Spring 2018

**Media Literacy: For Public Organizations**

Nicole Aguayo  
*University of Central Florida*

Jessica Green  
*University of Central Florida*

Jeneba Kamara  
*University of Central Florida*

---

Find similar works at: [https://stars.library.ucf.edu/publicsectormedialiteracy](https://stars.library.ucf.edu/publicsectormedialiteracy)  
University of Central Florida Libraries [http://library.ucf.edu](http://library.ucf.edu)

This Guide is brought to you for free and open access by the School of Public Administration at STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Media Literacy: How the Era of Fake News Affects Public Service by an authorized administrator of STARS. For more information, please contact [STARS@ucf.edu](mailto:STARS@ucf.edu).

---

**Recommended Citation**

Aguayo, Nicole; Green, Jessica; and Kamara, Jeneba, "Media Literacy: For Public Organizations" (2018).  
[https://stars.library.ucf.edu/publicsectormedialiteracy/4](https://stars.library.ucf.edu/publicsectormedialiteracy/4)
Public Sector Communications

Media Literacy for Public Administration

April 23, 2018

Nicole Aguayo, Jessica Green, and Jeneba Kamara
Executive Summary

The following document defines what media literacy is for public administration agencies, as well as explore the importance of media literacy to government agencies specifically. This document will also explore subject matter that includes media literacy in education, using media literacy to address social issues, the role that media literacy plays in changing the narrative of women’s presence and influence in public administration, and issues and resolutions that arise in media literacy. Utilizing scholarly articles in form of literature reviews, the information and analysis provided in the document will successfully illustrate the very important role that media literacy plays in public administration entities. At the conclusion, there is an appendence section that has related news articles that further support in information discussed in this document.
Table of Contents

Executive Summary.................................................................2

Defining Media Literacy..........................................................4

Trends in Media Literacy.........................................................7

Molding Media Literacy to Specific Audiences ............................9

Media Literacy in Public Agency Education...............................11

Examining Media Literacy’s Influence of The Role of Women in Public Administration…..15

Obstacles in Media Literacy.....................................................20

Media Literacy in Public Administration Operations......................23

Navigating Social Identity Via Media Literacy.............................25

References...............................................................................28

Appendence 1.1.Related News Articles........................................30
Defining Media Literacy

According to the article, The Role of Media Literacy in the Governance Reform Agenda, Martinsson defined media literacy as the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create media content. Media literacy plays an important role for the democratic process; it allows individuals to participate in “active citizenship”. The new technological advances promote diversity, allowing individuals to express different opinions and get involved with government processes. However, there has also been challenges due to technological advances such as misinformation and unhealthy media habits. Individuals that are media literate can quickly identify harmful content that is displayed online and protect themselves and others from new content that is constantly being put out.

For many years, news media has had a powerful impact on governance and hold people accountable. Serving as a watchdog to protect the public’s interest and allow them to be aware of social issues and crises going on around the world. Allowing the public to see the debates going on between politicians and cast their own opinion on the ongoing issues. The news media is facing many obstacles such as: states restrictions, advertisements limiting news media, and lack of journalism which contributes to people pushing their own agenda. Without the proper education on media literacy citizens can fall victim to misleading information and threaten the democracy process. Even the most transparent media will have some sort of bias it is up to the public assess the bias being presented. An individual who is media literate can properly assess the information being able to spot biasness and not let it determine what they think.

Living in the digital era, we are constantly surrounded by media that has heavy influence in our everyday lives. We receive different content from a number of sources such as: television, music, social media, and radio. In this digital era, citizens can actively participate in journalism,
online discussions, and other projects. Content is put out by anyone who knows how to access media through technology. Expressing their biases, creating content based off of misinformation, or following a social media trend. Social media has had a toxic role in media literacy, inaccurately stating information and starting trends. However, there are also some movements started by social media that has had tremendous impact. For example, police brutality and the recent videos that have been captured started a long overdue conversation about the excessive use of force. Media Literacy education (MLE) teaches the public how to formulate their own opinion based on the information given. MLE teaches individuals how to conduct their own research and also teaches how to indicate the biasness being given. Once they have the identified the biases and conducted their research they can analyze the content and formulate their own opinion. Allowing them to be a part of the democratic process and start an open dialogue about real world issues and change.

Media literacy is the public’s understanding of the content that is being put out into the world. Greece created the foundation of media literacy, developing questioning practices that deepen analysis and reflection (Hobbs and Jensen, 2009). Over the course of time media literacy has constantly change in order to adapt to the constant media and technology changes. Media literacy education taught individuals how to develop their critic of the media instead of them being easily influenced.

The article Media Literacies by Buckingham defines the term media literacy and how the term began. The use of the term media literacy came about in the 1970s; it was first known as “television literacy”. The translation of the word media literacy is media education, informing the public about the media and how to interpret the information they provide. Buckingham states
that the only true form of communication is written, if the information is not written it is described as a literacy.

Considering a different angle, Buckingham defines media literacy as the “knowledge, skills and competencies that are required to interpret media” (Buckingham, 2013). Although, the definition sounds quite simple Buckingham suggest that media literacy is complex. Unlike language or written communication methods, media literacy is metaphorical term that blurs all forms of communication. According to the article, media analyst rejects the idea of individuals using the same methods as language to interpret visual interpretation. Without using the same methods we use in other form of communication media literacy can be hard to define. Based on cultural backgrounds information relayed through the media will be interpreted differently, which can cause misinterpretation of information. However, the article suggest that we can interpret visual and audio visual representation the same way we interpret the world.

Phycologist have tried to identify the make of media literacy and constantly have found themselves in-between a rock and a hard place. Having the basic make up of media literacy will give individuals the opportunity to learn how to interpret the media. Which will then promote democracy and give citizens a greater role in the governance process. Without having the basic make up of media literacy, people will continue to teach media literacy in different ways. Not having a clear make up of media literacy allows different media outlets to send messages that only reflect their personal bias. The make-up of media literacy is objective meaning it is up to interpretation, making it hard to fight the bias that is faced with the media.

The article *Media Literacies* by Buckingham provides good insight to the difficulty in teaching media literacy. Media literacy can be interpreted in many different ways making it impossible for there to be one interpretation, allowing room for media outlets to use their bias.
Allowing us to take a look at the challenges will allow us to analyze the difference in articles and may lead to a way to promote media literacy in an appropriate way.

**Trends in Media Literacy**

In the article *The Past, Present, and Future of Media Literacy Education*, Hobbs and Jensen discussed the different thoughts of media literacy over time. In the beginning of the media era, media was seen as untrustworthy, spreading false information around and influencing the ideas of children and adults. The idea of media literacy education in the beginning was to be provide “cognitive defense” over the propaganda that was being spread throughout fast growing industries (Hobbs and Jensen, 2009). Providing a defense mechanism so the public didn’t become influenced by films or any media being displayed. During the 1970s and 1980s the ideas of the media shifted from propaganda to a legitimate form of communication. Media Literacy in the 1970s was one exercising their democratic rights and civil duties. Instead of teaching children that the media was filled with propaganda, teachers began to let students develop their own opinion on issues addressed in the media. This allowed the public to have a voice in the media process allowing transparency from both media industries and government. Today many use the media to push their own agenda, allowing more propaganda than ever before. Using tools like advertisements, social media, and even the news to use as a platform to get their agenda out. As Masterman stated, being truly literate means being able to use the dominant systems of the culture. When exploring the importance of media literacy in the government it is important to know how media literacy is defined. As stated previously, the thought of media literacy has changed throughout the years. Media was first condemned because of propaganda, then people were allowed to have their own views on media, now the media has heavy influence with the use of social media and advertisements. Being media literate is to know everything that is portrayed
in the media is not true. Also, you cannot depend on anyone to tell you what is being portrayed in the media. Only you can use your beliefs and prior knowledge to assess what is being portrayed. Your assessment may differ from others but it will be your own assessment without the input of others. Media literacy education also serves the purpose of letting others assess the content being released by the media. Media literacy education should not allow children to be closed minded and have the same viewpoints as the teacher. It should allow children to question practices giving them a deeper understanding and a chance to reflect on the content.

This article provides significant information regarding obstacles and importance of media literacy in the government. Levitt an employee for Center for Substance Abuse Prevention(CSAP), had to overcome the influence of pop culture and advertisements on the youth. Pop culture and advertisements influenced the youth to indulge in toxic activities such as drinking alcohol. There were three problems that Levitt was facing: the first issue is that the federal government did not have the funding to compete with the advertisements, second any messages sent from the federal government will be seen as suspect, and third careful consideration to create content that won’t backfire.

One of the thing Levitt considered was the ongoing trend of the youth creating their own media content. Although, his agency didn’t have the funding to release content, he knew they had partners that will be willing to assist them in releasing healthy content. They first started by releasing weekly readers to elementary schools. In the weekly readers there are articles, activities, resources, and a teaching guide for teachers. This allows CSAP, to allow elementary students become more media literate on substance abuse. The second thing they did was create video competition, allowing high school students to indulge in the thing they love most, creating their own content. The videos created were at minimum 30 seconds and maximum 2.5 minutes.
The students had to create positive content based on youth health, negative media content, and substance abuse. Allowing high school students to create their own content promoted a fun way for them to become media literate, without trying to influence their current culture.

