

Part two

English for Media Literacy and Information

(MLI)

COURSE N°01

What is media and information literacy?

“Literacy” is the ability to read and write. “Media and information literacy” (MIL) is the ability to fully use many types of media safely, wisely, and responsibly. MIL is a set of competencies that enables a person to access media, analyze media content, create new media messages, reflect on existing media content, and take action with media. People who are media and information literate are better able to understand complex media messages from newspapers, books, radio, television, billboards, websites, social media, and all other forms of media. They can better recognize disinformation, know how to verify information, and can produce media messages themselves.

But how do people become media literate? They learn what media is, what its characteristics are, and the different ways it works. Becoming media literate involves sharpening the skills needed to use and understand media, but it also means developing a sense of how to use media responsibly.

In many countries, MIL is now taught in schools. Educators have discovered that MIL is an effective and engaging way to apply critical-thinking skills to a wide range of topics. In fact, many people consider MIL an essential competency in today’s media-saturated world where technologies are developing rapidly and media systems growing ever more complex.

Media and information literacy can help people

- *Develop critical thinking skills*
- *Understand how media messages shape our culture and society*
- *Identify targeted marketing strategies*
- *Recognize what the media maker wants us to believe or do*
- *Name the techniques of persuasion used*
- *Advocate for changes to the media system*

- *Recognize bias, disinformation, and lies*
- *Discover the parts of the story that are not being told*
- *Evaluate media messages based on our own experiences, skills, beliefs, and values*
- *Create and distribute our own media messages*

Why is media and information literacy important?

MIL allows people to better understand different forms of media and their influence on society and individuals. It raises people's awareness of their culture, their values, and the significance of information and communication. Media systems, societies, and individual human beings are complex and multifaceted. That's why media-literate people avoid making quick, simplistic judgments. Another objective of MIL is enabling greater access to media and making it easier for people to create their own content. This can give rise to new visions of media access, structure, and control, and develop societies where people are valued as citizens and not treated as subjects.

Today's technologies allow people to create and analyze messages in a variety of media formats like text, photos, or videos. But the skills needed to do that have to be learned, practiced, and updated frequently. That means staying media literate involves lifelong learning.

Young people in particular need opportunities to engage with educators so they can make sense of their experiences with mass media as well as with newer technologies, such as social media and messaging platforms.

COURSE N°02

What are media?

What is a medium?

The term medium can be defined in several different ways. According to dictionary.com, a medium is "one of the means or channels of general communication, information, or entertainment in society, such as newspaper, radio, or television". A medium is used to transport messages between people. These messages aren't shared directly face-to-face, but indirectly via the medium: a letter, a radio program, an e-mail or a billboard. In these exchanges, the messages are encoded by the person sending them (the media maker or makers) and decoded by those receiving the message (the audience). These messages are referred to as media messages.

What are some examples of media?

The emergence of media began with the development of written languages. For the first time, people were able to write down and copy a message over and over again. They were able to share these messages with others who were far away or even who lived years, decades, or centuries later. Different forms of non-electronic print media are used to this day:

- Bulletins and notices
- Newspapers and magazines
- Letters
- Books
- Comics

In the 20th century, media technology developed rapidly. Broadcast media like radio and TV were perfected and became popular. Movies went from silent and black-and-white to sound and color. Since the start of the 21st century, computers and digitalization have enabled new media technologies and experiences. Examples of electronic and non-print media include:

- Radio
- Television
- Cinema
- Computers (CD-ROM, USB flash drive)
- Video games
- E-mail
- Audio recordings
- Mobile phones
- E-books

How can we categorize media?

There are many ways to categorize media. For instance, we can distinguish between broadcast media designed to reach a large audience (radio, TV) and print media (books, billboards, news papers).

We can differentiate between **one-way communication** (e.g. print and broadcast media) and **two-way communication** (e.g. social media), where there is direct interaction between the sender of the media message and its receiver.

You could also categorize media into four types: print, visual, sound, and digital.

- Print: books, newspapers, magazines
- Visual: movies, television, photographs, drawings
- Sound: radio, recorded music, CDs, MP3 audio files
- Digital: internet, email, video games, social media

All these categories only serve as a rough orientation, since many media forms and technologies are fluid. They can spill over into other categories. For instance, radio is a one-way broadcast medium, but call-in programs add elements of two-way communication to it.

What are traditional and new media?

A popular way of categorizing media is between traditional or analogue media and digital or new media. The watershed moment is computerization and digitalization that took place at the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries. Media that existed before that time are sometimes referred to as “traditional media”, those that were invented later are called “new media”. Analogue media content is printed on paper, recorded on tape, on film, or on a record. It is disseminated as printed material, via radio waves, or terrestrial TV signals. Traditional media include newspapers, books, letters, radio, and TV. These days, however, a lot of media content is digital. It can be reproduced and shared electronically without loss of quality, often through the internet. Media that only evolved thanks to digitalization include social media, blogs, and e-mail.

