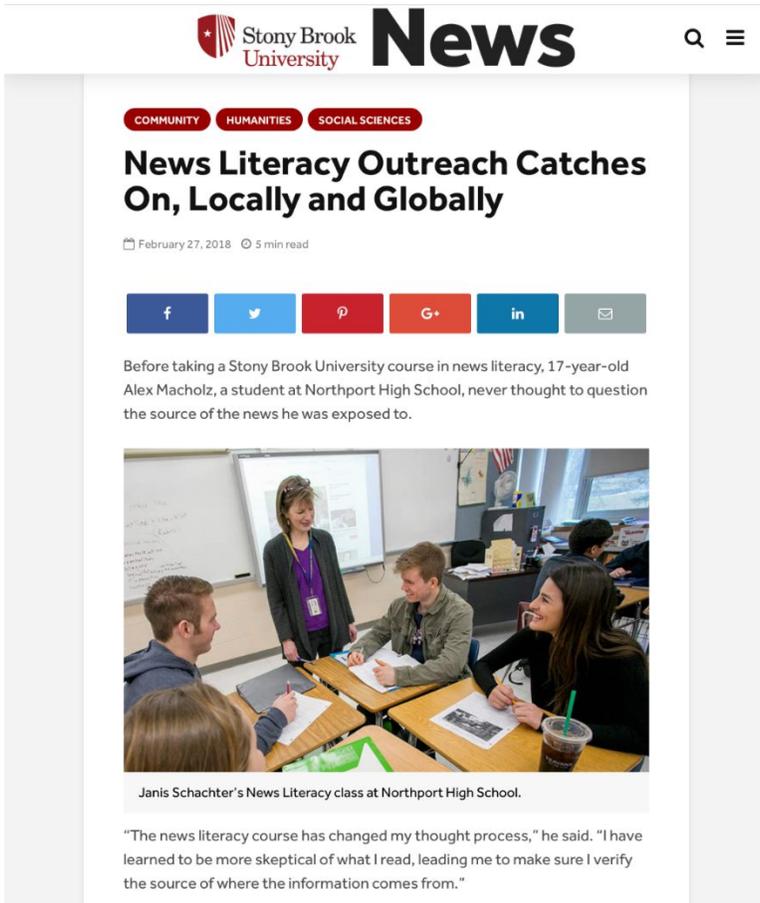


ENTRY - PRESS FREEDOM TEACHER – USA – JANIS SCHACHTER

News Literacy and the Power of Information

Janis Schachter
Northport High School
New York, USA

Northport High School Meets The Center for News Literacy At Stony Brook University



The screenshot shows the top of a news article on the Stony Brook University website. The header includes the university logo and the word "News" in a large, bold font. Below the header are navigation tabs for "COMMUNITY", "HUMANITIES", and "SOCIAL SCIENCES". The main headline is "News Literacy Outreach Catches On, Locally and Globally", dated February 27, 2018, with a 5-minute read time. Social media sharing icons for Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Google+, LinkedIn, and Email are visible. The article text begins with "Before taking a Stony Brook University course in news literacy, 17-year-old Alex Macholz, a student at Northport High School, never thought to question the source of the news he was exposed to." Below the text is a photograph of a classroom setting where a woman, identified as Janis Schachter, is standing and talking to a group of students seated at desks. A caption below the photo reads "Janis Schachter's News Literacy class at Northport High School." At the bottom of the screenshot, a quote from Alex Macholz is visible: "The news literacy course has changed my thought process," he said. "I have learned to be more skeptical of what I read, leading me to make sure I verify the source of where the information comes from."

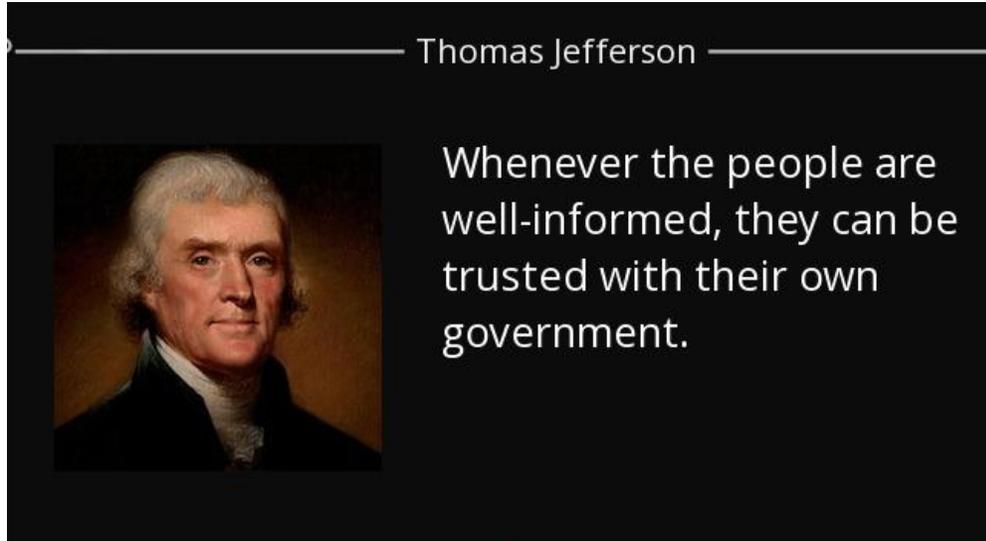
For more than 10 years, I have been teaching Stony Brook's News Literacy program to students at Northport High School on Long Island, New York, USA.

[\(https://news.stonybrook.edu/featuredpost/news-literacy-outreach-catches-on-locally-and-globally/\)](https://news.stonybrook.edu/featuredpost/news-literacy-outreach-catches-on-locally-and-globally/)

I also participated in the inaugural Global News Literacy Conference at Stony Brook (photo at right).



News Literacy and Civic Engagement



Stony Brook University’s News Literacy curriculum is designed to help students develop the critical thinking skills needed to judge the reliability and credibility of information. At Northport High School, we offer the course as an option for New York State’s senior “participation in government” requirement. We believe that in order to participate fully and responsibly in a democracy, citizens must know where to get reliable information. That reliable information is “actionable,” and can be used to make decisions about voting, or protesting, or signing a petition. Students learn to be responsible on social media, checking before they like or share a post.

News Literacy Club!

My students like to think of News Literacy as a special club where we learn how NOT to get tricked on the internet. Stony Brook has done studies showing that News Literacy students are more engaged, but my evidence is only anecdotal: I watch students become more interested in the world around them, more willing to ask questions (“Where did you hear that?” “Is it verified?” “What was the source?”) And I have heard from students, sometimes years after they’ve graduated, who want to share with me a stories of news and information savviness.



Janis Schachter’s news literacy class at Northport (NY) High School (School Library Journal)

Years later, students remember their News Lit experiences...

“She believes that she is not merely teaching teenagers about social studies, but is working to empower and educate citizens and news consumers. To this end, she guides discourse rather than shying away from it, allowing her students to test out new ideas in a kind of “public forum” and to learn from each other, all the while maintaining a safe and respectful environment for these exchanges.”

“Though I took your news literacy class way back before fire was invented, I found myself often relying on what we learned to help navigate the crazy news articles in 2020. So, for that...thank you! You really do make a difference.”

“I credit her influence as my News Literacy teacher, and the lessons she brings from a former career as a reporter, with helping shape my trajectory as both a reporter and young philosopher.”

News Literacy – a Global Concern



In 2017, a crew from Bulgarian National TV visited my school to learn about our News Literacy program. It was of course a proud moment for me, the teacher, to see my students so eloquently talk about their quest for reliable information, but it also impressed upon them the global interest in that quest.

Northport High School News Lit, 2020-21



This year's class has focused on information – and misinformation – about the coronavirus and the coronavirus vaccine, as well as the US election.

The Importance of Good Journalism, And Brave Journalists

We spend time talking about what journalists do, so we can recognize a verified story when we see it. We think about our own desire for information, and the people who might want to hide information from us. We also learn about journalists who make sacrifices every day – and sometimes the ultimate sacrifice – to keep us informed.





Committee to Protect Journalists

Espanol - Por...