**Molding Media Literacy to Specific Audiences**

Tailoring to your audience is an effective way of promoting media literacy. If Levitt was not educated on the current culture of the youth the messages he put out on substance abuse could have backfired. It would have seemed like the government was trying to control the media content being displayed to the youth. Negatively impacting any additional content that would have gone out. Knowing your audience positively affects the content of the message being given. Levitt used partnerships with other organizations that had the funding to create content to make students more media literate on substance abuse. Knowing your audience and tools you can use to effectively get your message across and make your audience more media literate.

The article written by Moeller, outlined the use of media literacy of Obama’s presidential election. It is even inferred that the reason he got elected is because of media literacy. In the article written by Moeller she stresses the importance of the role the public in media literacy, empowering them to take action to defend their access to information and secure their participation in the role of governing. Throughout the article Moeller highlights the influence media literacy had on the Obama Campaign and how other organization can benefit from promoting media literacy.

Instead of directing an individual in a preferred direction media literacy teaches a nonpartisan skill set. This teaches individuals how important being engaged is and how their votes are to “create pluralistic and accountable societies”. Obama’s campaign was able to engage with voters through media outlets, and was known as the “YouTube candidate”. Rather than reaching out to
individuals for solely monetary purposes, Obama created an Open-Source campaign allowing open dialogue to discuss issues, values, as well as views about America. Obama got voters to engage in the democratic process allowing them to have a say instead of being coerced into voting for him. The Obama campaign taught voters the importance of being media literate and how important it is that they use their voice in the government process. This allows them to know that moving forward that a campaign should involve the issues that they believe are important not just the issues the candidate’s donors deem important. Also, in the article written by Moeller, she identifies how individuals and organizations can benefit from promoting media literacy. The first thing an individual should learn about media literacy is what “news” is and how different media outlets decide what’s important. Once an individual identifies how a media outlet determines what’s important individuals will be able to identify if they operate on bias. Monitoring and analyzing media coverage and understanding media’s role in shaping global issues allow individuals to comprehend the role of the media. Once the basics are covered, individuals can use media literacy to exercise their right for freedom of expression. Allowing individuals to defend media as it relates to their government, involve society in the government process, and motivate news outlet to cover transparent stories. In Conclusion, teaching media literacy is very important for the democracy process. It allows an individual to know how outlets are releasing news and observe if an organization is based on their own viewpoints. Media literacy allows citizens to know that information should be transparent and if more people become media literate outlets will have to start releasing transparent news. Which would stop the fabricated news stories from coming out that take precedence over the information people may find valuable. Citizens who are media literate promote healthy democracy and active government participation.
Media Literacy in Public Agency Education

In the article, “New Media and the Development of Education Sector: Appraisal of Selected Schools”, the authors Udoudo and Ojo give insight about the importance of media education in the Nigerian educational sector specifically in nursery, primary, secondary schools through literature reviews. The Authors emphasize that the new media is an essential part of the learning and teaching process. The new media communication system is currently making waves through the introduction of new ways of learning. Its ability to ensure availability of content anywhere without inhibition of physical space and time has made it more useful in learning. In Nigeria, the use of the new media has opened up, especially in the area of social networking and organizational communication, but still tries to come into full use in teaching/learning process. (Ojo, 2016) The problem statement that the researchers want to address is to find out to what extent students in the nursery, primary, and secondary levels in Obio/Akpor Local Government of Rivers State, Nigeria, make use of the new media in their learning process. (Ojo, 2016) There are four questions researchers want to investigate to what extent do nursery, secondary and primary schools use new media, how much relevant knowledge do students in the education grade levels use the new media in the learning process, what type of new media are used in the educational levels and what challenges are experienced faced by the students in the educational grade levels while using the new media for learning.

The Authors introduce the term of new media which isn’t properly defined in the article. The method used to investigate these questions that were used in this study was a survey and quasi-experiment. The study used guided test, observation, and interview as instruments. The study was conducted in eight selected primary and secondary schools which formed the entire population for the study. The findings from the study revealed that researchers observed that
there was a wide gap between the teachers and the learners in the use of the new media. The researchers also observed that learners outside the classroom setting were conversant with the use of the new media, especially in cases where they were not given adequate opportunity of making use of new media for learning in the classroom. (Ojo, 2016) All the eight schools studied have had some basic ideas of Internet use, but the majority of them have yet to apply the new media to teaching–learning process. The two schools ahead of others in the use of the new media technology in teaching–learning process are private schools. The conclusion is that private schools have the prospects of doing better than public schools.

