MEDIA LITERACY AND FAKE NEWS

by:
John Carlo C. Tello
Teacher II, Mariveles National High School-Poblacion

Technology can be either beneficial or harmful. Technology makes it possible for information to be transferred at a rapid rate. It also makes information more accessible. One major issue with regards to information and technology is the rise of fake news. The internet, especially social media sites permitted people to publish, communicate and consume information with very little editorial standards. More people become misinformed and disinfomed due to the existence of fake news, and this can be very dangerous. Students can access fake news from their mobile devices in just a blink of an eye. Thus, students are susceptible to misinformation.

Fake news is information that is fabricated and blatantly false. This type of information is a hot topic since 2017 and become a major phenomenon in social media. Fake news includes news stories with no verifiable facts, sources, or quotes. Sometimes fake news may be a form of propaganda to mislead readers such as political movements. The digital age introduced social media influencers and vloggers and some of them misuse information to clickbait for economic incentives (Molina, Sundar, Le, & Lee, 2021). Information overload and the lack of understanding of how the internet and social media works contributes to the increase in false stories which can deceive many people.

Misinformation and disinformation are results of false information. However, the two terms are different based on the intent or the motivation for sharing the information and the kin people who share it. Misinformation is made from unintentional mistakes such as inaccurate date. In misinformation, the misleading information is shared without the intent to manipulate people. In contrast, disinformation refers to deliberate attempts to confuse people with false information or cause harm (O’Brien & Alsmadi, 2021). The
persistence of fake news in online platforms may lead to reduce trust in in the media. This may lead to difficulties in determining fact from fiction in the future. One good example is the false information about the corona virus and vaccines which makes it difficult for health workers to convince people to get vaccinated.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, information and communication technology is central to the lives of Filipino learners. Students are vulnerable to fake news, misinformation, and disinformation. They spend significant amount of their time using mobile phones, chatting, vlogging, posting various media and searching information or content all over the internet. They strongly rely on information posted online which affects how they perceive reality. The significant rise of fake news makes it crucial that students have skills in identifying facts and distinguish bias (Mai, 2018).

Teachers and parents must help students develop media literacy to protect them from the harmful effects of misinformation and disinformation. Media literacy is basically critical thinking which is essential in navigating online media. Media literacy is reflected as the ability to have an access, analyze, evaluate, and create media in a variety of platforms. It is relevant and timely since it is a 21st century approach to education. It shows a framework to access, analyze, evaluate, create, and engage with messages in a various forms and platforms (Aspen Media Literacy Leadership Institute, 1992).

For curriculum designers and implementers, media literacy can be integrated in basic education curriculum as young learners are exposed to information and communication technology. Teaching media literacy skills to younger students can protect readers and listeners from misinformation and disinformation. This is the same as teaching proper hygiene decreases the spread of disease.

References:
