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When the library steps in: introducing media and information literacy as a programme for library professionals

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Abstract

Media and information literacy (MIL) was recently introduced in the Philippines although it has been the talk of the town since the Grunwald Declaration on media education in 1982. De La Salle University (DLSU) Libraries is an active partner in promoting MIL and decided to support this as part of its information literacy campaign. This project report provides an overview of a seminar-workshop programme on MIL conducted at DLSU Libraries for public school teacher-librarians. The programme is based on a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) publication entitled 'Pedagogies of Media and Information Literacies' which has five modules: Understanding media and information literacy; Young people as global media audiences; Media cultures and technologies; How to interpret media; Cooperation and sharing ideas. The project report acknowledges how the participants were able to grasp and understand the MIL values and how they were able to apply these values in their own workplace. Finally, the report shares analyses of the participants' reviews of the programme.

Keywords

Competencies; knowledge transfer; media and information literacy; programme evaluation; Philippines

1. Introduction

Every person whose country signified its support to the United Nations (UN) and signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which the UN General Assembly proclaimed in 1948 (United Nations, 1948) will benefit from the said global declaration. This historic event was made for all of us to enjoy any form of human rights for as long as we are held responsible for every action that we make. In this regard, Article 19 of the Declaration says: 'everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.' In order to uphold these rights, the emerging field of media and information literacy (MIL) would give us the power to participate in public platforms, whether physical contact or online communication. Participation would require the necessary knowledge, attitudes, skills and best practices to attain a sustainable world that secures inclusivity and openness of all (IFLA, 2012; IFLA, 2014). If every individual has the right to express his/her opinion using accurate, relevant and authoritative information, MIL will be achieved. Any additional information that can be gained through the course of interaction leads to knowledge. As such, lifelong learning is attained. Recognising the role of MIL and its advantages in media and information analysis, this report will share the inclusion of the MIL programme at De La Salle University (DLSU) Libraries entitled 'TeachMeet with "LORA, The

Librarian”’. Specifically, the purpose of this report is to provide an overview of a seminar-workshop programme on media and information literacy conducted at DLSU Library for public school-teacher librarians. It acknowledges how the participants were able to grasp and understand the MIL values and how they were able to apply these values in their own workplace. Finally, the report shares analyses of the participants’ review of the programme.

1.1 Definition

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), MIL is defined as ‘a set of competencies that empowers citizens to access, retrieve, understand, evaluate and use, create, as well as share information and media content in all formats, using various tools, in a critical, ethical and effective way, in order to participate and engage in personal, professional and societal activities.’ (UNESCO, 2013, p.7). MIL is built on the premise that the concept of media literacy and information literacy are combined together and that it addresses the same purpose of educating the people about the importance of carefully analysing and processing all sorts of media and information.

2. Review of related literature

2.1 Media and information literacy

Media and information literacy (MIL) puts an emphasis on promoting and upholding the values of critical and analytical thinking (Gretter & Yadav, 2016). UNESCO has been working tremendously to ensure the importance of MIL in today’s century by developing a strategy to converge partnerships among national and international stakeholders. Their publication on policy and strategy guidelines (Grizzle, Moore, Dezuanni, Asthana, Wilson, Banda & Onumah, 2013) is an effort to increase awareness on how to become a global media and information literate individual through the efforts of all sectors of society including cultural and memory institutions like libraries, archives, and museums. The relationship between communication, media and libraries can also be reflected on how media and information transgress through time and on how journalists and librarians can work together to preserve the true meaning of information. Grizzle and Singh (2016) introduced the five laws of MIL which was derived from the renowned five laws of library science by S. R. Ranganathan. Law One states that all forms of information providers including media, internet and libraries are for equal use of all individuals and there is no information greater than the other. Law Two states that all individuals can produce information provided that it is transmitted in an accurate way and that everybody has a right to access this information. Messages may sometimes be biased so it should be noted that Law Three states that information should be transparent and well communicated. Law Four presumes that all citizens may not get all information but we have the right to know and fully understand every message disseminated. Finally, Law Five states that MIL is dynamic, hence MIL competencies is a continuous process and that we are obliged to learn from it.

2.2 History of MIL

The roots of MIL began when the International Symposium on Media Education held in Grunwald started to open up the importance of having a concrete media education for all (UNESCO, 1982). Towards the end of the symposium, the delegates came up with things to consider when teaching media education which are important to develop the critical thinking skills of people.

As time went by, a handful of declarations and recommendations were suggested to fully implement a collaborative agenda towards achieving a national media and information literacy in every member country of the United Nations. For instance, the first forum on MIL held in Fez,

Morocco in 2011 fully endorsed the integration of media literacy and information literacy to achieve sustainable development.