In this study, of Digital Media in Primary Schools: Literacy or Technology? Analyzing Government and Media Discourses, researchers examine the Portuguese government educational program which allowed all primary schoolchildren the opportunity to obtain a low-price laptop named “Magalhães”. The study intends to understand the current practices in the use of digital media in school and outside school as well as the perspectives of children, teachers, and parents about the potential gains and challenges that digital media introduces. The study aims to examine whether policymakers and teachers are aware of the fundamental need for media literacy. (Pereira, 2013) Also, researchers aim of the study the selections made by the media regarding which materials they choose to bring into the public sphere from this governmental initiative and which materials they choose to ignore. (Pereira, 2013) The intention of the study is focus on the program’s policies and the school children’s media use.

Researchers used a media approach versus a technology centered approach which means that digital media and technologies are understood as social and cultural phenomena rather than simply technical devices. The study consisted of observing 3 cycles of educational cycles under the Portuguese educational system under the Magalhaes initiative that consisted of 479,519
children. Another method utilized in this study is analyzing the press coverage of the government program from its launch in 2008 until June 2010. Some European institutions such as the Council of Europe and the European Commission have also underlined the importance of promoting a critical relation between people and media (old and new), defining media literacy as “the ability to access the media, to understand and critically evaluate different aspects of the media and media content and to create communications in a variety of contexts” (Pereira, 2013).

The results of analyzing new media researchers gathered a total of 219 documents were gathered in the documental research and considered for analysis: 180 print documents and 39 promotional videos. Based on the results, of the study there needs to be further discussion to examine how children are learning and how these challenges are preparing children for the future. The findings of this analysis show that the “Magalhães” laptop was presented to society by the government as a tool that will revolutionize the school, the learning process, and the educational practices, as if giving children access to a computer necessarily means successful learning and modernization of schools. (Pereira, 2013).

Significant legal and cultural changes are putting pressure on educational administrators to rethink the work of creating inclusive schools. Same-sex marriage is now legal in all states, and many states’ anti-bullying laws specifically protect lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ) students. (Smith, 2018) The sexual orientation of students within the public education system has become a concern and focus among school administrators in the public educational system. In this study researchers recounted school principals’ responses to proposals to bring a no-cost LGBTQ-focused professional development into their schools. Specifically, analyzing their responses, researchers explore school principals’ understanding of their schools’ need for professional development on LGBTQ issues, their resistance and
hesitation around training their staff about supporting LGBTQ students, and their concern over
conflict with community values. (Smith, 2018) Researchers used three benchmarks to rate the
attitudes of school administrators to access whether the professional development is necessary
based on school leaders and LGBTQ issues, school leaders and “diversity” and social justice
leadership.

Researchers determined that LGBTQ parents and children are putting pressure on
administrators to provide leadership for efforts to recognize and affirm family diversity, sexual
orientation, and gender diversity. Thus, a significant portion this study is to work with schools
has been approaching school and district administrators and discussing the need for educator
training and schools’ active engagement in addressing the needs of LGBTQ students and
families. This article is situated in the context of existing literature on (a) school leaders’
engagement with LGBTQ student and family needs, (b) school leaders’ awareness of and
engagement with diversity issues, and (c) social justice perspectives on school leadership.
(Smith, 2018) The data analyzed for this article come from three studies related to the
effectiveness of and educators’ responses to the RSIS professional development program.
(Smith, 2018)

The data from the study indicated an overall lack of awareness of the school experiences
of LGBTQ youth and a pattern of resistance from leadership candidates regarding their
responsibility to recognize the needs and experiences of LGBTQ students. (Smith, 2018)
Researchers make a great point that school administrators are expected to know but the only way
administrators would know is if they are taught through training. Educational leaders are
expected to be knowledgeable about differences among their students, parents, and school
employees, and “willing to confront difficult topics/issues, as well as to enact positive strategies
to build awareness and acceptance of all people”. (Smith, 2018) School administrators’ perceptions and interpretations of “who” their students might be are significant because they shape how educators “predict and explain what students can or cannot do, how they will or will not behave, the futures that are or are not open to them” (Smith, 2018) This article opens the door for discussion among school administrators to analyze where their schools’ rate in other social issues and social justice.