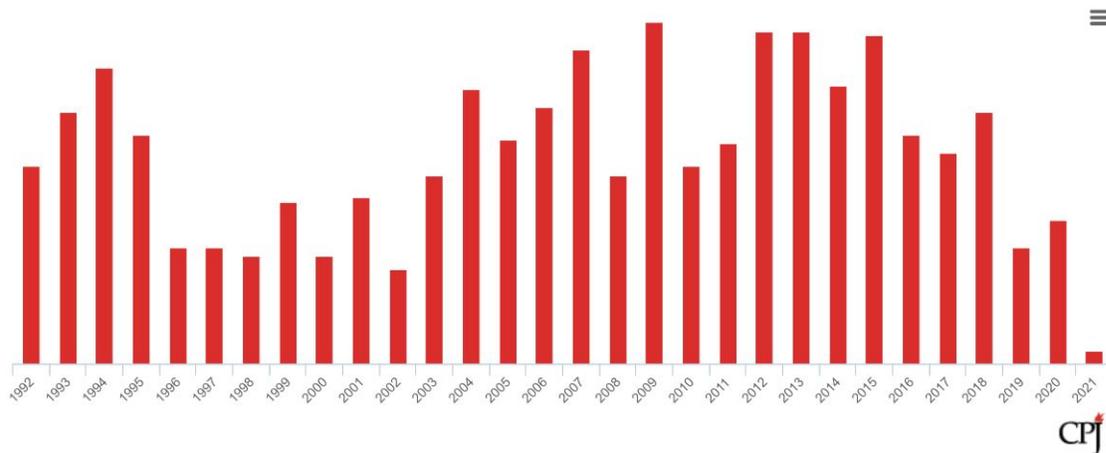
NEWS DATA GET HELP GET INVOLVED ABOUT US COUNTRIES & REGIONS EN 🔍 🐦 📺 📷 📱

Explore all CPJ data

1400 Journalists Killed

between 1992 and 2021 / Motive Confirmed

Reset



Students spend time exploring the CPJ website, choosing for themselves where they want to focus – on a particular journalist, or a particular part of the world, for example. They share what they have learned, and how they feel about it.

Spreading the Word



I have shared my passion for News Literacy with teachers across New York State (here I am in Syracuse). This year, I was recognized by the New York State Council for Social Studies for my work in News Literacy. It is the part of my teaching career that I am most proud of, and I am proud to share it with you. Thank you for your consideration.

We asked Janet Schachter to donate an activity for Global Youth & News Media to share in the context of World Press Freedom Day. Here's what she did.

Janis Schachter
News Literacy
Northport High School
Northport, NY USA

News Literacy Lesson Plan/The Power of Information
Based on the News Literacy program at Stony Brook University
<https://digitalresource.center/>

Objective: To understand the risks journalists take to get us information, and to reflect on the importance of that information.

1. Recently, a police officer in Minneapolis, Minnesota, was found guilty in the killing of George Floyd during an arrest back in 2020. The arrest was captured on a cellphone video by 17-year-old Darnella Frazier and quickly went viral. That video, seen as an example of police brutality against black citizens, led to protests around the United States, and, eventually, the trial and conviction of the police officer. (If students are familiar with the trial, you might discuss how the trial would have been different without that video. If they are not familiar, you might explain how crucial the video was to public opinion and as evidence in the trial itself.)
<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/20/us/darnella-frazier-video.html#:~:text=Darnella%20Frazier%2C%20who%20was%2017,charged%20in%20Mr.%20Floyd's%20death.>

Darnella Frazier was not officially acting as a journalist on that day, but her video shows the power of information, and the power of ordinary people who can share information over social media -- sometimes information that people in authority do not wish us to see. (If you have time, you might compare the video with the initial police report about the incident):

<https://www.politifact.com/article/2021/apr/22/what-first-police-statement-about-george-floyd-got/>

2. Eddy Binford-Ross was acting as a journalist when she covered the protests that erupted in Portland, Oregon, after George Floyd's death. (For background, see <https://www.koin.com/news/protests/portland-protests-what-happened-in-2020-whats-next-in-2021/> and <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2020/07/23/portland-protests-teenage-reporter/>

Eddy Binford-Ross was a reporter for the Clypian, a publication run by students at South Salem High School, in Salem, Oregon. Show students this interview:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fRtvc3TP5Ww>

Ask: According to Eddy Binford-Ross, why is what she is doing important? Do you agree or disagree (explain)? Was she in danger? What risks did she take? Is this something

you would do? What are areas of *your* interest, where you crave information and appreciate - or would appreciate -- the work reporters are doing in gathering it? (Examples don't have to be life-threatening, but you could talk about other sacrifices reporters make, such as the sacrifice of time when they are working on a big story.)

3. Because information is powerful, there are many times when powerful people want to prevent information from being shared. The emperor Napoleon is quoted as saying, "Four hostile newspapers are more to be feared than a thousand bayonets." Ask students why he would say that. Governments and others in power before and after Napoleon's time have worked to prevent the public from getting information.

The Committee to Protect journalists promotes press freedom and keeps track of journalists who are killed, attacked or jailed for doing their jobs. Ask students to browse the CPJ site (<https://cpj.org/>) and choose one item that interests them. If could be a graph or chart, the dangers faced by journalists in a country or region of the world, or the case of a particular reporter. Ask students to share their discoveries with the class and reflect on them. Discuss: Why do journalists put themselves at such risk? Is it important to us that they do so? Is there a danger in the public NOT being informed?