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) also provided seven recommendations that each organisation and government must act upon to ensure that policies and strategies will be implemented. One recommendation is that MIL education should be embedded in all lifelong learning curricula. In the Philippines, it is now part of the senior high school programme being implemented by the Department of Education.

2.3 Knowledge transfer and lifelong learning

Since MIL is a new and emerging discipline, training and workshops must be provided to ensure that knowledge has been transferred. Transfer of knowledge is an approach to enhance and improve new learning. Knowledge transfer may be gained through reading, research and other capacity building activities. This is a way of passing on what the expert has learned and sharing it with those who are interested to learn the same field of knowledge. Knowledge transfer is also a way of nurturing those who are less experienced and may need direction and counselling from the teacher or trainer. This translates to lifelong learning experience. Mahoney's (2017) analysis of lifelong learning is learning throughout our lifespan. For as long as we live, we need to continue learning new skills and acquire new knowledge. Graham (2012) reported the issues discussed during the International Conference on Media and Information Literacy for Knowledge Societies held in Moscow in 2012. This form of conference reporting gives a chance for others to know what transpired during the entire conference. Experts in the field of MIL were present during this conference and it was a good venue for knowledge transfer. For example, Graham (2012, p.138) mentions that Boekhorst elaborated 'the growth of information use in everyone's lives and the changing role of technology create a need for a new concept of literacy to deal with creating and using different media.' As part of this study, the authors have to copy the whole statement to retain the meaning of the phrase. Other experts present in the conference were Jesus Lau, Carolyn Wilson and Sheila Webber.

The institution's support for any professional to grow and develop is also very important. A professional development plan must be present and all staff should have an equal opportunity to participate in these activities. Even experts in the field may need to update what they know for there are always new ideas and trends that come up.

2.4 Updates on MIL in Asia

As mentioned by Yap and Alejo (2016), training, seminars and conferences are positive benefits to enhance professional competencies. Aside from that, the target of UNESCO to integrate a curriculum geared towards learning MIL has just started in some nations. The following are the Asian countries which are now testing the waters and investing on human capital to advance the promotion of MIL:

China. Webber (2017) mentioned in her blog that China has a growing interest in MIL based on the UNESCO Global MIL Assessment Framework: Country Readiness and Competencies research conducted by Zhang Kai. Kai (2017) reviewed the current state of media literacy education in China and found out that MIL education practice lacks practical standards, government support and has a diverse interpretation of MIL. Professionals, especially teachers who will have a direct contact with the students require proper training and guidance in handling and teaching MIL.

Japan. Japan has been actively promoting MIL in the region. They were able to organise the Tokyo International Symposium which aims to raise awareness of MIL in Japan and Asia Pacific. They

also launched formal classes on MIL in Hosei University. They are also influential in MIL research in Japan and conducts regular training and workshops (UNESCO, 2014; 2017).

Kazakhstan. In Kazakhstan, Nazarbayev University Library recently held a training seminar on Media and Information Literacy for library professionals in Astana. This was in partnership with MediaNet and IREX Europe with the support of the British Embassy in Astana. The aim of the seminar was to increase the awareness of librarians about MIL and its promotion in libraries and library users' communities. MediaNet has been conducting MIL training and workshops to advance the critical thinking skills by improving the fact-checking and information verification of the Kazakh people.

Singapore. As early as 1997, Singapore's Ministry of Education came up with information literacy guidelines whilst media literacy was introduced only in late 2000 (Lin, Mokhtar & Wang, 2015). A Media Literacy Council was launched in 2012 to promote media literacy. Singapore is rolling-up to combine MIL in their local curriculum.

Thailand. The government of Thailand has been aware of the positive effects of employing MIL in Thailand especially for the young Thais. They even suggested including MIL in their curriculum. MIL training and workshops have already commenced in 2016 (Office of the Prime Minister, 2016). MIL projects were established as early as 2011 to prepare teaching materials for teachers that would help them analyse and evaluate media (Siricharoen & Siricharoen, 2012).

Philippines. Philippines is not far behind the above mentioned countries. It is currently implementing the MIL curriculum for senior high school students. Republic Act No. 10533 also known as the 'Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013' paved the way for the inclusion of MIL into the course curriculum which develops the innovative and critical thinking skills of students to become responsible users and content creators of media and information (Labangon & Zabala, 2018).

DLSU has always been at the forefront of providing worthwhile education programs that could stimulate lifelong learning to all the users (Yap, Labangon & Cajés, 2017). One way to spread MIL competency is to gather librarians and teach them the components of MIL. As noted by Labangon & Zabala (2018), the majority of those teaching MIL lack the professional preparatory training for MIL. In 2016, DLSU provided its first free half-day lecture on MIL for public school teacher-librarians (DLSU Newsette, 2016).