Exchanging Media Literacy’s Influence of The Role of Women in Public Administration

In this article “Changing the Narrative: The difference women make in public administration” researchers address the issue of changing the narrative and examining the difference women make in public administration. The level of education women have attained in the past 20 years has positioned them for successful careers as well as for leadership positions. Since the 1990s, women have outnumbered men in college enrollment; they are also more likely than men to graduate from college and to enroll in post graduate programs. Researchers explore the link between social justice and public administration. A discussion and analysis of the literature on the difference women make in public administration followed by a discussion of why the difference women make is relevant to social justice. The article concludes with a discussion of the relevance of narrative inquiry to social justice in public administration. (D’Agostino, 2017) Some of the barriers researchers cited as for career advancement for women are political, organizational, and societal barriers.

Researchers determined that social justice has always been a vital component of public administration working with men and women on the issues of social justice. The difference women make in public administration is of growing concern to researchers. Several studies have examined how women impact legislation differently from men others have investigated the glass
ceiling and governmental representation and leadership. Several research studies in public administration have, however, taken an interpretative approach, thereby revealing hidden voices by reexamining public administration history through a gendered lens. (D’Agostino, 2017)

In the article researchers suggest documenting and mapping to change the narrative about women in public administration by dismantling of the roadblocks women encounter in the public sector has been an important focus of research, but the dominance of the positivist methods has also limited women’s progress both by making generalizations about the obstacles to progress they encounter as well as the progress that they have made despite those obstacles, and by excluding the voices of those women leaders who have overcome such challenges. (D’Agostino, 2017) Changing the dominant narrative by understanding the difference women make can catalyze gender equity and social justice by creating a space for an alternative perspective. Narrative inquiry introduces marginalized voices and provides counter-narratives that dispute misleading generalizations and refute entrenched assertions. (D’Agostino, 2017)

A Women’s progress in public administration has stagnated in part because the dominant narrative mainly focuses on gender equity as defined by the challenges and obstacles to entry into top leadership positions. (D’Agostino, 2017) Understanding the difference women make in public administration, the contributions to public administration as defined by the voices of women who have navigated the challenges and obstacles and are currently in leadership positions, provides the possibility for changing the dominant narrative. inquiry provides a tool to change the dominant narrative about the progress of women from one solely focused on gender equity to a narrative where gender issues are public administration issues and women’s progress in public administration is no longer perceived as a set of challenges and obstacles. (D’Agostino, 2017) The article tackles some of the prominent issues related to a women’s progression into
public administration. This article opens the dialogue for researchers to further investigate how the introduction of social media and media outlets have played a factor into the role women play in public administration and other barriers or obstacles women have had to endure.

The basis of the study of *Mom work versus Dad work in Local Government demonstrates* the need to change the narrative about a women’s role and assumptions surrounding the workplace especially within local government. The focus here is on local government, for it is at the city/county level that services are delivered most directly. And it is at the city/county level that women comprise 61% of the workforce in contrast to 43% at the federal level. (Guy, 2017) It has been more than half a century since the Civil Rights Act of 1964 forbade employers from overtly advertising “women’s jobs” or “men’s jobs,” yet the separation persists in many offices. Accepted traditions, such as job descriptions that list cognitive skills but overlook required emotive skills, disguise gender-normed services. (Guy, 2017) In this article the author argues that it is the invisible and taken-for-granted non-cognitive job demands that are influential in differentiating “women’s” jobs from “men’s” jobs. (Guy, 2017) The two largest types of jobs and equates their non-cognitive demands to mom work versus dad work. Because gendered jobs have economic repercussions that disadvantage women throughout their careers and diminish their retirement income, the discussion then connects the issue of pay with the issue of gender roles. (Guy, 2017) The fact is that women are concentrated in public schools, public health offices, and family and children’s services. Men are scattered more evenly across all jobs, but their concentrations are most notable in public safety. (Guy, 2017) The methodology used in this study was analyzing past and current studies that depict women in a less dominant role analyzing the data based on gender roles and aspects.
Whether in the case of public schools or in law enforcement agencies, gender and affect are recursive. There is a gender tension when women occupy roles that are traditionally performed by men. (Guy, 2017) There is a monetary penalty for holding a job that involves caring and nurturance. The “care penalty” is associated with lower wages for both women and men, yet men in these jobs still earn substantially more than their female counterparts. (Guy, 2017) The goal of this study is to illuminate the unstated assumptions about what is “normal” in local government service delivery systems and to show why this perpetuates the status quo and works to the economic detriment of women. (Guy, 2017) Gender is used as a surrogate variable for the “additional” skills necessary in the job. Essentializing emotive responses to a binary choice of masculine or feminine shortchanges the skills of many and avoids a more fulsome and nuanced approach to public service delivery. (Guy, 2017) In conclusion, this article has used the two most common functions performed by local government—education and law enforcement—to demonstrate the link between gender norms and the state. Throughout, gendered images of appropriateness are presented. By examining the teacher corps and the police force, it is evident that performance expectations—for both cognitive and emotive skills—are attached to gender norms. Moreover, there is a wage penalty for women, especially in “women’s” jobs. (Guy, 2017)

