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Promoting Media Literacy in Jamaican Schools

Broadcasting regulator embracing a new role

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The Broadcasting Commission, Jamaica's regulator of the electronic media, has been engaged in a multi-year UNESCO funded project aimed at developing media literacy capabilities among Jamaican teachers, as well as among primary and high school students. The article makes the argument that media literacy interventions are of strategic importance in the early stages of the human life cycle. It argues that media consumption among Jamaicans occurs through multiple paths for engagement that need to be deconstructed and understood for mature navigation of the local and global environments. It discusses this negotiation of content among Jamaican youths exposed through media to other global cultures. The authors suggest that media literacy competencies are of paramount importance in enabling Jamaicans to appreciate difference and to negotiate and assimilate other cultural expressions within their environments without losing their own cultural national identities. The article concludes that such undertakings by the Broadcasting Commission, seen by some as unusual for regulators, may soon become mainstream activities of media and or communications regulators globally. The approach is deemed by the authors as a vital means to enhance the judgment of audiences as they interact with complex media content, global cultures and emerging communications technologies.

Keywords: media literacy in schools, information technology access and inclusion, broadcasting and regulatory policies, electronic media in Jamaica, educational technologies and youth

Introduction

The multiple and expanding range of information and communications technology platforms now in use, some connected to the Internet, are demanding higher level skills from students, teachers and from citizens at all levels of society. In view of these emerging trends, the Broadcasting Commission,

regulator of the electronic communications industry in Jamaica decided to partner with UNESCO, the Joint Board of Teacher Education (JBTE) and the Ministry of Education (MOE) to introduce for the first time a media literacy curriculum in primary, secondary and teacher training institutions throughout Jamaica. We explore some key outcomes and share documentation on some of the pedagogical tools that were successfully used.

Grounding Media and Information Literacy

The Alexandria Proclamation on Information Literacy and Lifelong Learning (2006) and the Prague Declaration: Towards an Information Literate Society (2003) are among the seminal declarations acknowledging the strategic role of literacy in supporting human rights and the millennium development goals (MDGs). Much has happened globally since those two declarations were made: the world has been the site of significant transformation in terms of information, its sources and its management.

The Alexandria and Prague declarations, in spite of their foresight, did not anticipate the groundswell of mega new media and communications platforms and services birthed in the last 15 years: Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, Instagram et al. All of these media are accessed daily by more than 1 billion of the World's population, across many demographic and social classes.

Kasinskaite-Budderberg (2013) problematizes this significant growth in new media platforms:

The exponential growth of data and information, the constant introduction of new ICTs, and the exposure to media and its content, is imposing a number of structural and behavioural changes. In particular, it alters the ways people access, evaluate, and use information to produce knowledge and communicate with each other. Access to information and production of knowledge in different forms and formats is no longer the exclusive domain of specialised institutions or professional communities. Citizens are increasingly becoming not only information or media content consumers, but also producers and evaluators, through the use of various tools and media. User generated content is growing and new platforms for sharing information and media content are emerging. In short, information and content can now be easily produced, accessed and shared by nearly everyone, leading to increased collaboration and greater participation by citizens in society.

(Kasinskaite-Budderberg, 2013)

Against this background, the Fez Declaration on Media and Information Literacy in 2011 and the most recent Moscow Declaration on Media and

Information Literacy (2012) are timely reaffirmations of the importance of information and media literacy to the Human Rights Agenda, and to inter-cultural dialogue, which all take on added significance in the context of digital convergence.

It is useful to briefly outline, here, concepts of ‘media literacy’ with a view to show its many diverse and transversal linkages into other multi-faceted development and empowerment constructs; a necessary dialogue towards helping to redress continued unawareness about the empowering capabilities of media and information literacy, as suggested by the Fez Declaration.

Burn and Durran (2007) argue that media literacy is at once a ‘cultural’, ‘critical’ and ‘creative’ process. It is foundational works of theorists such as Raymond Williams, who popularized the notion of “lived culture”, which grounds the cultural conception of media literacy. This view of culture “...is a description of a particular way of life, which expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning but also in institutions and ordinary behaviour” (Williams, 1961:41). By inference, it could be concluded, as Burn and Durran suggest, that the cognitive capabilities of individuals in understanding and negotiating with media technologies and their output is a key contributor to that social construction of culture. The critical and creative conception of media literacy is linked to notions about “recorded culture”, meaning, those documented expressions that represent the ways of life of a people.

Beyond ‘text’

Other alternative viewpoints on media literacy suggest that “literacy must be reframed to expand the definition of a text to include new modes of communication and popular culture to enhance our critical analytical processes to explore audience reception, learn to critically read media texts, and aim at social justice, as well as grasping the political, economic, historical, and social contexts within which all messages are written and read” (Kellner & Share, 2007). There is also the already referenced notion of ‘multiple literacies’ in the context of the technological revolution (Kellner & Share, 2007). There is also the notion that Media Literacy is a vital skill for the effective functioning of democracy (European Commission, 2007). Jenkins (2006) links media literacy within the overarching and new paradigm of a participatory culture, one that debunks the traditionally distinct boundaries that demarcate information/knowledge producer and information/knowledge consumer. In the participatory cultural paradigm the two are one and the same. A multifaceted approach is embraced through: “play, performance, simulation, appropriation, multitasking, distributed cognition, collective intelligence, judgment, transmedia navigation, networking and negotiation” (Kotilainen and Arnolds-Granlund, 2010).

So, particularly in the Global South, media literacy is conceptualized in broader terms than just mastery of textual media; it is also about enabling people in those spaces to use media tools at their disposal to contest and successfully navigate the global digital space, learning from other cultures without necessarily losing their own cultures or the larger struggle for identity. Highly functional competences are being developed in these spaces to enable citizens to become skilled 'prosumers', at once information producers and information consumers, telling their own stories. It is in this context that Jamaica's Broadcasting Commission embarked upon its media literacy intervention to help alter, for good, the perceptions of young minds.

