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Reading Mediations: An Interactive Tool for Online Critical Literacy Instruction

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Introduction and Rationale

In the digital realm, the reach and impact of content meant to persuade is amplified by our ability to instantaneously receive, react, and respond to it, often in a public way. Further, the anonymity of information shared on social media platforms, blogs, and email can easily divorce it from a recognizably mediated nature. Something originally created to communicate a person's observation, for example, morphs into a fact, whether it is accurate or not.

Furthermore, digital content can so easily be altered or repurposed that it sometimes takes on a life of its own, with no apparent author or origin to provide context.

Internet memes are a clear example of this. An internet meme is "an activity, concept, catchphrase, or piece of media that spreads, often as mimicry or for humorous purposes, from person to person," online, usually by way of social media, blogs, email, and discussion boards.¹

Most often they are constructed with images and text that have been manipulated in some

¹ "Internet meme." *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_meme. See "Memes," *Wikipedia*, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meme for a comprehensive explanation of the history and current manifestations of the concept, apart from the context of the internet, including the philosophical and critical discourse that has evolved around the term.

way. A meme with an altered image or text that communicates misinformation is easily be shared with thousands across social media platforms.

Critical reading interrupts passive information consumption by highlighting the mediated nature of the information we consume and communicate. It has long been recognized as an essential skill for print-based media. With an information marketplace largely shifted to online communications, critical reading skills adapted to this realm are urgently needed.

A need for online information literacy skills had been recognized for some time. Educator Rolin Moe, writing in 2017 just after the presidential inauguration of Donald Trump, traced this back decades:

A 1989 [report](#) from the Association of College and Research Libraries' Presidential Committee on Information Literacy sounds much like what today's advocates espouse: It describes information literacy as "a survival skill in the Information Age. Instead of drowning in the abundance of information that floods their lives, information literate people know how to find, evaluate, and use information effectively to solve a particular problem or make a decision — whether the information they select comes from a computer, a book, a government agency, a film, or any number of other possible resources."²

During and after the 2016 election cycle, the fundamental necessity of such skills became a subject of wide public discussion.³ Misinformation and "fake news" were suddenly everywhere, to the dismay of a large portion of the American public. "The proliferation of fake

² Rolin Moe, "All I Know is What's on the Internet." *Real Life*, January 17, 2017, reallifemag.com/all-i-know-is-whats-on-the-internet/.

³ Website evaluation guidelines for students began appearing alongside the expansion of the web and the development of new technologies in the early 2000s; these appear to be re-tooled versions of existing critical literacy materials. See, for example, Karen McLachlan, "WWW Cyberguide Ratings for Content Evaluation." *Cyberbee.com*, 2002, www.cyberbee.com/content.pdf.

and hyperpartisan news that has flooded into Americans' laptops and living rooms has prompted a national soul-searching," according to a December, 2016 *New York Times* article.⁴ And, although many people can claim they can recognize fake news, a significant percentage are also aware that they have unwittingly shared false information, especially through social media, according to a December 2016 study by the Pew Research Center (Barthel, et. al.). Also in 2016, a widely-read white paper published by the Stanford History Education Group demonstrated that online critical literacy skills are more vital than ever, and that today's students need to have acquired these skills before they leave high school (Wineberg, et. al.).

The title of this project, "Reading Mediations," reflects the proposition that all information is mediated both by its form and by its context. It was created to demonstrate the rhetorical, recursively-mediated nature of online information, and to show how reading online takes place within a greater—and, fortunately, more readily accessible—information network than reading print materials. Reading Mediations is a remedial intervention designed for upper-level high school students and college students. It seeks to make the rhetorical properties of public information clearly visible in an online context, and uses a pedagogic approach to build users' critical online reading skills. Because metacognition is key to learning, guided readings and suggested activities in Reading Mediations encourage reflection on the critical reading process

⁴ Sabrina Tavernise, "As Fake News Spreads Lies, More Readers Shrug at the Truth," *New York Times*, December 6, 2016, www.nytimes.com/2016/12/06/us/fake-news-partisan-republican-democrat.html.

itself. This is intended to foster the skills and critical awareness that online information consumers need on a day-to-day basis.

Environmental Review

Online critical literacy curricula, factchecking guidelines, and verification websites have existed for years. Stony Brook University's Center for News Literacy, for example, was established a decade ago. It has developed a news literacy curriculum for students at the institution that focuses on web-based news and information consumption.⁵ The fact-checking site Snopes.com was established in 1994. Initially it focused on urban legends and rumors; as the internet expanded, so did a need for reliable information, and the site has developed into a multipurpose, searchable news aggregator.⁶ The Annenberg Public Policy Center started the site FactCheck.org in 2004. Like Snopes, its fact-checking includes in-depth, highly researched articles about the content it verifies.⁷

In the past, "digital media literacy" tended to focus on basic skills: verifying the reliability of websites and discerning real news from satire, for example. While these skills are still very necessary, the context has changed. The recent focus on fake news and misinformation has

⁵ "What is News Literacy?" Center for News Literacy, Stony Brook University, www.centerfornewsliteracy.org/what-is-news-literacy/, 2006.

⁶ *Snopes.com*, Snopes Media Group. <https://www.snopes.com/about-snopes/>.

⁷ *FactCheck.org*, Annenberg Public Policy Center, www.factcheck.org/.

been accompanied by a growing distrust of news media in general.⁸

These circumstances have prompted the augmentation of existing resources and the development of new web-based tools that help readers vet sources, and demonstrate the spread of misinformation throughout the online and social media ecosystem, in an attempt to curtail fake news. In addition to the expansion of fact-checking sites like Snopes.com and FactCheck.org, evaluation and fact-checking extensions for browsers and social media were developed to provide guidance and assistance to people as they navigate information on the web. Examples include sites like the aforementioned Snopes.com and FactCheck.org, as well as PolitiFact; platforms such as rbutr and Hoaxy; and web browser and social media extensions such as Slate.com's This is Fake, Media Bias/Fact Check, NewsGuard, *The Washington Post's* factchecking plugin for Twitter, and Facebook's media bias annotator. As adjuncts to a user's critical reading process, all of these tools are useful—and many are included in Reading Mediations—but no single fact-checking resource should take the place of thoughtful, reasoned, and researched judgement.

The development of tools, as helpful as they are, nonetheless places the onus on information outlets and social media companies to arbitrate between fact and fiction before readers encounter content. There are good reasons for this—for example, companies profiting from paid advertisements and click-throughs to questionable information outlets should practice

⁸ Tavernise. Her diagnosis was that "Fake news, and the proliferation of raw opinion that passes for news, is creating confusion, punching holes in what is true, causing a kind of fun-house effect that leaves the reader doubting everything, including real news."

corporate responsibility. However, the shift of blame to content providers allows readers to abdicate some level of responsibility for what they consume and distribute. It also creates yet another layer of mediation by platforms, websites, and widgets, further obscuring the rhetorical nature and context of the information they are attempting to control. In addition, as useful as many of these tools may be, they are not designed to provide—or exist within—a pedagogical environment that helps readers develop critical literacy skills of their own. Both the algorithms that drive widgets and the content of fact-checking websites offer a service that depends on the work of other people, whose job it has become to make distinctions between fact and fake.

Fact-checking guidelines and checklists provide a series of verification strategies which, over time, teach readers the steps they should go through in the critical reading process. Although these are also worth employing, they generally don't model the activity of critical online reading for learners. In the classroom, for example, guides have traditionally been used with static examples, in that the information is divorced from its online context and does not exist in a networked structure like the web, or in relation to the ever-changing online information environment. There are a handful of notable exceptions. Critical reading curricula that do incorporate contemporary sources (such as social media posts) into specific skill-building exercises are the web-based, interactive fact-checking guidebook [*Web Literacy for Student Fact*](#)

[Checkers](#) and the Stanford History Education Group's [Civic Online Reasoning](#) curriculum, modules which cover various genres of content in depth.^{9,10}

Project Goals

This project was designed using the Association of College & Research Libraries' (ACRL) Framework for Information Literacy as a model.¹¹ The ACRL framework, as well as college-readiness Common Core standards, informed the structure of Reading Mediations and its pedagogical goals.

The first goal for Reading Mediations is to facilitate an understanding that most if not all of communication is rhetorical at some level, and that (just like print and terrestrial broadcast media) public information encountered online is also a form of communication shaped by intention and a point of view. In other words, while verifiable facts should be regarded as such, even they are likely couched within a particular perspective. As the expression goes, "consider the source."

⁹ Mike Caulfield, *Web Literacy for Student Factcheckers*. Pressbooks, 2016.

¹⁰ "Civic Online Reasoning." Mediawise and The Stanford History Education Group, 2019, sheg.stanford.edu/civic-online-reasoning.

¹¹ "Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education," American Library Association, February 9, 2015. ACRL publications are available under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial \(CC-BY-NC\) license](#).

An adjunct to this goal is the understanding that critical reading may involve points of disagreement. Rather than avoiding these, however, a reader should make use of dialogue (within reason) to deepen conversations around contested knowledge and information.

The second goal of Reading Mediations is to facilitate an understanding that critical reading online is often nonlinear—that is, a good critical reader rarely follows a “straight line” when evaluating range of sources, each of which may provide only a portion of information on a topic or event. In keeping with this practice, a critical reader’s own thought process should be flexible and open to evaluating alternative points of view as they arise.

The third goal of this project is to facilitate an understanding that information has different types of value, depending on its context and source: how information is produced, packaged, and distributed, and by whom. It may be a commodity—designed to appeal to readers as consumers, so that the producer profits or is empowered in some way. It may be a means of educating the public. It may be aimed at influencing the reader’s point of view. It may simply be intended to create social connections. It may be a community’s method of negotiating and understanding the world. In most cases, the information that readers encounter online is multidimensional, and exhibits several of these functions at one time. Readers who understand this will be better able to discern and navigate content.

The activities built into Reading Mediations were designed to align with every Common Core college readiness “anchor standard” for high school-level reading,¹² including close reading and textual analysis; evaluation of claims versus evidence; reading across multiple media; and comparison and synthesis of multiple perspectives. In the process of developing these skills, students will learn how to factcheck, understand the ways information and propaganda can go viral, and examine how reading and sharing choices both reflect and impact online public discourse.

Project Design

Reading Mediations’ conceptual design is intended to make the process of critical reading visible and increase readers’ awareness of how they consume information online. Its structure is meant to foster a critical reading pedagogy that reinforces process and context, makes vetted verification tools available in one location, and encourages users’ self-awareness in their exploration of the way information spreads on the web.

The project was created in [Scalar](#), a semantic authoring tool and platform developed by the Alliance for Networking Visual Culture (ANVC) at the University of Southern California, which enables non-linear presentation of text and media and encourages the inclusion of material that exists outside the platform.¹³ The dynamic nature of Scalar enables readers to experience

¹² “College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading,” College Core Standards Initiative, www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/R/.

¹³ *Scalar*, The Alliance for Networking and Visual Culture, <https://scalar.me/anvc/scalar/>.

critical literacy as a process that takes place in a networked environment. Because the nonlinear structure of Scalar models both the networked nature of information and the nonlinear process of online reading, it is an ideal format for experiential teaching and learning of online critical reading/information literacy.

Moreover, with its rhizomatic structure, content is not prioritized in Scalar. Although a Scalar site can be built to approximate common website structures (sequenced pages from home or landing page through content; a “hub and spoke” design around a landing page; or a more complex tree-like hierarchy expanding out from a landing page) to facilitate navigation, every component will be accessible through alternate navigation options available to users. These include visualizations of the connections between pages and site content, tagged pages that link to other relevant sections of the site, content annotations, and a site index, among other things. Reading Mediations takes this a step further. Its structure is made permeable by enabling users to access external websites from within the platform. A “book” or project authored in Scalar works against the insularity and linearity of print and e-books, as well as most web-based critical media literacy curricula. On a rhetorical level, Scalar disrupts the traditional hierarchies of truth and authority often taken for granted, and demonstrates that, while truth is not relative, a circuitous route of reading and evaluation may be the best way to arrive at it.

Scalar’s network of pages and web-based resources are connected through guided readings or “paths.” In Reading Mediations, these paths are format-specific: text, image, data, social media.

Introductory exercises, structured along these paths, serve as an entryway to the process of critical reading. For the initial version of the platform, two paths were created—Information Literacy and Metaliteracy—each including sub-paths organized by format. The sub-path in Metaliteracy is also structured around a specific theme: the controversy over gun rights and gun violence. Other theme-based sub-paths in Metaliteracy may be created at a future date. In addition to these reading paths, other paths include an exploration several search engines and how they differ, an introduction to fact-checking sites and resources, and a tour of platform-based critical reading resources [Hoaxy](#), [rbutr](#), [Whois](#), and [TinEye](#) image search, among others.

The site is versatile and modular; most sections of the site can be combined with other sections, tools, or reading resources as an instructor wishes. Thus, an instructor who wants to work with his or her students to develop online critical literacy skills can make use of the first guided reading section, Information Literacy, or the more advanced Metaliteracy section.¹⁴ Accompanying questions, suggested lesson plans, and explorations of the web through Twitter, search engines, and platforms can be mixed and matched to create additional structured, as well as self-directed, reading experiences. Instructors and users will likely discover that once they have progressed beyond the guided readings—which are the most linear portions of the

¹⁴ In the area of critical literacy and information literacy—especially regarding the internet—terms like “critical literacy,” “digital literacy,” “information literacy,” and “metaliterary” have been used in different ways, with their definitions sometimes overlapping. For the purposes of this project, I define “Information Literacy” in the context of critical online reading as the ability to recognize different formats of information content, understand that different skills are required to consume this information in a critical way, and employ these skills in relation to each type of content. I define “Metaliteracy” as the ability to apply information literacy skills in an extended way, combining different types of skills to evaluate discourse around a particular topic, issue, conversation, or event. Most important, Metaliteracy includes the ability to reflect on, evaluate, and adapt one’s own information consumption and critical reading process.

site—it is not easy to use the platform in a passive way. The material, its organization, and the properties of Scalar combine in such a way that requires users to make very conscious choices about which resources to use and how to navigate best between subject matter and critical tools. Problem solving through the platform, users are encouraged to become aware of their own reading process and content consumption—facilitating metacognitive learning.

Reading Mediations' links to sites and Twitter feeds provide instructors with opportunities to extend the introductory critical reading experiences as well. Although the guided readings are located along paths within the boundaries of the Reading Mediations site, even these boundaries are permeable. In the course of moving through and assessing content and context as it exists in a guided reading, users may follow links to active Twitter threads and online news sources, going “outside” of the Reading Mediations network on Scalar and into the unfettered web. In these moments, students may also be encouraged to discover and take new content back “inside” the platform to add context to the subject matter, or apply verification resources. They may find and compare current news articles, or make use of the platform's interactive resources to explore how viral information spreads, how claims are verified, how context is created, and how public opinion is shaped.

The dynamic and networked structure of the Scalar platform enables readers at different learning stages to experience online critical literacy as a process within a semi-circumscribed pedagogical environment, with gateways to the open web.

In addition to guided readings and links to web-based articles, images, search engines, and Twitter feeds, the site includes selected factchecking sites, web domain lookup, image lookup, and specialized platforms (one of which is also a web browser extension). These are Hoaxy, developed in 2016 by Indiana University's Network Science Institute and the Center for Complex Networks and Systems Research, and the rbutr search engine and browser plugin, first developed by Shane Greenup and Craig O'Shannessy in 2012.

Hoaxy is particularly useful in that it presents both fact-checks and claims, and can visualize the spread of information online over time. Rbutr uses a crowdsourced database, and depends upon readers finding and submitting alternative content that "rebutts" a flagged article, tweet, or comment. In the process readers are exposed to different points of view, and become better equipped to decide for themselves what to believe. Both sites work like search engines and permit user-centered explorations of online content. All links to external sites function as "portals" into subject material where it lives on the web, and are intended to be used in conjunction with each other, guided readings, and selected fact checking resources accessible via the platform.

Reading Mediations would be best deployed in a class setting (online or face-to-face instruction). Concepts and questions within the guided reading sections do not entail right or wrong answers, and the learning experience would be most effective in a context that includes group discussion and debate. In addition, some of the information students will encounter is not filtered (especially the social media content); using the site in a class would reinforce

guidelines and boundaries to help students better navigate sometimes unpredictable or potentially disturbing material that may surface during a web search.

Because the supporting material will require some basic web navigation and critical literacy skills, Reading Mediations is best suited for ages 16 and up; the guided reading content, however, may be more appropriate for college-level students. In addition, students would need to be comfortable navigating the web and reading online. For students who are visually impaired, most components of Reading Mediations should be accessible with a screen reader. While it is very likely that most high school and traditional college students will have at least some degree of internet literacy, including internet search and exposure to social media, those who are unfamiliar with these components would be better served by using some of the resources included within the Reading Mediations site, such as the Civic Online Reasoning curriculum developed by Stanford History Education Group, or the *Web Literacy for Student Factcheckers* e-book. Above all, students should already have a basic understanding of what critical literacy is, regardless of their skill level. This concept should be introduced to the class members prior to using Reading Mediations.

Development Process

As is often the case with a complex project, the development process entailed some false starts, design modifications, and technical workarounds. Initially, the project was designed to incorporate online literacy tools within the guided readings, and these readings were to be organized around a very specific event or topic. Further complicating the organization, the

paths were to focus on discrete critical reading skills, such as recognizing points of view, discerning fact vs. opinion, reading texts against images, determining incomplete or inaccurate information, and evaluating intent or bias.

For example, I intended to design an introductory exercise that would revolve around an event, with readings ranging from straight reportage, to viral social media posts, to a collection of articles or editorials linking to each other. A user would then follow a path through this content, guided through differing perspectives and accounts. As the exercise progressed, the path's design would encourage the user to employ verification resources in conjunction with the readings to learn more about specific claims; evaluate related or conflicting stories; identify inaccurate, incomplete, or biased information; and trace how information is disseminated, especially via social media. Instructors would be encouraged to incorporate discussion and evaluation at any point along a given path—pausing at one stage, for example, to evaluate the content, points of view, fact checks, and claims related to the reading material, or how the readings have influenced students' opinions up to that point.

The overall project design was also more ambitious at first. A glossary page of concepts, terms, and issues germane to critical reading (e.g. philosophical perspectives on truth and authority, bias, rhetorical strategies, historical trends, definitions, etc.) was proposed, with each item linked to entries in Wikipedia and/or Wiktionary. In another section of the site, a trending news input was to pull in linked content from a range of journalistic sources through an API.

The design and scope of Reading Mediations at this stage proved unwieldy, however, and the project was streamlined and reorganized along more simple lines. While some of the components remain, the content has become more general, rather than focusing on a specific event. Paths are organized around a topic, and each moves through different formats (text, images, data, and social media). Within these paths, questions for the user call attention to particular skills, such as discerning fact from opinion in text. Resources such as Factcheck.org or Hoaxy are employed in suggested lesson plans rather than along the paths. Through the networked structure of Scalar, it is also possible to proceed along paths organized by information format, rather than general topic.

I encountered technical obstacles during development as well. The Twitter API I had planned to use, which employed hashtags, was discontinued. The iframes within individual Scalar pages, which mostly contained other websites, were also unpredictable and often did not load. This was most likely because the ANVC's Scalar server hosts multiple projects, and that number continues to grow. The Twitter issue was circumvented by linking to user and group pages instead of hashtags. However, as the API still did not permit streaming the content of other users' feeds, I substituted hyperlinks. Conceptually, it is not an ideal workaround, as the original plan was to "contain" streaming material within the Scalar platform, reinforcing a sense of boundaries between the Reading Mediations teaching tool and the unfiltered web (albeit with the option of direct web access). I addressed the functional problems by moving the project to my own hosted account with Reclaim. Fortunately, ANVC recently developed an import/export option, so this process was not as onerous as it could have been. This solved most of the iframe loading issues.

Hosting the project through a private account, however, presents its own potential problems. First, it will be more difficult for interested instructors, who may wish to adapt Reading Mediations for their own use, to copy the project to their own server. They will need to contact me for permission. Reading Mediations is an Open Educational Resource; while this step does not obviate the “open” aspect of the resource, it does run counter to the general spirit of OERs. Second, and perhaps more important, is the issue of privately hosting the project. Although I plan to maintain my account with Reclaim, that cannot be guaranteed indefinitely. Conversely, while it also cannot be guaranteed, ANVC most likely has plans for maintaining and preserving Scalar and the projects located on their server far into the future.

Initially, Reading Mediations was conceived of as a tool primarily for upper-level high school students, which is why the content meets Common Core standards. However, targeting this age group created constraints related to the guided reading subject matter, and the exercises could not assume that most students would already have developed a certain level of maturity regarding the material they might encounter during internet or Twitter searches. In the second stage of the project, my plan was to develop a basic curriculum with the help of a high school social studies instructor who had agreed to participate, and after the Reading Mediations website was completed she would test it in her classroom. However, by the time the project began, the instructor was unavailable. Testing the final product would have proved difficult, as I have no connections to high school instructors.

It soon became clear to me that because I have personal experience in college-level instruction, I would feel more comfortable designing Reading Mediations for a college context. In addition, I am an employee of Lehman College and have connections with faculty in the School of Education, the OER librarian, and the director of online education—all of whom have expressed interest in this project.

A reconceptualization of the site itself was also in order. Rather than creating guided reading paths around literacy concepts, I organized them within sections: Information Literacy and Metaliteracy. Each section has specific objectives, and relates to a general theme. Information literacy, while nominally more basic, is designed to familiarize students with basic principles of critical online literacy in four information formats: text, image, data, and social media. The overarching theme of the Information Literacy section is internet privacy. Metaliteracy includes the same four information formats, but engages users on a more sophisticated level. In particular, the social media component is more open-ended and encourages students to discover and evaluate subject matter through links to hashtag feeds in Twitter. Metaliteracy will eventually include several guided readings; in the beta version of Reading Mediations, there is one path that concerns gun control. In each case, the common theme serves to loosely tie the readings together in order to facilitate conversation about them as groups of texts that each use different rhetorical strategies and require different reading strategies.

Guided Readings and Suggested Lesson Design

The pedagogical components of Reading Mediations are primarily the instructions and questions that accompany the guided readings. These were based on a significant amount of research into other critical and web literacy sources, including the ACRL information literacy framework (American Library Association), Common Core standards, critical literacy guidelines, and lesson design resources such as *Understanding by Design* by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe¹⁵. My own experience as a college instructor (both composition and literature) and with designing a training curriculum for college tutors also informed this process. Having absorbed many other lesson ideas and the principles of critical literacy instruction, I imagined myself in the classroom and constructed reading guidelines and questions that would facilitate the type of learning experiences that, hypothetically, I would like to engage in with students.

The suggested lesson plans presented an opportunity to extend and deepen the learning experience. Rather than provide lessons that cover a comprehensive range of skills, I chose to focus on selected types of online critical literacy. The introductory lesson focuses on visual literacy, encouraging students to be aware of their subjective impressions when looking at images, and how these impressions influence opinion.

¹⁵ Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, *Understanding by Design*. 2nd Ed. (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2005). E-book.

The Metaliteracy lesson involves some of the more advanced tools that Reading Mediations contains—in particular, rbutr and Hoaxy.¹⁶ Students employ these in the course of the exercises; in different ways they make visible the way information is spread and contested online. The exercise is also a means of familiarizing instructors with the pedagogical value of these platforms, so that they might use them when devising other online literacy activities.

Eventually both sections can be expanded to include lessons that involve additional information formats and tools, such as the selection of search engines contained in Reading Mediations. The modular nature of Reading Mediations facilitates a wide variant of uses. For example, the AllSides page in the Information Literacy section could form the basis of an effective lesson on point of view. The path on web search engines could be employed in a lesson about how what we see on the web is often determined by forces beyond our control. It is hoped that instructors will find effective ways to combine Reading Mediations' various components according to their own goals for teaching online critical literacy. Ideally, additional lesson ideas would be contributed by instructors using the tool in their courses.

Next Steps

The penultimate step in creating Reading Mediations is to test it in a classroom and use the feedback to make adjustments. Unfortunately, the timeline of the independent study did not

¹⁶ SuSPECT, a project headed by Dr. Nava Tintarev and funded by the Leiden-Delft-Erasmus Center for Education and Learning is currently investigating rbutr's efficacy as classroom tool for teaching online critical reading. <http://www.wis.ewi.tudelft.nl/suspect/>

permit a testing phase. As a workaround, I have reached out to faculty members at Lehman College who previously expressed interest in the project, including Olena Zhadko, director of online education, and Sherry Deckman, professor of middle and high school education. Professor Deckman, who has seen the Reading Mediations website, would like to review it in more depth and is interested in using it in one of her master's-level courses (Lehman does not offer undergraduate degrees in education). She feels it would be an effective way to give her students a hands-on experience of what critical online literacy is, as well as the concepts and methods they might use to teach it in their future high school courses. Unfortunately, Professor Deckman will not be teaching until next fall, so testing the project in this context must be postponed until then. In the meantime, I plan to show the site to other faculty who teach and/or research media literacy with the hope that they will offer some feedback and suggestions based on their own classroom experiences. In addition, Reading Mediations will be submitted to OER sites and I will use social media, i.e. "academic Twitter," to expose the project to a wider audience of potential reviewers and users. There are opportunities, as well as an appeal, on the Reading Mediations site for users to submit feedback and suggestions.

The final phase in the Reading Mediations project is ongoing. As Scalar uses content from elsewhere on the web, dead links and missing pages will undoubtedly appear within its sections in the future. The site will therefore require periodic review, and substitutions for missing content will need to be researched and included. A second—and possible a third—guided reading path in the Metaliteracy section is also planned. While this goes beyond the scope of the project's beta version, Reading Mediations will be made more robust engaging with

additional and updated content. Finally, hosting will eventually become an issue. It is hoped that ANVC will increase its server capacity for Scalar. If this comes to pass, Reading Mediations will very likely be exported back to its original home, which will better facilitate exposure, use, replication, and adaptation.¹⁷

¹⁷ Reading Mediations has been published under a Creative Commons 4.0 license.

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