In the of relational leadership, storytelling and narratives: practices of local government chief executives study researchers want to examine the relational of narrative and storytelling practices of a group of senior public administrators in the United Kingdom: local government chief executives. The significance of storytelling and narrative change has changed the voice of public administration. In doing so, researchers want to explore the distinctive settings of leadership with a focus on the dynamics of leadership. (Kevin Orr, 2016) In public administration, the role of narratives and stories—as an interpretive methodology and as a significant aspect of public
administrators’ practice—has not yet succeeded in becoming front and center of scholarly attention. Narrative analysis in public administration can be traced back at least as far as Waldo (1968), who explored “administrative novels” centering on issues relevant to public administrators. Yet interest in stories and narratives in our field has been sporadic. Borins observed that although “the use of narrative has become widespread through many disciplines, it has yet to establish a strong footing in public administration” (Kevin Orr, 2016).

There are several parameters researchers are trying to target with this research one being stories have the capacity to cut across professional or departmental boundaries and engage people with a shared sense of context and purpose. Stories can generate an emotional connection helpful to motivating and influencing staff. Stories can help challenge and reframe the assumptions that underlie particular ways of practicing. Stories lend themselves to talking about the public mission of organizations. Attention to stories and narratives helps us understand leadership influence as collective and collaborative. (Kevin Orr, 2016) Researchers want to explore one of the golden threads that runs through these definitions—the importance of influencing—and we examine the ways in which leaders use narratives and stories to influence understanding and action in organizations. Examining practices through a relational lens moves the analysis beyond the notion of the “hero leader” and instead enables us to understand the ways in which the everyday dilemmas of organizing are inescapably collective. (Kevin Orr, 2016)

The methodology to complete this study examined how chief executives created local context through story and narrative techniques. Zooming in on chief executives’ storytelling through their reflective accounts of their practices, our study took momentum from work that suggests the constructive ways language is used to present important focal points for research. (Kevin Orr, 2016)
Researchers analyzed transcripts and field notes entailed standard, systematic, inductive, and abductive processes in which we moved between data and theory, focusing on instances of leadership and storytelling or narrative work. (Kevin Orr, 2016) The data from the review of the transcripts revealed that stories can generate an emotional connection helpful to motivating and influencing staff. Stories can help challenge and reframe the assumptions that underlie particular ways of practicing. Stories lend themselves to talking about the public mission of organizations. Attention to stories and narratives helps us understand leadership influence as collective and collaborative. Based on the research presented in this study storytelling represents a topic of great contemporary appeal to practitioners and therefore may help overcome what Van Wart identifies as the dangers of obscurity in leadership theory. (Kevin Orr, 2016) Our research highlights ways in which storytelling—and the broader idea of narrative—represents a significant part of their everyday relational leadership practices. If collective leadership requires visioning, then, in our study, stories emerge as a facilitative resource, inviting others to contribute to how the present is understood and the future is imagined. (Kevin Orr, 2016)

Obstacles in Media Literacy

Based on the aforementioned definition of media literacy being “the public’s understanding of the content being put out into the world”, this also holds true for internal communications. Frequently the internal communication of a public agency suffers from incidents of frustration and poor morale due to focus being on external communications, and not on correspondence within the agency. Sharma and Kamalanabhan discuss in their article entitled “Internal corporate communication and its impact on internal branding” the importance of communication internally, as well as the impact poor communication strategies have on an agency (Sharma & Kamalanabhan, 2012). Since media literacy deals with the proper
understanding of content, Sharma and Kamalanabhan discuss that employee communication holds a very crucial role, however implementation of internal communications strategies over the course of the last several years have been poor (Sharma & Kamalanabhan, 2012). In addition to issues that arise with poor communication, branding is also important to being effectively media literate. Sharma and Kamalanabhan elaborate that evaluating internal communication dimensions is important to in seeing what the influence of internal branding outcomes are in regards to employment engagement levels (Sharma & Kamalanabhan, 2012). Additionally, as issues continue to arise internally with employees and internal branding standards, it would be advantageous to examine the effectiveness of the current internal branding in the context of how it affects employee turnover (Sharma & Kamalanabhan, 2012). At the conclusion of their research, Sharma and Kamalanabhan came to a few interesting conclusions. Poor internal communication can lead to disloyalty of employees, particularly because as job turnover occurred, mismanagement of communication made both junior and senior team members feel as though their role was not stable (Sharma & Kamalanabhan, 2012). Research also indicates that best practices of internal communication strategies involved also integrating human resource functions (Sharma & Kamalanabhan, 2012). Ultimately, it is important to keep in mind a balance of internal and external communication strategies in order to maintain employee morale, productivity, and loyalty.

