brands; public broadcasters and print newspapers.

In relation to social media, there were low levels of trust from the teachers surveyed: 27% said they distrusted sources like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter greatly. More than half (52%) said they tended to distrust social media.

Again, context is relevant here; the survey group is dominated by teachers older than 35 years of age who are also heavy users of offline news. The results need to be assessed against contemporary trends in the Digital News Report: Australia 2018 showing for the first time that Australians’ use of online news (82%) surpassed traditional offline news sources (79%) and that social media is now the main source of news for those aged 18-24 years (Park et al., 2018).

This data therefore raises two questions.

— If more news is being consumed via social and online media, how equipped are teachers to verify it and guide students?

— What does it mean if teachers consume and understand news differently to students, younger teachers or trainee teachers who are more likely to share news online and increasingly treat news as social content, using self-curation practices to filter news, alerts and notifications?

"I have found that students in year 8 are increasingly uninformed about what is happening around the world and only focus on their own interests or social media. They are coming to high school each year less able to think critically as they believe whatever they are told ‘online’. They don’t know how to find reliable sites or check facts. I will say outrageous things expecting to be challenged but it does not come!"

Overwhelmingly, primary and secondary school teachers view critical thinking about media as important: 52% rated it as very important, while 29% viewed it as somewhat important. More teachers in Hobart (63%) rated the importance of critical thinking about media as very important than those in regional Tasmania (40%), consistent with recent trends indicating that news consumers in regional and remote parts of Australia are more likely to have lower news literacy than those in major cities (Park et al., 2018).

"Asking the key critical thinking questions (Who wrote this? How reliable a source is this? Who’s the intended audience? Who and what is included/excluded? What techniques are being used here? Whose voice is being privileged or silenced?) is becoming more and more important, and more difficult to teach, at a time when we are being bombarded with information, messages and fake news."

Many teachers, particularly those at the secondary level, are worried about students’ reliance on digital and mobile media for news. Most say students are heavily exposed to multiple sources of information and yet are ill equipped to distinguish accuracy, bias, and fakery in text and images on the internet or social media platforms. However, several teachers fear focusing on negative issues though media literacy education can have adverse impacts. There is concern that encouraging critical thinking can create an overly cynical attitude in a student and in a class culture. It must be balanced with an attitude that there are things in this world that are true, trustworthy and stable.

However, overall, respondents stress the importance of critical thinking to avoid manipulation by vested interests—political, commercial and media agendas. The survey reveals strong teacher awareness of the importance of keeping student learning environments up-to-date and relevant.

"Critical thinking about media allows students to question issues that affect their lives and others. It can help to strengthen empathy and challenge ignorance. In addition, it is our democratic right to vote for the leaders of this country and in the future my students will be required to take part in these national and local elections. It is crucial to the democratic process that our future generations are able to think critically to make informed choices that best represent their values and that hold our leaders to task."

When asked about the frequency of students talking to them about distressing or upsetting news, just 6% said it happens often, while more than half of teachers surveyed (57%) said they are approached occasionally by students grappling with these issues.
Despite strong and often passionate belief in the importance of critical thinking about news and the media, when asked how often they explore critical engagement with news stories, nearly a quarter of the teachers surveyed (24%) said they rarely turned it into a classroom activity (see Figure 3). This trend is broadly consistent with previous research showing one in five Australian students reported receiving lessons in the past year to work out if news stories are true and can be trusted (Notley et al., 2017).

However, more than half of the teachers report they did sometimes engage with news stories in the classroom and 19% said it was a frequent activity. Of those, 37% would explore critical engagement with news stories once or twice a term, while 32% would do so five or more times.

The data highlights:

— There are inconsistencies across educational sectors with the implementation of teaching about media literacy under Media Arts in the Australian Curriculum, which is dependent on school authorities and State or Territory curricula.

— Teacher motivation and time constraints may be an influential factor limiting the teaching of media literacy.

At the primary level, teachers report they led class discussions, relying on educational websites and screen resources like the ABC’s Behind the News (BTN), which is aimed at upper primary school students.

Secondary school teachers say engagement with news stories fits with activities in English, Humanities, Technology and the Sciences including class discussions, analysis of news articles, quizzes, analysis of images and political cartoons, focusing on breaking news and local issues and using news stories to introduce larger topics.

Other Australian research has shown the variety of sources and extension of effort by teachers to curate content to promote learning across the curricula appears to rely on the teachers’ own knowledge of the connections between digital technologies, content and pedagogy (Dezuanni et al., 2017).

Half of the teachers surveyed provide opportunities for their students to create their own news stories, often (4%) or sometimes (46%). A fifth reported that they never do it, despite mounting evidence from researchers about the importance of participation and creating/expressing oneself using the media (see Mihailidis & Craft, 2016; Buckingham et al., 2005; Livingstone et al., 2005; Luke et al., 2017).
So what support and resources do teachers need?

The survey asked teachers to identify the resources and support that would make it easier for them and their students to decide whether news stories are true and can be trusted. Options included technical support, new equipment, online resources, specialist staff and curriculum-aligned plans. There was also an open field for suggestions. Teachers were asked to select all that apply, and how they would use them in the classroom (see Figure 3).

The data shows that, overwhelmingly, teachers need more support and resources.

Support for more online resources was high (78%) with several teachers suggesting that specific media literacy content to ‘to guide staff/students through the process’, including weblinks, photocopiABLE sheets and ‘age appropriate’ resources would help them provide guidance to students. Several teachers said contemporary content would save them doing extensive, time intensive research to curate videos and examples.

Most teachers (66%) believed curriculum-aligned plans would be of assistance and age-specific news (i.e. programs like BTN) should be expanded beyond the primary years (64%).

“It is definitely an important issue for students and explicit teaching on this is needed. For secondary teachers, the questions are ‘where in the curriculum do we cover this?’ and ‘how might we address this issue best?’”

Most teachers surveyed are aware that students need to develop greater understanding about the technical and social complexity of the internet.

“There is potential for a unit of work on building students’ critical thinking when using the internet. We already do a lot on cyber safety but I think cyber accuracy is also relevant.”

Throughout the survey results, teachers demonstrated that they are thinking through the challenges presented to their students in navigating a complex and sometimes contradictory media landscape. In part, this is because the landscape is difficult for themselves as adult educators to traverse. How can we better equip teachers to stay up to date with current and emerging media technologies and their uses? Teachers’ requests for specific support demonstrates that they see practical solutions to critical questions, which will help to prepare students for the contemporary media world, and hopefully equip them for what the future holds.

Figure 4

Which of the following resources or support would make it easier for you and your students to decide whether news stories are true and can be trusted?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online Resources</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Aligned Program Plans</td>
<td>66%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technical Support</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specialist staff</td>
<td>16%</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Equipment</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>6%</td>
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0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%
The data shows that, overwhelmingly, teachers need more support and resources.
Recommendations

A multi-stakeholder approach to media literacy and media education should be pursued in Australia.

Future researchers, policy makers, and educators need to focus more on standards of teacher training and professional development in media education.

More clarity is required for teachers from school and curriculum authorities regarding media literacy instruction and the priority it should be given in Australian classrooms.

Specialised media education resources should expand focus on explaining the news media environment and the way participants are engaged in it, including social and ethical dimensions.

The impact of the media industry’s involvement in media literacy education needs further research, including what content approaches successfully engage and entertain students, the value of age-specific news and engaging with user generated content.

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The impact of the media industry's involvement in media literacy education needs further research.
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