
Foreword

C*opyright Clarity: How Fair Use Supports Digital Learning* is a book that will make a significant difference in how I design my college courses for K–12 classroom teachers, media specialists, and school librarians from this point forward. In fact, I cannot imagine writing another syllabus without Renee Hobbs’s book close at hand. It is that essential.

For too long a time, copyright “law” had eluded me, and like many other colleagues who were equally unsure about their rights and responsibilities as users, I simply avoided numerous forms of copyrighted materials that undoubtedly would have enhanced both my instruction and my students’ learning. Although I was vaguely aware of the doctrine of fair use, I had assumed wrongly that, in principle, it was a concept meant to work against me. I now know differently, thanks to Renee Hobbs, who has written an immensely readable text on why fair use is actually an ally of teachers and students immersed in 21st-century literacies.

All of this was brought home to me when a student in one of my methods classes this semester used the term “copyright” to signal her concern that a project she was planning on fan fiction for a high school English class might be in violation of certain copyright guidelines as she understood them. I realized then that *Copyright Clarity* could not go to press soon enough. I wanted to give this student a copy of the book, but since that was impossible, we talked through some of the issues Hobbs lays out in a chapter that explains a process K–12 educators and teacher educators can employ to determine the rights and responsibilities of fair use. Going through that process provided the self-confidence I needed to address questions from other students who had similar concerns about using copyrighted materials for their final projects.

Copyright Clarity is more than a simple eye opener on fair use, however. It deftly teaches, as well. Real-world examples abound, and there are several opportunities for the reader to engage in an inquiry process while turning the pages. In fact, I found myself dog earring numerous pages as I read, promising myself that no longer would I let certain assumptions (even myths) about seeking permissions deter me from incorporating copyrighted materials that I needed to make learning both meaningful and memorable in my students' eyes.

Finally, a book on topics as sensitive as copyright and fair use must provide documentation that is above reproach. Here, Renee Hobbs' scholarship and experience as a media literacy educator instilled the credibility that I was seeking. In a nutshell, *Copyright Clarity* is easily the most important book I have read this year.

Donna E. Alvermann
University of Georgia