In Calista's and Melitski's article "E-Government and E-Governance: Converging Constructs Of Public Sector Information and Communications Technologies", they discuss information and communication technologies (ICT's) and how they are becoming prevalent in public agencies (Calista's & Melitski, 2007). Calista and Melitski elaborate on the sociotechnical theory, which "advocates the dispersion of technology as a means to refine existing
communication and organization structures” (Calista's & Melitski, 2007, pg. 94). The premise of the theory is that there is a benevolent connotation of sociotechnical interactions, meaning thus technology is helpful in promoting communication throughout public agencies. The issue with this, is as noted in previous research, is technological proponents frequently have decentralizing tendencies, which can harm the authority of a public agency (Calista's & Melitski, 2007). This past semester, I studied abroad in Seoul, South Korea, and the country is a huge advocate of E-Government and E-Governance. Site visits included tours of the Seoul Metropolitan Government and with their Emergency Management service building, and there was much discussion about the implementation of E-Government and E-Governance legislative measurements. Calista and Melitski elaborate that E-Government involves a “commitment by government to improve the relationship between the private citizen and the public sector due to enhanced, cost effective and efficient delivery of services, information, and knowledge” (Calista's & Melitski, 2007, pg. 96). There was the initial desire to shift to this type of governance in order to “give a voice to the people”, after moving from being more heavily regulated by the national government. There were several issues that arose, as communication and the importance of media literacy took a back seat to the misunderstandings and frustrations of the constituents in these local districts. When there is a breakdown in communication between local and national governments, sociotechnical theories aren’t advantageous if rudimentary interactions haven’t been established. Lack of access to technology from the lower classes and inefficient implementation of sociotechnical tenets lead to push back and even riots from many of the citizens of Seoul. This situation highlights what can happen with there is a lack of proper media literacy.
Media Literacy in Public Administration Operations

Sementelli eloquently discusses how media literacy can be used to address concerns with public administration operations, as well as bridge the gap between certain theories. Theories associated with bureaucracy and social order when discussing the public sector administration can be explained by using media based pedagogical tools (Sementelli, 2009). There has been marked progress in managerial training with the use of integrating popular culture references and pictures; delivering information via an interface that the general of society understands is beneficial to the agency (Sementelli, 2009). Across many industries and throughout society, the use of media has deeply penetrated the adult learning process (Sementelli, 2009). From basic harassment videos to complex development leadership training, training modules are improving keeping in mind the tenets of media literacy (Sementelli, 2009). Research continues to be conducted on the integration of contemporary media into public administrative trainings; however the use of media is being successfully utilized as part of training programs simply by pairing media items with agency related topics (Sementelli, 2009). As new technological advancements promote diversity, utilizing media in this way further allows individuals to learn on a more relatable platform, as well as get involved with government practices that allow constituents to voice their opinions.

Media literacy via institutional communication is steadily being incorporated into the framework of public agencies, and this correspondence in vital in maintaining public image through the established policies and supported activities (Miron and Ticu, 2012). Frequently it is discussed the responsibilities public agencies have to their constituency, however having established media literacy highlights and strengthens specific role each party has by presenting the content in a way that makes the obligations clear for each role, in a comprehensible way
(Miron and Ticu, 2012). Also coinciding with public relations, institutional communications can vary in purpose, from a social trend, to seeking to adjust behaviors (Miron and Ticu, 2012). Maintaining a strong sense of media literacy is vital in the public administration’s ability to enhance or elucidate the agency’s image, as well as construct around that image a climate of trust and empathy among the citizens being served (Miron and Ticu, 2012). Furthermore, operating with sound media literacy means that the agency is effectively raising public awareness on key issues, as well as promoting operational excellence (Miron and Ticu, 2012). Institutional communications that come from public agency are tasked with conveying the agency’s ability to carry out legal functions appropriately and efficiently, as well as endorsing adherence to policy and achieving the goals and desires of the citizens (Miron and Ticu, 2012). Media literacy for a public agency must also consider how to effectively communicate when citizens express dissatisfaction. Branding and how a public agency markets itself also falls in the arena of media literacy, and should be aimed at truthfully communicating information of public interests as well as promoting social cohesion (Miron and Ticu, 2012).

