

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Jung Hwan Yang PhD

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Education is Key - Civics Education Oral History project

Interview # ECE-A-L-2021-021

Jung Hwan Yang, an assistant professor of communication at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Education is Key – Civics Education* Oral History project.

Interview Date and Location:

Date: Jun 2, 2021 Location: Champaign, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:22 / 1.37 hrs.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on July 6, 2021.

The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

Transcript being
processed

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Abstract

Jung Hwan Yang, *Education is Key – Civics*, ECE-A-L-2021-021

Biographical Information/Overview of Interview: JungHwan Yang was born in the early 1980s in Seoul, South Korea, and graduated from Seoul High School in 1998. His high school life in South Korea was tied to academics and preparing for the College Entrance Exam, and he also cultivated his interest in music and photography. JungHwan graduated from Seoul National University in 2007, majoring in mechanical engineering, and obtained a MA in communications in 2009. JungHwan next attended the University of Wisconsin (Madison), earning a Ph.D. in journalism and mass communications in 2017. In 2016 Yang began teaching at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. In 2019, he became an assistant professor at UIUC. JungHwan has been involved in several media literacy research projects and publications since 2016 involving social media, twitter, media polarization, on-line political expression, and on-line voter guides.

Dr. Yang discusses the research he has conducted on media literacy. One major research project conducted between 2018-2020, involving 1,037 Internet users, found that partisan media sites may not sway opinions but do erode trust in the mainstream press. He also reviews current challenges in media literacy and journalism, including the omission of stories, retractions which do not match the prominence of the original reporting, and the growing use of social media for news understanding. Dr. Yang also discussed possible practices that could help improve media literacy, along with changes in journalistic ethics by those practicing in the field. Current journalism cases were discussed, including the treatment of Covington High School students by the media, vaccination questions, and the role of Big Tech in journalism. The role of civics education, media literacy, polarization in the media and in the country, and the importance of including the viewpoints of non-elites were also discussed. Finally, Dr. Yang looked at the challenges of college teaching remotely from March 2020-May 2021.

Subject Headings/Key Words: media literacy; role of social media in journalism; journalistic ethics; media coverage of Covington High School students at D.C. Right to Life event; media coverage of COVID-19 vaccinations; University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; university teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Notes to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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