2.5 The MIL programme

The TeachMeet with "LORA, The Librarian" programme from DLSU Libraries traced its humble beginnings in 2016 as part of the information literacy (IL) programme campaign. It is a community extension programme that intends to provide an informal organised venue to share knowledge, skills and experiences of public secondary school teachers and librarians on the different ways of retrieving and managing information (DLSU Newsette, 2014). The programme aims to conduct a half-day lecture and mentoring programme where it presents insights on the value and importance of MIL to people from all walks of life.

3. Methodology

This project report employed a qualitative descriptive approach to analyse the participants' evaluation about the programme. Resource persons with a background in MIL shared their knowledge for free to the eager participants. The programme is based on a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) publication entitled 'Pedagogies of Media and Information Literacies' which has five modules: Understanding media and information

literacy; Young people as global media audiences; Media cultures and technologies; How to interpret media; Cooperation and sharing ideas. Each resource person was given a topic to discuss and they were evaluated based on the knowledge they presented.

3.1 Programme content

The programme content captures the five modules of the book entitled 'Pedagogies of Media and Information Literacies' published by UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education. According to the authors of the handbook, it is designed to introduce the basics of MIL and is prepared to become a practical guide on teaching and learning MIL.

To provide a more compelling result for this study, the researchers made use of the participants' evaluation for the past two years (2016-2017) of the seminar-workshop. Twelve (12) participants attended the seminar-workshop in the first year while fourteen (14) participated in the second year. An evaluation about the activity was summarised to measure the attainment of the programme, the level of knowledge imparted, the sound knowledge and delivery of the resource persons, and the program design itself.

3.2 Learner validation of the programme content

The programme is still new and the organisers will find ways to track the learners' understanding of MIL and how they were able to implement MIL in their own learning environment. Working closely with the participants after the programme is an ideal task at the moment to monitor their MIL activities. The participants were asked to evaluate the programme after the activity by submitting an evaluation form.

4. Learning outcomes

Each module has its own learning outcomes (LO). The MIL programme adapted the same LOs as it is the main textbook used during the programme. Table 1 summarises the LOs of each module.

Table 1: MIL learning outcomes

Module Number	Module Title	Learning Outcomes
1	Understanding media and information literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be able to identify the key elements of media and information literacy • learn to distinguish information sources and needs • be able to identify the ways to include media and information literacy in school curricula • learn how to teach and assess media and information literacy.
2	Young people as global media audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learn to perceive young people as audience: targets, receivers, users, or co-producers • get an insight into relationships with media in the construction of a developing identity • be familiar with global views into young people's media relationships • learn how media can be utilised in civic participation.
3	Media cultures and technologies	<p>Get an insight into:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • socio-cultural meanings of media • societal impacts of digitalisation and the birth of the information society • the history of development of media devices and technologies • media convergence and the centralisation of ownership • the regulation and ethical rules of media.
4	How to interpret media	<p>Learn about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • representation in media and information • news criteria and the anatomy of news • the power of images in advertising; • analysis of narration in film, TV, and music video • assessment of the reliability of online information • making an effective interview and to write an article.
5	Cooperation and sharing ideas	<p>Learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about collaborating with libraries and youth centres working in the field of media education • about setting up a media club in your school • about using young people as assistants in media clubs.

4.1 The respondents

The respondents of the study were the participants of the MIL programme from November 2016 and November 2017 sessions. They are not librarians but are licensed professional teachers who were assigned to manage their respective school libraries. In the Philippines, there is an enabling law (RA 9246) which regulates the practice of librarianship wherein libraries should be managed by a licensed librarian. However, the majority of public school libraries in the country are being administered by teachers who also assume the role of librarians.

4.2 Participant analyses of the programme

Participants were asked to assess the seminar-workshop to determine the effectiveness of the programme in teaching media and information literacy to public school teacher-librarians. Items such as attainment of activity objectives, levels of knowledge imparted, the resource persons, and the programme design and management were measured to identify its strengths and weaknesses and its efficacy. Results will be used to further improve the programme and its implementation in the succeeding sessions.

4.2.1 On the attainment of activity objectives

The MIL programme aims to raise awareness of the importance of MIL as an essential part of lifelong learning and knowledge transfer. It also seeks to provide help for librarians and LIS students to create new means of teaching the skills as well as understanding the issues and challenges that revolve around this emerging trend.

With regards to attainment of activity objectives such as raising awareness of the importance of media and information literacy being a vital component of lifelong learning, the majority of the participants (72.77%) provided positive feedback which denotes that it has excellently increased their cognisance of MIL as essential part of lifelong learning.

The majority of the participants (68.18%) also provided a positive comment about how the programme would be of great help for librarians and LIS students to develop new strategies in teaching media and information literacy skills. The programme has indeed provided new insights on different MIL pedagogical styles and teaching techniques that the librarians and students can adopt in their respective workplaces.

As for the understanding of the issues and challenges in teaching media and information literacy skills, almost all of the participants (72.77%) denoted a positive response and identified that the programme has indeed provided an ample amount of knowledge for them to be able to greatly appreciate and understand the pressing issues and concerns that revolve around the field of MIL. In addition, with regards to promoting media services and programmes of DLSU Library, majority of the participants (77.27%) also provided an affirmative response.

4.2.2 On the level of knowledge imparted by the resource persons

Participants were also asked about their satisfaction of the level of knowledge shared by the resource speakers. The majority of the participants gave a positive feedback on the level of knowledge imparted about MIL, particularly its importance for the young (63.64%); technological and cultural perspectives and its interpretation (63.64%); and partnership and collaboration (68.18%); further denoting that they were indeed satisfied with knowledge and expertise shared by the resource persons. On the same note, the resource persons also got excellent remarks on their usage of the effective range of adult learning methodologies (77.27%); their sound knowledge of the topics covered (77.27%); their clear presentation of the module objectives (63.64%); their preparation for the programme (68.18%) and their clear and accurate answers on questions and

queries from participants (77.27%). Participants were able to get insights and techniques from the speakers on how they can successfully impart or transfer the knowledge they gained from the programme. The participants were also being monitored and mentored even after the programme to ensure that proper implementation is being obtained.

4.2.3 On the programme design and management

As for the programme design and management (which includes the adequacy of the time allotted per topic; the logical sequencing of modules; provision of opportunities to raise questions; the smooth flow of the activity; and the conduciveness of facilities for learning) the majority of the participants also showed an affirmative reaction.

While it was true that time had been one of the challenges in implementing the programme, the majority of the participants (63.64%) signified that the time allotted for each topic was adequate to provide them with the basic knowledge and understanding of the importance of MIL. A suggestion to provide more time to discuss the MIL in depth was also being considered.

Proper and logical sequencing of the modules was also excellently highlighted by the participants (63.64%) since it provided sufficient background to fully understand and appreciate MIL. From the basics and fundamentals of MIL and MIL for young people, to technological and cultural perspectives of MIL and its interpretation, and up to partnerships and collaboration with other stakeholders, these topics have indeed gave the participants a working knowledge and background of MIL and its importance.

The provision of opportunities to raise questions as well as the smooth flow of the programme; and the conduciveness of facilities for learning, including the evaluation to gauge participants' working knowledge of MIL and the effectiveness of the programme, were also able to gain affirmative responses from the participants. This denotes that participants were given ample chance to raise questions and clarify things related to MIL. The flow as well as the suitable learning facilities and assessment implemented throughout the programme also provided sufficient knowledge, greater understanding and appreciation of MIL for the participants and its importance to people from all walks of life.

The above mentioned responses from the participants were indeed relevant to determine the effectiveness and to further improve the programme for its forthcoming sessions.

4.3 Learning the basics and importance of MIL

The programme is relatively new and it still has a long way to go. While it is true that it is still finding its ways to track down and guide participants in their understanding of MIL, it is overwhelming to know that participants were indeed putting in their best efforts in implementing and integrating MIL in their respective workplaces. Some have basic information literacy (IL) programmes in place but they are still working things out to integrate media and information literacy in their activities. Continuous efforts of collaborating and engaging with the resource persons as well as the other stakeholders were also being made to properly guide the participants with their respective activities; making sure that it will indeed be a success. As we all know, there is no overnight success.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

It is concluded that the programme was indeed effective in teaching media and information literacy to public school teacher-librarians. The programme supports the participants' deepening understanding of MIL values. Participants were able to greatly appreciate and understand MIL through the programme contents and principles shared by the resource persons. It was also

inspiring to know that the participants were able to recognise and understand its values and apply them especially to making informed and educated decisions in their daily lives. Knowledge transfer was fairly achieved.

Furthermore, the positive feedback and affirmative responses of the participants with regards to the entirety of the programme denotes that it has attained its goals and objectives. These results further imply that the programme is worth pursuing and essential in teaching educators and other information professionals the value of MIL and the importance of teaching MIL to people from all walks of life.

It is recommended that the programme accommodates a larger group and expand its reach not just to public school teacher-librarians but also to private schools as well. In addition, making it more interactive, fun and enjoyable will also be a great help in imparting knowledge and skills in media and information literacy to participants.

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