FACT SHEET 3
MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND RISKS

▬▬ People depend on information and it has been stated that "our brains need information to work optimally".[21] If that information is false or distorted, it can greatly affect how we act and react. Honesty and integrity are inherent ethical considerations in a democratic society and critical thinking and evaluation in MIL can reduce the risk of the dissemination of dishonest and false information.

▬▬ The risk of fake news and the dissemination of false information will increase greatly as access to information and communication continues to grow across the globe.

▬▬ By focusing on the emergence of fake news, citizens may become less aware of propaganda, which is just as problematic.

▬▬ More and more people are getting their information directly from the internet as a media source, and digital content sometimes spreads rapidly without thorough fact-checking.

▬▬ Citizens may rely on information that is incorrect, which could have disastrous consequences for their communities and society in general.

IDEAS FOR CLASSROOM WORK

▬▬ The Five Laws of Media and Information Literacy were inspired by the Five Laws of Library Science, proposed by S. R. Ranganathan in 1931. UNESCO considers media and information literacy to be a nexus of human rights and the five laws act as guides to the media, information and all "containers of knowledge".

▶ Ask students to examine each of the five laws and write short essays related to their online lives and the laws: http://bit.ly/2wnA5IV.

▶ Students can also look at this visual identity of the five laws and discuss where there is crossover, interlinkage or differentiation in their lives and in their communities: http://bit.ly/2wsVjoT.

▬▬ Online communities and campaigns – Involve your students in a research project by getting them to use digital media to engage with issues in the local community or state politics. The ultimate goal for students would be to create a campaign that influences online communities. The students should be encouraged to interpret the issue, their understanding and ability to express their own creative viewpoints through digital media.

▬▬ Access, search and critical evaluation – Invite students to pick a topical concern and perform some initial research. Have them check different sources, use different search engines online and then check print resources. Compare and contrast the differences and nuances.

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21. https://en.unesco.org/themes/media-and-information-literacy.

▬▬ Social media and veracity – Invite students to examine the social media accounts of their favourite athletes, actors or musicians. Ask them to critically review the information provided to determine whether the information is true, false or perhaps exaggerated for marketing purposes. Have the students create a three-point checklist that they can use to determine whether something they read online is true, false or grossly exaggerated.

▬▬ Imagine a ban on mobile phones for a week – Ask students to determine what would be the consequences for their ability to critically evaluate the world around them without immediate access to media. Does a lack of online information cause them to research elsewhere? Does it cause them to disengage?

▬▬ Racism and nationalism – Distribute two versions of an article about violence. One of these could be the "original" version, usually pinpointing and identifying the nationality or ethnic origin of the people committing acts of violence, and the second version with a greater focus on the origins of the victims. Discuss why the ethnic or national origin of the perpetrators of violence should or should not be mentioned and what the impact of such information has on people. After a class debate, distribute a summary of the findings of researchers like Martin Daly, which makes the clear link, via scientific research, between violence and social inequality and shows that social inequality is a much better predictor of violence than ethnic origin or nationality (www.martindaly.ca/killing-the-competition.html).

GOOD PRACTICE/LIVING DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

▬▬ Linking media and information literacy to digital citizenship – Maintain a healthy scepticism about the material that you find online and be prepared to evaluate materials with a critical eye. Regularly search for divergent opinions and information in order to avoid propagating myths or falling for false claims.

▬▬ The Center for Media Literacy has practical resources to assist schools in developing, organising and structuring class exercises on media literacy (www.medialit. org/cml-medialit-kit). Get students to apply some of the following questions to selected online articles and messages they personally receive to think about media and information literacy in their everyday lives.

▶ Who created the message?

▶ What techniques are used to attract my attention?

▶ What lifestyles, values and points of view are presented in or omitted from the message?

▶ Why was this message sent?

▶ How might different people understand the message differently from me?

▬▬ MIL Curriculum for Teachers – UNESCO has developed a Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Curriculum for Teachers intended as a tool that will provide educators from all backgrounds with the main competences (knowledge, skills and attitudes) related to MIL. It focuses on the pedagogical approaches necessary to enable teachers to integrate MIL into their classrooms (http://bit.ly/2NaEW7i).

FURTHER INFORMATION

▬ The Council of Europe has materials relevant to this fact sheet in the Internet literacy handbook; please see ILH Fact sheet 6, "E-mail and communication"; Fact sheet 10, "Searching for information"; Fact sheet 11, "Finding quality information on the Web"; and Fact sheet 22, "Getting assistance".

▬ The UNESCO mission is to inspire media and information literate societies through a comprehensive strategy. UNESCO has prepared a model Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Teachers, as well as the development of guidelines for preparing national MIL policies and strategies, among other international projects: http://bit.ly/2MQT6gS.

▬ Frau-Meigs D. (2011), *Media matters in the cultural contradictions of the "information society" – Towards a human rights-based governance,* Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, available at: http://bit.ly/2PyfPgw.

▬ Media Literacy Now has a thought-provoking essay arguing for the linkage of MIL and digital citizenship, available at: http://bit.ly/2o5p3US.

▬ The Global Digital Citizen Foundation has a critical thinking workbook with games and activities for developing critical thinking skills, available at: http://bit.ly/2BGuVO9. This allows students to go beyond being informed on a subject or issue.

▬ UNESCO has produced a media education kit for parents, students, teachers and professionals which provides a comprehensive view of media education while outlining the ways in which people can increase their participation in their political and cultural communities: http://bit.ly/2P1scRc.

▬ Be Internet Awesome (https://beinternetawesome.withgoogle.com/en_us) teaches kids the fundamentals of digital citizenship and safety so they can explore the online world with confidence (ages 9-11).