The Commission's perspective that media regulators should not be just about laws, infringements and transmission technologies, opens up new possibilities for work related to audiences, content and the development of people's critical faculties, through their more discriminating use of media. It is this view that informs the Commission's adoption of a media literacy intervention in Jamaica, partnering with a range of educational and child development agencies, including the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Joint Board for Teacher Education (JBTE).

The project

The project, started in 2007, involves the creation of a range of learning resources delivered by trained teachers in classes within Jamaica's secondary school system.

Resources include videos and CDs containing media literacy instructions, with supporting literature. Materials focused on media bias, gender stereotyping, deconstructing advertisements, understanding the impact of violence in the media and how to identify child friendly programmes. It explored the application of critical, analytical and evaluative skills to what is seen and heard on various forms of media. The idea is to increase the ability of students and teachers to be more media savvy. It encourages them to discuss issues of bias and credibility, evaluate the source of information, critically analyse media messages and create and produce their own messages for varied media platforms. (JBTE, 2010).

Overall, an estimated 500 students were exposed to the project in its three phases and several trainee teachers were involved in its delivery. The staff of the Commission visited regularly with students of the target schools to reinforce the messages in the training materials delivered by their teachers. A systematic evaluation exercise was carried out at the end of each phase to determine the effectiveness and relevance of what was being presented to students.

Evaluative reports on the roll-out and impact of the media literacy content

seem to corroborate its design as a ‘creative process’. One teacher, in whose school the pilot was conducted, remarked that:

“The programme brought out the expressive side of the students. I observed more students participating than in the normal class sessions. They were driven by the information. They did not want to put down their hands until they spoke their part.”

(Project Report, 2010)

These creative elements were targeted and nurtured by the teachers who encouraged students to write their own news releases and other media related products, tasks that were eagerly embraced by the learners at all levels.

Encoding meaning

When citizens engage with media in their own private domains, how do they relate to the content being purveyed? How does their understanding of the material come about? In this respect, Stuart Hall’s *encoding-decoding* theory is a useful analytical lens. (Hall, 1980).

Hall suggests that elites who occupy a ‘dominant-hegemonic’ position ‘encode’ media content with both ‘denotative’ and ‘connotative’ messages, often, advancing agendas favourable to those dominant interests. But, the germ of Hall’s postulate lies in how he supposes media users de-construct or ‘decode’ those embedded messages, in order to construct meaning of their own. He suggests that there are three main ways by which this is accomplished: first, there are those viewers who will decode media messages within the dominant-hegemonic position, which means they accept the connotative meanings that the encoder inscribed. In many ways, this pattern of media consumption and meaning making forms the foundations of cultural imperialism and ‘cultural inundation’. It implies that people are encouraged to cease to exercise their own agency to refute, reject and accept and assimilate media content infused into their social system.

The second way is the ‘negotiated code’. In this context, media users still decode content within the dominant-hegemonic paradigm in the main. However, they allow for a modicum of situated and oppositional thought. In this approach, the dominant-hegemonic meanings and inferences are still most influential.

The third way represents an oppositional de-coding among media users. That is to say, they understand the connotative and literal meanings being transmitted through media, but opt instead to decode or interpret content in an oppositional or contrary manner in their own interests.

Understood and applied creatively, Hall's 'Encoding and Decoding' theoretical framework can assist greatly in the design of media and information literacy interventions, specifically those geared at enhancing peoples' capabilities of analysing media content and arriving at contextual and situated meanings. It is this approach that was encouraged in the delivery of content within the Jamaican media literacy intervention here under review.

The lessons go wider than Jamaica's case study. Audiences in both developing and developed countries must be trained to accept and reject meanings and to re-purpose content creatively to suit their own requirements. Where some sections of the audience have tended to uncritically accept purveyed content, it could be that there is an absence of basic literacy and an overdependence on a single hegemonic source for information.

Critical thinking

The media literacy project is aiming to help young Jamaicans avoid this trap through active engagement with media content. Students were given opportunities to negotiate, assimilate and produce content towards their own end goals and those of the community. To accomplish this re-orientation of education in a constructivist sense, "requires that the process of instructional design, pedagogy and infrastructural developments are so designed as to motivate the critical thinking dimensions of our students and to motivate within them a passion for learning" (Dunn, 2008).

The media literacy intervention is beginning to accomplish those goals as reflected by a teacher, who is involved in the project:

Low performing students got a chance to express themselves in a way they have never done in a normal class session. They were even writing more than before. During the breaks/pauses of the videos, pupils were writing and discussing the information seen and heard at times without being directed to do so.

(Project Report, p. 27)

On the basis of the teacher's observation of students' responses in the media literacy project, we argue that the competencies being built up are useful enhancements to the everyday practices of young Jamaicans. Continued training towards their discriminating navigation of the several streams of global content, many bearing the imprints of varied foreign ideologies, cultures and mores, is crucial for personal growth and national development.

In the text box below, an example is shown of part of the curriculum designed to facilitate personal development of students through Jamaica's Broadcasting Commission media literacy strategy.

Table 1. Curriculum Design

GRADES 7-9 BCJ-JBTE MEDIA LITERACY CURRICULUM

MODULE 1- Impact of Media Literacy on Self-development

OVERVIEW

The purpose of this module is to help students understand the impact of media literacy for self-development. It will cover:

- Literacy Development
- Types of Electronic Media
- Definition of Media Literacy
- Print Media

1. Literacy development is the ability to develop language art skills, view, speak, listen, read (comprehend) and write (create, design, produce) print and electronic materials that will communicate information successfully.
2. Recognizing and identify three types of electronic media

OBJECTIVES

Students should be able to:

1. Discuss the importance of language arts skills in today's media environment.
2. Design a ten minute video illustrating different media being used by students
3. Identify different types of electronic media
4. Define media literacy after collaborative group discussions
5. Describe the relevance of each type of media

TEACHER'S TASK

1. Ask students to identify the five language arts skills. Encourage student discussion about the importance of each skill in today's media environment.
2. Allow students to share at least five sentences for class participation about the importance of language arts skills and the different ways these skills are used in the media today.
3. Have students design video of different electronic media being used by students at school. Focus on the positives and negatives of all types as you facilitate discussion of the theme "my School and I". (Include smart phones and social networks)
4. Engage students in a brief discussion to construct definition for Media Literacy.
5. Use concept map strategy to elicit definition from students
6. Expose students to different samples of age and interest appropriate forms of media.

STUDENTS' TASK

1. Identify language arts skills and talk about their importance in today's media environment. Then email or social network with a friend about the importance of language arts skills to media literacy.
2. Design the video around the use of at least three types of media used by students.
3. Explore the concept "Media Literacy" in groups of four.
4. Record one common idea by the group members.
5. Write class definition in note books.
6. Describe the type of media that impact positively on the self-esteem of grade 7 students.

Resource Materials: Multimedia projector, you-tube internet access, laptop, print media samples (The Sunday Gleaner, The Jamaica Observer, The Youthlink, The Star, The North Coast Time, The Jamaica Herald, The Children's Own) examples of BLOGS and sample pages from Twitter and Facebook

Source: BCJ-JBTE Media Literacy Project Report - Jamaica

The excerpt of the curriculum above is not far removed from the model media and information literacy curriculum that UNESCO suggests. However the pedagogical approach is more personal, constructivist and is aimed at helping young Jamaican students to contextually understand themselves, and their relations to emerging global communications and media technologies.

Lesson guides for teachers

The Broadcasting Commission and its partners recognised from the outset that the significance of media literacy is magnified in the face of the deep transformation taking place in the information and knowledge economy. One complication that arises from these developments in the knowledge society is that a whole new slate of literacy competencies is required from citizens and which may not necessarily be acquired in the same old way via the traditional curricula. Some of these new literacies, according to UNESCO, include: games literacy, access to information literacy, digital literacy, internet literacy, cinema literacy, among others.

Accordingly, media and information literacy are becoming increasingly included in the traditional curriculum. This is because "Media literacy educators must help students understand and analyze media constructions of reality, which sometimes offer incomplete or inaccurate portrayals of the world we live in. Media literacy education begins with awareness and analysis but

culminates in reflection and engagement. The ultimate goal of media literacy is empowerment” (Ashley, 2013). Against this background it is useful to evaluate a sample curriculum for the teachers in the media literacy project in Jamaica. It may also help other jurisdictions to think about some of the issues that ought to be included in specialised curricula for teachers of media and information literacy.

Table 2. Curriculum for Student Teachers and In-Service Teachers

Curriculum for student teachers and in-service teachers	
COURSE NAME	INTRODUCTION TO MEDIA LITERACY
COURSE CODE	
YEAR	2
SEMESTER	1
NO. OF CREDITS	1
NO. OF HOURS	18
COURSE DESCRIPTION	
<p>Media Literacy Education is vital in today's world, as students are readily accessing and using a variety of media. Media is used to indoctrinate, educate, entertain, and is now a powerful form of socializing. Students today are more aware of what is happening in our global village as just by a click (on the Internet or on their cellular phones) information, music, images and videos are available to them. Students are also influenced by the fashion they see, the advertisements they view and hear, the stereotypes portrayed by the media e.g. body images, sexuality, gender and race. With these factors in mind this course was created. The main aim is to introduce, expose and educate teachers-in-training and in-service teachers to aspects of media literacy education, so that they will in turn be able to help their students develop critical thinking skills that will enable them to make informed decisions.</p>	
COURSE OBJECTIVES	
<p>By the end of this course teachers-in-training and in-service teachers will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the relevance of media literacy education • Examine aspects of media students are exposed to and its impact on their thoughts, thinking and way of life • Examine various media literacy initiatives, and their importance • Investigate the power of persuasion of advertisements and how they influence people's thinking • Investigate how media influence popular culture • Develop unit plans and integrate these within aspects of the revised early childhood and primary curricula • Deliver a workshop to parents 	

UNIT 1

NO. OF HOURS: 3

UNIT TITLE: Introduction and Relevance of Media Literacy

- Definition of literacy
- Types of literacy e.g., family, technology, media, health
- Definition of media literacy/media literacy education
- Types of media
- Importance of media literacy in today's school e.g. the effect of media on academic performance, socialization

ACTIVITIES

1. Discuss influence/impact of the media (positive and negative) on the society e.g. music, language – oral and written, clothing, culture in general – violence, sex, portrayal of body image, the “bling” culture and privacy
2. Investigate and make report on types of literacy
3. Research on media literacy and types of media
4. Investigate and make comparison between past and present media available to Jamaican children
5. View and discuss module 1 video (Broadcasting Commission – media literacy project)
6. Discuss the extent to which teachers are media literate
7. Discuss the role of primary and early childhood teachers in the teaching of media literacy

UNIT 2

NO. OF HOURS: 4

UNIT TITLE: Education vs. Censorship

- The audience (Readers, Listeners and Viewers)
- Programme rating process (including the rating symbols)
- Relevance of rating and censorship
- Role of the Broadcasting Commission
- Media Literacy Initiatives (e.g., UNESCO, Children's Media Literacy Pilot Project with Joint Board of Teacher Education and The Broadcasting Commission of Jamaica)
- Keeping teachers informed

ACTIVITIES

1. Investigating Social Network/Media – e.g. Facebook, Hi 5, You Tube, My Space (debate “Networking Sites - tool or nuisance in school”)
2. Visit and interview personnel from Broadcasting Commission and media houses and make report
3. View and discuss module 2 & 3 videos (Broadcasting Commission's Media Literacy Project)

4. Debate – topic “Censorship or Education”
5. A look at some Media Literacy Education Initiatives
6. View/discuss television programmes e.g. comedies (Family Guy), cartoons and their influence on peoples’ thinking
7. Find articles that relate to media, media changes, censorship for discussion or debate

UNIT 3

NO. OF HOURS: 3

UNIT TITLE: Advertisements in the media

- Developing critical thinking/reading e.g. identifying propaganda techniques, persuasion, questioning and making valued judgements/informed decisions
- Consumer education and advertisement

ACTIVITIES

- View and discuss Module 4 video (Broadcasting Commission’s – Media Literacy Project)
- Examine propaganda techniques and the importance of developing critical thinking so as to be able to make informed decisions
- Create advertisements for class critique
- Research on consumer education for class presentation

UNIT 4

NO. OF HOURS: 4

UNIT TITLE: Integrating Media Literacy with the curriculum

- Disciplines that media literacy can be integrated with e.g. Language Arts, Social Studies and Mathematics

CONTENT

The Revised Early Childhood Curriculum – 4 and 5 year olds

The Revised Primary Curriculum – Grades 1-3, 4, 5 & 6

ACTIVITIES

1. Learning using the social media/network and You Tube
2. Integrating educational programmes e.g. Nick Jr., Disney, National Geographic and TLC, stories in the newspapers
3. Create unit plan (Must integrate different forms of media and material produced by JBTE and BCJ. Must also include information on persuasive techniques used in advertisements and how to identify facts from opinion. Must also have activities and information on rating.)

UNIT 5

NO. OF HOURS: 4

UNIT TITLE: Involving Parents in Media Literacy Education

- Educating parents on media literacy (monitoring media content that children listen to and view)
- Planning a Media Parenting Workshop

CONTENT

- Media education begins at home
- Children risk poor grades and behaviour problems by spending too much time with TV and radio

ACTIVITIES

- Discuss handout on performance and behaviour (Broadcasting Commission and Dr. Samms-Vaughan)
- Access articles and web-sites that provide information for parents on media education (for both early childhood and primary age children)
- Coordinate, produce information, pamphlets/brochures and conduct workshop/seminar

MATERIALS

- Videos produced by Broadcasting Commission
- Information from UNESCO
- Online articles

ASSIGNMENTS & ASSESSMENTS

Method of assessment: Course work only

Number of Pieces 2

Possible Assessments

1. Parenting Workshop/seminar for a PTA or Parenting Week
2. Develop Unit Plan and Micro Teaching
3. Create Advertisements using various propaganda techniques
4. Critiquing movies/television programme/advertisements
5. Research

Source: BCJ-JBTE Media Literacy Project Report- Jamaica

This proposed curriculum finds resonance with the model media and information literacy curriculum from UNESCO, but with a more focused and targeted emphasis on the new and emerging media platforms and also on the dynamic process of parents and child interaction in the media consumption and interrogation process. That is, there is the underlying assumption within the curriculum that irrespective of the media platforms, able or trained parents are poised

to play a very powerful role in enabling students to be dynamic and intelligent consumers of media content.

Another important point is that the curriculum contains among its objectives the process of popular culture construction and the role that media literacy could play (representation of dancehall images, sounds, songs, gender identity). This is particularly important, given that new media outlets have democratised access to ears, eyes and minds of people globally, such that a plethora of new, varied and previously unknown voices are enabled to contribute to the emergence of popular cultural expressions. But there are also adverse dimensions of social media and popular culture, particularly when the technologies are deployed to cause harm. Instances of cyber-bullying provide a useful reference for how people sometimes misuse a technology to inflict harm to others. Issues such as these are addressed in the media literacy project.

Success and lessons learned

Table 3. Media Literacy Project Successes

Project Success	Factors that supported Success
Teachers are more aware of the idea of media literacy and its relevance to young children.	The teachers were briefed by the facilitator at every opportunity that she met with them. Student teachers and in-service teachers were acquainted with the materials, and lessons were team taught with the facilitator and the host and student teachers.
Students' knowledge of the media and how to use it responsibly has improved significantly.	The videos were very child-friendly and the students clearly loved watching them. The topics explored were also very interesting to the children.
Interest in the project is high among several education stakeholders – students, teachers and parents.	Teachers infused concepts from the videos into the other teaching activities and content. The children shared the information with their peers and their parents.
Noticeable improvements in academic areas, especially literacy.	The students did many written and oral activities based on the projects to demonstrate their learning.
General improvement in students' attitudes and behaviours towards learning and individuals	The content of the videos and the activities that the children engaged in were personalized in many instances and so they saw the relevance of the project to their lives.

Source: Media Literacy Project Report

Table 3 shows that the media literacy project is already starting to bear fruit, particularly in the areas of students' general attitudes to their academic work and to their learning.

Limitations

As with many other developing or middle income countries, schooling in Jamaica is widely available. However, scarce economic resources number among the main limitations besetting education. Some of the more costly aspects of the programme included the actual equipment and devices that the schools required to facilitate students' viewing of the material. In some instances, schools had only a very small TV set. But one limitation in particular that might have relevance to other jurisdictions concerns the disparity between the knowledge base of teachers about the technologies and that of the students. Based on this experience, there is evidence that teachers do not have a good grasp of the new technologies and consequently are sometimes constrained in executing the lessons fully given glitches in setting up the technologies. Also it happens that sometimes teachers are less knowledgeable about the technologies than their students; this could be an opportunity for empowered learning, that is, when students are allowed to help in tutoring their teachers to master the technologies.

There is also the very problematic, but ultimately fulfilling, issue of integrating media literacy within the curriculum. Is it best to have it as a stand-alone unit, or should it be integrated within the general curriculum of the schools? This represents a limitation in the project to the extent that teachers were unable to adequately deliver the media literacy modules in an integrated way, without it appearing as though the modules were unrelated to the general curriculum.

Conclusions

This Jamaican media literacy intervention demonstrated some very important lessons, which might be useful to other jurisdictions internationally. The first is that media regulators can forge alliances to intervene in the educational system to help create a future generation of informed media audience members. Many of these youths will become critical analysts of national or community media outputs and will act as media monitors against abuse of accessible media channels and of citizens' rights.

Secondly, the project demonstrated that media literacy programmes are useful routes to achieve other pedagogical learning outcomes. A part of the project's success is attributable to the use of local indigenous, culturally relevant content to which students and teachers could easily relate.

Thirdly, it is clear that the so-called participatory culture, of which Jenkins speaks, represents a significant element in pedagogy at the primary and secondary levels of the educational system. This conclusion arises from the explicit advances that students made in the media literacy project after having been allowed to develop their own learning experiences. Furthermore, it also

shows that the technologies, in themselves, are merely tools to be used creatively towards other higher order objectives, such as personal development and educational attainment.

Finally, partnership with entities that are placed to deliver sustained student engagement is of crucial importance. In the Ministry of Education's Joint Board of Teacher Education, the Broadcasting Commission found a strategic partner whose remit allowed access to hundreds of young Jamaicans to become exposed to lessons in media and information literacy. And, in the Ministry of Education, there is some assurance that the project will continue in the formal curriculum, when the project officially ends in 2014. In this sense, the Jamaican media literacy project could be useful for others, including regulators, wanting to construct media literacy interventions towards human and national development.

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An Implementation and Evaluation of “Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Teachers” in Japan

Masato Wada & Yosuke Morimoto

This article aims to examine the efficiency of media and information literacy education in the Japanese Normal University based on using the UNESCO Media and information Literacy Curriculum for Teachers (MIL Curriculum). In Japan, some teachers have been teaching media literacy, and others information literacy. Additionally, Japanese teachers sometimes misunderstand media literacy; they have students connect the notion of critical autonomy in media, to moral education using media or education through media. This confusion about the definition of media literacy is one of the major obstacles when we try to teach media and information literacy in Japan. An authorized curriculum is needed. We have been implementing the UNESCO MIL Curriculum for in-service and pre-service teacher education. We evaluated the effect of the Curriculum on teaching using quantitative and qualitative methods. Students learned Module 3 (Representation in Media and Information), Module 4 (Languages in Media and Information) and Module 6 (New and Tradition Media) of the MIL Curriculum. Activities included a student comparison of a Japanese movie to a Korean movie and students playing an online game, Food Force. These activities increased student motivations to learn.

Keywords: media and information literacy curriculum for teachers, media and information literacy, media literacy, Japan, teacher training

Introduction

This article aims to examine the efficiency of media and information literacy education, focusing on the Japanese Normal University (Tokyo Gakugei University). In Japanese education, many Japanese teachers sometimes misunderstand media literacy; they have students connect the notion of critical autonomy in media, to moral education using media or education through

media. This confusion about the definition of media literacy is one of the major obstacles when we try to implement media and information literacy in Japan. This obstacle arises because there is a need for an authorized media and information literacy education curriculum for teachers.

The following passages describe this Japanese situation in detail and explain some obstacles that arise when we promote media and information literacy in Japanese schools. These discussions will demonstrate the value of using the UNESCO MIL curriculum “*Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Teachers*” in pre-service teacher training. This is followed by a discussion of the Japanese pre-service teacher training system. Finally we examine the efficiency of the MIL curriculum in Japan.

The situation about MIL education in Japan

Media literacy came to the attention of Japan’s citizens around 1994, when Japanese mainstream media reported some biased news that had influenced all Japanese people (Suzuki, 1997). For instance, when the Matsumoto sarin attack occurred in 1994, one man (Mr. Kono) was falsely accused, mainly because of the mass media (Suzuki, 1997). Another example is when the Great Hanshin Earthquake occurred in 1995; mainstream media reported mainly emotional scenes and shocking footage (people rescued from a collapsed building, and collapsed raised motorway or express railway). Because of these reports, some disaster areas could not get the support they needed, and some people who lived away from the disaster area could not get necessary information (Suzuki, 1997).

However, some believe the term ‘Media Literacy Education’ was brought from Canada to Japan earlier, but was not specifically called ‘media literacy education.’ Nakamura said that language education text used from 1952-1954 included a unit on ‘how to listen to the radio’, and also that text for grade nine junior high school students used from 1959-1961 included a unit on ‘the necessity of reading the newspaper’ (Nakamura, 2013). Because the description in those texts included a critical thinking process similar to those requested in media and information literacy, Nakamura argued Japanese teachers had already been teaching media and information literacy education since the late 1940s (Shimomura, 2002).

Japanese educators had been interested in education using media since television was brought to Japan in the 1950’s (Kasahara, 2012). On the other hand, the term ‘screen education’, or teaching correct understanding of moving images plus viewing and analysis skills, was also introduced in the 1950’s and attracted the attention of audio-visual educators. However, ‘screen education’ did not become popular among ordinary teachers and educators (Kasahara, 2012).

It can be said that Japanese media and information literacy education has been divided into two streams and each stream has developed independently. One stream is media literacy that focuses on critical media analysis. Another stream is information literacy that focuses on education using media. Those two streams about media and information literacy cause a vague understanding of the concepts of media and information literacy for Japanese classroom teachers. For instance, Ishikawa (2006) studied Japanese elementary and junior high school teachers understanding of media literacy. Thirty-nine elementary and junior high school teachers participated in the training of information morals education on Hitachi-city in 2005. Ishikawa used a questionnaire to ask those teachers how well they understood media literacy and whether they had taught media literacy in their classes. Teachers stated that they taught “privacy protection”, “copyright”, “how to use media in a right way”, “utilization ability of the media”, and “convenience and the risk of the media”. Ishikawa’s research shows that those teachers tended to confuse audiovisual education and information education with media and information literacy education.

These studies show that the main problem in Japanese schools is teacher’s inability to distinguish the concepts of media literacy and information literacy. UNESCO points out the difference between media literacy and information literacy in the MIL curriculum as follows.

... information literacy emphasizes the importance of access to information and the evaluation and ethical use of such information. On the other hand, media literacy emphasizes the ability to understand media functions, evaluate how those functions are performed and to rationally engage with media for self-expression. (Wilson et al., 2011, p. 18)

The UNESCO MIL curriculum explains how the concepts of media and information literacy can be seen as ambiguous, and it is possible that the ambiguity of the definition will lead classroom teachers to misunderstand the concepts. As was mentioned earlier, some Japanese educators believe they have already been practicing media and information literacy education. However, those are partial practices. Japanese educators and classroom teachers still do not have a comprehensive understanding of media and information literacy education. If Japanese educators and classroom teachers want such an education, they are encouraged to gain the knowledge, teaching skills and understanding about media and information literacy during their pre-service and in-service teacher training. However, Japanese classroom teachers are so busy that they don’t have time to learn it. In addition, other obstacles may be involved. One of the big elements in Japanese schools is culture or habitus and this can influence a teacher’s willingness to learn about media and information literacy as well.

School culture

In Japanese school education, most educators tend to consider it is not the school's responsibility to teach contemporary culture, in particular youth culture, because youth culture is recognized just as 'entertainment'. However, this is not only true in Japan. In England, David Buckingham said "the term 'media' still often appears to be a synonym for anything that is not 'literature' – so that it is not uncommon to find popular fiction being studied in a Media Studies classroom" (Buckingham, 2003). In the USA, Renee Hobbs argued "some spectacularly bad decisions on the part of some teachers, who may use movies as a reward for good behavior, take the kids to the computer lab as a break from "real" learning, or use music, media, or technology to keep disruptive classrooms quiet and orderly" (Hobbs, 2011). In Canada, Robert Morgan said that English teachers tend to regard traditional English literature, such as William Shakespeare, as important, and they do not discuss television programs, comics, and teen magazines in their classrooms (Morgan, 1998). These cases demonstrate even in countries and regions where media and information literacy education has been done, school culture tends to not accept popular culture as a serious aspect of classroom work. Japanese school culture is no exception. At least in the case of media use and teacher's recognition about media, Japanese schools are similar to those countries and regions mentioned. However, when we focus on practice, Japanese school is different from other countries and regions.

Some media and information literacy education practices in Japanese schools are carried out in 'Japanese Language', 'Social Studies', 'Information Studies', and 'Arts' classrooms, but most practices are carried out in 'Integrated Studies', 'Moral', and 'Special Activities' classrooms (Morimoto, 2008). This fact means that Japanese media and information literacy education is a sporadic approach, and is not a comprehensive approach. The Japanese Ministry of Education locates 'The Period for Integrated Studies', 'Moral Education', and 'Special Activities' as being outside of the main subjects. The Japanese Ministry of Education explains "these are referred to as subjects etc.; special activities are limited to classroom activities, excluding school lunch programs" (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan: MEXT, 2011). These 'subjects etc.' have some different features when compared to regular subjects. First, 'subjects etc.' do not have government authorized textbooks. Second, teachers do not need a specific license to teach these topics. Third, teachers do not need to assess student's achievement about those classes. Finally, the number of times their classes meet is less than for regular subjects. The Japanese Ministry of Education says "the annual teaching program should be made to cover 35 or more school weeks (34 weeks for Grade 1) for all subjects, including moral education, foreign language activities, the period for

integrated studies and special activities” (MEXT, 2011). Japanese teachers have to teach ‘Moral Education’ and ‘Special Activities’ in just one hour per week, and do ‘The Period for Integrated Studies’ in two hours per week. In these classes, it is difficult for teachers to teach media and information literacy using a comprehensive approach.

Taking into account Japanese teacher’s work environment, they may have no choice. Japanese elementary teachers have to teach almost all subjects, provide instruction during school lunch, contact parents, attend committee meetings, do counseling, and so on. In addition, class size in Japanese elementary schools is 27.9 students per classroom, and 32.8 students in junior high school. These numbers are greater than the 6 to 9 students noted as the OECD average (OECD, 2012). Japanese teachers have so much work that they only do their class with the government authorized textbook. Almost all of the government authorized textbooks lack content about media and information literacy because it is not included in the national curriculum. As many effective media and information literacy education practices demonstrate, teachers should include discussions about contemporary media texts, such as movies, music, video games and television programs (Hobbs & Cooper Moore, 2013). When teachers teach media and information literacy, they have to examine those media texts first and determine whether they can use those texts in their class. However, Japanese teachers do not have time to consider those things and they do not have the flexibility to create teaching materials. Further, as Hobbs and Cooper Moore discuss, teachers do not include popular culture texts because they often lack knowledge about them (Hobbs & Cooper Moore, 2013).

As many media literacy educators have stated, we have to teach and learn about the media that is around us in our daily lives, with students (Masterman, 1985; Buckingham, 2003; Luke, 2003; Tornero, 2008). In other words, we should connect student culture outside of the classroom with the culture inside of the classroom (Hobbs, 2011; Silverblatt, 2014). If Japanese teachers are eager to change the current situation and teach students about media and enable them to discuss democratic society, they have to learn about media and information literacy before they become a teacher. Although it is hopeful that classroom teachers learn media and information literacy during their in-service teacher training, they do not have much time to learn and in-service teacher training often results in independent learning. Since a comprehensive understanding of media and information literacy education is necessary, it will be appropriate to introduce MIL curriculum into pre-service teacher training.

Japanese teacher training course

Japan has authorized requirements that must be common to all teacher training courses in universities, but it is difficult to speak generally about them because they vary in every university (university, teachers college, and junior college). Generally speaking, a teacher training course in Japan is four years of concurrent course work. This means students acquire their diploma and teacher qualification simultaneously.

Tanahashi and Imai (2009) developed the media literacy curriculum for the students of the teachers college, and assessed the curriculum. Furthermore, Teraoka et al. (2009) discussed the class practice in the university that viewed media literacy education as one of the current education problems and brought it up in the teacher training course of the university. Through their work, some universities have tried to introduce education about media literacy and the information literacy.

However, research around these practices is not comprehensive. This research just focused on a particular field. The practice that focuses on just one field or a few particular fields will cause some problems. One of the major problems is that so called ‘intertextuality’ that is explained as “the idea that texts are inextricably bound up in their relationships with other texts” (Buckingham, 2003, p. 136).

When we consider the contents of the MIL curriculum and the existing Japanese teacher training course, we can introduce the MIL curriculum into teacher training in two ways. One method is to incorporate it into an existing unit and another is to introduce an additional unit. However, it is thought that the latter method is unrealistic. This is because the number of lesson hours required of university students is already overloaded. The UNESCO curriculum states that the “MIL curriculum focuses on “required core competencies and skills which can be seamlessly integrated into existing teacher education without putting too much of a strain on (already overloaded) teacher trainees” (Wilson et al., 2011, p. 19)

In order to integrate these core competencies, University teachers who teach the MIL curriculum should understand the contents (mainly analysis using semiotics) of Cultural Studies in particular. Sometimes a university teacher is in charge of a subject about the teaching profession and its pedagogy (i.e. educational science and each subject pedagogy), but may not be taught the sociological field where that specialty is regarded differently. This may be so even if the teacher can teach pedagogical approach and literacy theory. Therefore teachers who are in charge of the MIL curriculum should have interdisciplinary knowledge. How to best train such a talented teacher is a critical issue. Conversely, one might consider letting a sociologist be in charge of a part of

the MIL curriculum for example. In this case, the sociology teacher must first learn the pedagogy of MIL.

To solve those problems, at Tokyo Gakugei University we are teaching and learning the MIL curriculum, and we are also in charge of pre-service teacher training. We experimented with teaching some MIL modules in our classes.

An implementation and an evaluation of MIL Curriculum

We implemented Curriculum Modules 3, 4, and 6 for pre-service teacher training students at Tokyo Gakugei University in Japan. As suggested in Modules 3 and 4, students compared a Japanese drama/movie with a foreign drama/movie. Other students learned the *Food Force* game from Module 6. We measured their teaching motivations and evaluated the Modules.

Drama/Movie comparative analysis in Module 3 and 4

Forty-two students reviewed the MIL Curriculum and decided to compare a Japanese drama/movie and a foreign version of the same drama/movie. In our experience, Japanese students dislike critical analysis. Of course, analysis is an important method to learn for media and information literacy. However, “critical” is a negative word for Japanese. Japanese students think that they have to deny their favorite dramas/movies in order to do critical analysis. Students understand that TV advertisements contain some misinformation. They think that the advisement can be corrected by critical analysis. However, they are conflicted when they think about their favorite dramas/movies and critical analysis. So instead, they say they do not like critical analysis. When they have to do comparative analysis of a drama/movie, will they happily evaluate this drama/movie in detail? If they will not, one must ask whether comparative analysis is effective for MIL education in Japan?

We have two research questions.

Question 1: Do students have high motivations to do drama/movie comparative analysis?

Question 2: Is their motivation high on movie/drama comparative analysis compared to TV advertisement analysis?

Methods

Forty-two pre-service teacher training students were divided into six groups. They compared a Japanese movie/drama with a similar foreign movie/drama, using the media representation from Module 3 and the media language from Module 4 in the MIL Curriculum. Students made a presentation of their

comparison of the movies/dramas and wrote comments. They answered a questionnaire about their motivation. The motivation analysis evaluated four sub-motivations; attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction. Those motivations are detailed in the ARCS motivation model developed by John Keller (1983). We measured students' motivations on a nine point scale, ranging from 1 (*lowest*) to 9 (*highest*).

Results

Students selected six movies/dramas. The movies/dramas were 1) *Godzilla* (Japan/USA), 2) *Shall we dance?* (Japan/USA), 3) "Sekai no Chushin de Ai o Sakebu"(Japan)/*Crying out in Love, in the Centre of the World* (Korea), 4) "Ikemen desu ne" (Korea/Japan), 5) "Hana Zakari no Kimitachi he (Hana Kimi)"(Japan)/*For you in Full Blossom* (Taiwan), and 6) "Hana Yori Dango" (Japan)/*Boys over Flowers* (Korea). Students selected Asian movies more than Hollywood movies, since Hollywood movies are not popular in Japan. Japanese movies account for 60.4% of the box office and imported movies account for 39.6% of the box-office (Motion Picture Producers Association of Japan, 2013). "Hana Yori Dango" was the most popular series of all time in Japan. It is an animated TV drama (available in Japan, Korea, Taiwan and China), and a movie, written in "Manga".

Hana Yori Dango is a secondary school drama about a poor girl and four rich boys. Students selected a five-minute scene from *Hana Yori Dango* and compared the Japanese drama version with the Korean version. They analyzed every thirty-seconds for media language and representations. In the Japanese drama, Tsukushi Makino, the main girl's character, is staying in the classroom and drama progresses with her narrations. In the Korean drama, the TV news announces that these are rich students and a rich school. There is one bullied boy and the main girl character helps him in both dramas. The bullied boy commits suicide from the top of the school building and a girl helps him in the Korean drama. However, there is no suicide scene in the Japanese drama. Students wrote impressions of their drama comparisons. "It was easy to understand the difference of two drama's sounds and shots. I was surprised that the main character did not appear sooner in the Korean drama." "I had seen Japanese drama before. I am very interested in Korean drama that reflects Korean culture, thinking style, sound, and screen structures. The expressions of two dramas were very different." Students analyzed TV advertisements too. We compared their learning motivations for drama/movie comparisons with their motivations for TV advertisement analysis. The motivations of drama/movie comparison were over 5.00 (middle). There was a marginally significant difference in attention (one sided t-test: $t(17)=1.56, p<.10$) and confidence (one sided t-test: $t(17)=1.64, p<.10$) between drama/movie comparison and TV advertisement analysis (Table 1).

Table 1. Drama/movie comparison and advertisement analysis

	Drama/movie comparison		Advertisement analysis	
	M	SD	M	SD
Attention	7.17	1.29	6.83	1.20+
Relevance	7.06	1.35	6.83	1.29
Confidence	6.94	1.35	6.33	1.28+
Satisfactions	7.00	1.06	7.00	1.33

N=18, *M*: mean, *SD*: standard deviation, scale range: 1 (lowest), 5 (middle), 9 (highest), +:*p*<.10 (one sided *t*-test)

Discussion

The motivations of drama/movie comparison were over 5.00 and students had high motivations on drama/movie comparative analysis. A drama/movie's average score of attention and that of confidence were higher than advertisement analysis scores. The drama/movie comparison has an effect on motivation.

Online game on Module 6

An online game is an interactive multimedia tool in classrooms. Game play is one of the pedagogical approaches and activities used in Module 6, Unit 3 of the MIL Curriculum.

Online games: Play a free online humanitarian simulation game, such as Peacemaker, Food Force or Darfur is Dying. How can a computer game help you to think creatively about global issues? What are the learning outcomes from these games?

Activity: Develop a lesson plan using an electronic game as part of teaching and learning, to raise awareness about global issues, such as hunger, conflict and peace. Teach this lesson and write a short report on teacher's responses to the issues, noting the questions they raised and how the games helped to address them.

(Wilson et al., 2011, p. 126)

Peacemaker and *Darfur is Dying* have no Japanese tutorials. Japanese students have no motivation to play the game's English version because they have already been playing many kinds of games with Japanese tutorials. *Konami*, a Japanese game maker, developed *Food Force* with a Japanese version on Facebook. *Food Force* is known as a serious game in Japan (Fujimoto, 2007),

but Japanese students are not familiar with that game. The game on Facebook is a social game. Most students have an account on Facebook and they can play *Food Force*. Petros & Georgios (2011) taught *Food Force* to primary education students. Their research showed that playing *Food Force* provided no significantly different results in knowledge construction compared to modern pedagogical interventions without the game, but the game contributes significantly to attitudes and views of students and the engagement of students during learning, making the learning process significantly more interesting and motivating for them. Imaeda (2010) taught *Food Force* to students of the training course of registered dietitians at the university. Those students had a high motivation to learn about food problems and understood nutrition improvement activities.

We have two research questions.

Question 1: Does the game lead to positive attitudes that will help to teach children in class?

Question 2: Do students who play *Food Force* increase their teaching ability?

Methods

Forty-two pre-service teacher training students were divided into eight groups and played *Food Force* on Facebook. They developed a lesson plan using *Food Force* as part of teaching and learning, to raise awareness about hunger. They wrote a short report about how the games helped to address hunger. They answered questions about their teaching motivations using the ARCS model. Teaching motivations were as follows;

Attention: I have an efficacy to teach children to pay attention to food problems.

Relevant: I have an efficacy to teach children to think that food problems are relevant to their life

Confidence: I have an efficacy to teach children to have a confidence that they can learn about food problems.

Satisfaction: I have an efficacy to teach children to be satisfied with learning food problems

Results

(1) Lesson plans and a short report

Student teachers put children's game play activities in the first stage in their lesson plans. They intended to use the game to raise children's motivations to learn about food problems. They adopted a collaborative learning style and were invested in their learning.

Student teachers responses for *Food Force*:

“Game provides children the chance to think about food problems with interest.”

“Children will learn about food problems by playing this game.”

“Game is not real and teacher should add real teaching material on this lesson plan.”

(2) Teaching motivations with *Food Force*

We compared students’ teaching motivations before and after game play. There was a marginally significant difference in attention (two sided t -test: $t(27)=1.99$, $p<.1$) and relevance (two sided t -test: $t(27)=1.94$, $p<.1$) and significant difference in confidence (two sided t -test: $t(27)=2.79$, $p<.05$) and satisfactions (two sided t -test: $t(27)=5.31$, $p<.05$) between pre and post scores (Table 2).

Table 2. Teaching motivations with *Food Force*

	Play Food Force			
	Before		After	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Attention	3.04	1.01	3.50	0.69+
Relevance	3.21	1.10	3.64	0.95+
Confidence	2.71	0.76	3.18	0.90*
Satisfactions	2.71	0.78	3.54	0.88*

$N=28$, M : mean, SD : standard deviation, scale range: 1 (lowest), 5 (highest),
+: $p<.10$, *: $p<.05$ (two sided t -test)

Discussion

Student teachers had positive attitudes about using the game to teach children in class. They hoped to use the game at the beginning of the food problem lesson. They thought that the game would increase children’s attention and motivation in external events of Instructions (Gagne et al., 2005) However, teachers also stated that the game had no reality and they should add a lesson plan with real teaching material. Students played *Food Force* and increased their teaching abilities (Table 2). Our findings suggest that this online game is a useful tool to teach about global issues and increases teaching motivations, but the teacher has to add a lesson plan with real teaching materials.

Conclusion

The drama/movie comparison activity had an effect on teachers motivation. The value of Module 3 and 4 on the MIL Curriculum was

verified. Students played the *Food Force* game and increased their teaching abilities. The value of Module 6 on the MIL Curriculum was verified. These results imply that using a few modules is a good start to fully understanding the MIL curriculum, but more is needed. We believe the whole MIL Curriculum must be introduced to pre-service teacher training. There are many other Modules in the MIL Curriculum and each Module should be verified for use in Japan.

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