Understanding that media literacy for organizations that fall within a public administration atmosphere is paramount, and the base level of comprehension comes in realizing that even what could be perceived as a small story has a unexpected way of making it to mainstream media outlets. In an article published in the nonprofit quarterly, author Steve Dubb discusses that in many instances, nonprofit/public agencies have a better handle on media situations that have to be mended. Dubb’s research further reinforces the notion that constituents “want to know what their school board is doing, people want to know what their city council is doing (Dubbs, 2018). Quite often, public agencies are the first place that people go to for information, and have a big interest in that information being accurate and delivered in a timely
fashion. Through the coursework of the Nonprofit Management program at the University of Central Florida, the concept of public trust being very difficult to earn, but also earn back once broken, is communicated throughout many of courses. Missteps inevitably will occur, but it is how they are addressed that will serve as testament to the efficiency and overall caliber of the agency. There is slowly a trend developing in public administrative agencies where they are expanding their focus on promoting news literacy, particularly for younger demographics (Dubbs, 2018). Public Administrative entities need to operate with understanding that while upholding the mission of the agency is typically the paramount concern, the perception, or optics, of the decisions being made on behalf of the constituents that are part of a particular community are also chiefly important. Different from private organizations, nonprofit and public agencies follow a model that hold responsibility to a mission, rather than shareholders or profitability (Dubbs, 2018). Focusing on the comprehension by the constituents of what is transpiring within the inter-workings of a public agency, rather than a profit driven mission, it showing promise of being a better “model” to operate; economists discuss however trying to prompt these types of changes in a private agency might lead to what could be considered a “market failure”.

Navigating Social Identity Via Media Literacy

Even with a public agency, identity is indivisibly interrelated to power and influence; being aware and literate of media occurrences is a vital part of developing “self-awareness” as a leader (Kanagasingam and Tamdji, 2017). It is enormously important for public administrative entities to adequately navigate social identity; the myriad of attributes and values that make us each different from one another (Kanagasingam and Tamdji, 2017). There has been a through line thus far in this document on predominantly focusing on external stakeholders, but
the employees and other internal stakeholders that are present within a public agency are vastly
importance to operating media literately. As the demographics of the workforce change right
along with the constituents those employees serve, there’s need to be an understanding, and
promoting of cultural competency that assists in adapting to the new environment. Typically
viewed as a negative occurrence, marginal identities can at times be a strength; research has
shown that certain individuals mentioned “having a marginalized identity fostered connections
with others, because it helped them more clearly see injustice and connect with others that had
similar experiences” (Kanagasingam and Tamdji, p. D 2, 2017). Thus there are ways for a public
agency to shift into being more media literate, and culturally competent. Kanagasingam and
Tamdji first mention to cultivate identity awareness by considering what identities are most
salient to the agency, as they are more than likely to shape views and decision, thus appearing as
an implicit bias (Kanagasingam and Tamdji, 2017). Being able to address and discuss these
different biases will enable the agency to lead more efficiently in complex situations.
Additionally, as rudimentary as it sounds, an agency should be courageous in their leadership.
This “courageous leadership” occurs when an agency is in tune to not only interpersonal, but
overall organization dynamics of identity (Kanagasingam and Tamdji, 2017). What this entails
includes having to engage in what is considered difficult and many times unmentionable;
dogmas such as race, religion, gender issues, and other usually off limits topics; it is very
important to be attentive to those that seek to have a voice in your organization, in particular
working arduously to give those that may be marginalized a voice as well (Kanagasingam and
Tamdji, 2017). Part of fostering media literacy is addressing internal occurrences, including
addressing transgressions when they come about, and utilizing the organizational power of
position to promote overall dialogue and learning- sharing power and enabling diverse leadership
with increase the overall efficiency of the agency (Kanagasingam and Tamdji, 2017).
References


Levitt and Denniston. (2011). The National Association for Media Literacy Education’s Journal of Media Literacy Education 6(2), 79 – 86: Voices from the Field Federal Agency Efforts to Advance Media Literacy in Substance Abuse Prevention


Links to Related News Articles

Selangor: Better social media literacy:
https://www.thestar.com.my/opinion/letters/2018/03/19/better-social-media-literacy/

Why media literacy must become an educational priority:
https://www.florala.net/opinion/why-media-literacy-must-become-an-educational-priority/article_e23c248a-3919-11e8-8157-cf1ef422ea2c.html

Social Media Effectiveness for Public Engagement:

Nonprofit Communications:

Media Literacy Education:

Media Literacy Vital to Civil Society: