

SEATTLE REP

EUREKA DAY

BY JONATHAN SPECTOR

Youth Guide

Welcome to *Eureka Day* at Seattle Rep!

What does it mean to be part of a community?

That question sits at the heart of *Eureka Day*. The people in this play care deeply about their school and the people in it. They want to make decisions thoughtfully and collectively. They believe everyone deserves to be heard. Then they disagree. (They *really* disagree!).

What follows is funny and uncomfortable, but it also feels familiar. How do we stay in community when consensus isn't possible? What do we owe one another when the stakes are high, and we believe we are right?

Disagreement is part of being in community. It can also be hard. It is tempting to surround ourselves with people who already see the world the way we do, or to dismiss someone whose beliefs frustrate or anger us. *Eureka Day* puts people with very different perspectives in the same room and makes them figure out how to move forward together.

Uncomfortable engagement is part of civic life. Democracy isn't only something that happens in elections or government buildings. It happens whenever we have to make decisions with other people. Sometimes we have to speak up when it feels uncomfortable, and sometimes we have to step back and listen. Living in community means we will not always get our way.

As you watch *Eureka Day*, pay attention to how the characters disagree, not just what they disagree about. Notice when someone is actually listening and when they are simply waiting for their turn to speak.

Theater is a great place to practice this kind of engagement. We watch the same story and may leave thinking very different things about what we saw. That difference is part of the experience. The conversation afterward can be just as important as what happens on stage.

We hope *Eureka Day* gives you something to talk about with your classmates and the people in your community. Ask questions. Disagree. Be curious about why someone sees things differently than you do. Community isn't built by always agreeing. It is built by recognizing that even when we disagree, we still have a responsibility to one another.



Deanna Martinez
Education & Community
Programs Director

The Anti-Science Grift: Media Influencers Cash In on Misinformation

By Nicole Bearden, Seattle Rep Communications Manager



Eureka Day is a play where many of the characters have big disagreements on issues that science has solidly proven. So **how do people**—who in this case live in the same city and whose children attend the same school—**have such widely-differing views of reality?**

One answer: Social media influencers.

Social media has become many people's primary source of news and information. According to *Reuters'* 2026 Digital News Report, **about 54% of respondents use social media to access news**, compared to about 51% who go to news organization websites first.

This **news is often filtered through other users' biases and opinions**—especially with the rise of influencers. An article published earlier this year in the *Journal of Psychology and Marketing*, "Don't You Know That You're Toxic? How Influencer-Driven Misinformation Fuels Online Toxicity," examines this phenomenon:



"While regular users might see inaccurate posts called out and critiqued, the unique parasocial bond influencers have with their communities means these groups are much more likely to get behind an idea without interrogating its veracity.



...these posts do not simply attract more attention; they actually transform... individual reactions into collective, belief-driven antagonism. Misinformation introduced within these relationships therefore has much more traction and potential for harm."



How do paid influencers build these relationships? A 2024 article by University of Washington researchers Rachel E. Moran, Anna L. Swan, and Taylor Agajanian in the *International Journal of Communication* finds that influencers cultivate both an aura of expertise and a sense of intimacy with followers:



"Over the course of observation, grid posts, reels, and Instagram Stories reflected a pattern of direct and personal communication between each influencer and their followers. When an influencer shared their knowledge... they reinforced their expertise. This expertise is then projected as something followers can learn from.





However, while they are positioned as authority figures, these influencers do not distance themselves from their communities. In one grid post featuring quotes...they used the plural "we" to describe themselves in relation to their followers, acknowledging them further as "my friends." Language use also emerged as a tactic for establishing a community of those in-the-know."

When followers feel connected to someone they view as a celebrity, they're more likely to believe what that person posts—and less likely to push back the way they might with someone they know in real life.

But **who is paying for these views?** A 2021 ProMarket.org interview with Samuel Wooley, assistant professor of journalism and project director for propaganda research at the Center for Media Engagement at the University of Texas at Austin, reveals his research shows how:



"...influencers...are being paid by super PACs or by companies employed by political organizations, in order to spread particular types of messaging, giving it the illusion of more authenticity...[a] more personal nature."



Although paid influencers are technically required to disclose sponsorship, Wooley found that *"...much of the paid political influencers that we see...do not disclose the fact that they're working for political campaigns."*

If much of the mis- and disinformation on social media comes from undisclosed paid influencers, how do we protect ourselves and each other?

The Poynter Institute's guide, "Is This Legit? Digital Media Literacy 101," offers a starting point: how to fact-check, "search like a pro," recognize deepfakes, verify photos and videos, and spot red flags for misinformation.

Media literacy isn't a one-time fix—it's an ongoing practice, especially as disinformation tactics keep evolving. Resources like Poynter's guide give us a starting toolkit, but the real work happens each time we pause before sharing or verify a claim before it spreads.

The families of *Eureka Day* didn't set out to distrust each other or the facts in front of them—they were pulled apart by forces working quietly behind the scenes. Protecting ourselves from that same kind of manufactured division means choosing to slow down in a media ecosystem built for speed.



Find this article and more behind-the-scenes content on Inside Seattle Rep!



Find more media literacy tips at Poynter Institute



Lesson: Identifying Your Values

A value is something that is important to someone and guides their behavior. In *Eureka Day*, each character is acting with their core values in mind. Even when they disagree, we can understand why each character thinks the way that they do.

1. Circle 10 of the values on this list. Choose values that are meaningful to you.

Accountability, Achievement, Adaptability, Adventure, Altruism, Ambition, Appreciation, Authenticity, Balance, Beauty, Boldness, Bravery, Care, Challenge, Change, Clarity, Collaboration, Commitment, Communication, Compassion, Confidence, Connection, Consistency, Contentment, Courage, Creativity, Dedication, Dependability, Determination, Devotion, Discipline, Drive, Education, Efficiency, Effort, Empathy, Empowerment, Endurance, Equality, Ethics, Excellence, Fairness, Family, Focus, Forgiveness, Freedom, Friendship, Generosity, Gratitude, Growth, Harmony, Hope, Imagination, Impact, Independence, Innovation, Inspiration, Joy, Kindness, Knowledge, Leadership, Legacy, Love, Loyalty, Mindfulness, Optimism, Passion, Patience, Peace, Persistence, Power, Pride, Purpose, Reliability, Respect, Responsibility, Self-awareness, Self-esteem, Service, Spirituality, Stability, Strength, Success, Support, Sustainability, Thoughtfulness, Trust, Understanding, Vision, Wisdom

2. Narrow it down to three values.

VALUE 1 _____

VALUE 2 _____

VALUE 3 _____

3. Pick just one value to write about:

Why is this value so important to you?

VALUE _____

How does having this value impact how you act?

VALUE _____

REFLECTION

- Talk to someone else about the value they wrote about. How does it compare to yours?
- How can our communities benefit when we share the same values?
- How can our communities benefit when we have different values?