What are mass media and mass communication?

Mass media are various media technologies that aim to reach a large audience (such as books, newspapers, radio, television, films, recorded music, websites, and advertisements). Usually, the messages of a mass medium are one-way: broadcasters or publishers create media content like radio or TV programs or books and the audience consumes them without having a chance to interact with the creators. In mass communication, the group of media makers creating the media content is small because these media are expensive to produce. They disseminate their media messages to the public in order to achieve specific goals, which range from making money to achieving fame or gaining influence and power. Mass media makers can make profits through advertising or by selling the music, films, television shows, and video games they have produced.

COURSE N°03

What are the five core concepts of media?

The five core concepts of media are directly linked to the five key questions discussed earlier:

1. Authorship: All media messages are ‘constructed’.
2. Format: Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules.
3. Audience: Different people experience the same media message differently.
4. Content: Media have embedded values and points of view.
5. Purpose: Most media are organized to gain profit and/or power.

These concepts sound very abstract at first. trainees will probably need time to understand them. That is why starting with the five key questions is a good idea. Each answer to a question or follow-up question will take the trainees closer to understanding one of the key concepts and thinking critically about media.

What functions do media have for society?

What is their impact on society?

Media shape society, but society also shapes media. Media's impact is never one-directional; there is constant interplay. The resulting effects are often subtle, take place on many levels, and can be assessed in a variety of ways.

Media contents and forms are a central part of the public dialogue in any society. People like to talk about the news, movies, TV programs, and social media trends. So one impact media have on society is determining the topics, or setting the agenda, of the public conversation. In addition, media help define a society's values and boundaries. What is ok, what isn't? What views can an individual express publicly without risking rejection or isolation? But media contents and the discussion about them can also change views and perceptions. Movies or talk shows, for instance, can introduce a society to new ideas or values that will become accepted over time. And as the media bring about such changes, they simultaneously reflect and report about them. They are an agent of change, but also chronicle the societal changes they helped bring about.

Media help shape a society's identity. At the same time, people shape the media landscape by expressing their preferences. For instance, they might decide to use or abandon certain apps, watch certain TV shows or click past them, or pick up some newspapers and not others at the newsstand. If the public ignores specific media or media products, those media will not prosper.

Apart from having an impact on society as a whole, media also help shape groups within that society through shared media experiences—a generation, for

example. People who were all born around the same time will have similar media memories, even though they may live in different towns or provinces. Members of the same generation will remember watching the same movies or TV shows, listening to the same music, or using the same apps. These shared media memories create a bond within that generation and help define it.

A society's media system always reflects the power dynamics of that society. In a dictatorship, for example, independent media are hard to find. Authoritarian regimes tend to monitor and police social media and restrict access to information. In a market economy, on the other hand, you will have many forms of commercial media and a largely uncensored media market and internet. Sometimes, repressive governments allow only one or a few media outlets to operate; in market economies, smaller outlets might not be able to compete. The results is a media landscape with only one or a few players. These (near) monopolies reduce the public's opportunity to participate in decision-making. Every member of the public, however, should be able to participate in debates about the path a society is taking or should take.

Course N04

What is information?

Information is anything that informs. It includes such things as knowledge gotten through research or investigation, factual data, or instructions. Information should be timely, accurate, relevant, and increase understanding. Journalists work with information. They analyze and verify it and write it in language that is easy to understand to present their audience with a balanced perspective on a story.

What is an information source?

An information source provides information. Documents, speeches, videos, websites, photographs, and people are all examples of information sources, as are media like newspapers and radio shows. Individual sources of information that journalists might use in researching a story are rarely completely neutral. That's why it is important that the journalist considers where the information is coming from, why it is being shared, and to what extent the information source can be trusted. Because of this, most journalists work with the "two source" principle to check the authenticity of the information they are dealing with. If two sources that are independent of each other provide the same information, it is more likely that the information is true.

When considering the neutrality of media as information sources, it is helpful to look at who provides the information and who owns and controls the media outlet. Is it owned by an entrepreneur, a government, a private company, or is it independent? The owners of private media outlets often have an agenda, such as

promoting a political opinion. An independent media outlet can also have its own agenda, such as supporting a political opinion that contrasts with the government's point of view. It can also be useful to consider what motivates an information source. Is the source interested in making money, in pushing through an agenda, or in informing the public?

The rise of social media has made the information landscape more complicated. Social media platforms can be sources of quality information, but also full of disinformation: rumors, lies, hoaxes, propaganda, and clickbait. Users are confronted with a mix of high and low-quality information in their newsfeeds and must individually determine the truthfulness of every post. For this they need basic knowledge about how the platforms work and how to judge if a post is likely to be true or not.

What is news?

What is the difference between news and information?

The word news comes from the word "new". News is information that is new, important, and relevant or interesting to a specific audience. The information on social media comes from a variety of sources: private individuals, groups, professional media organizations, to name just a few. Each of these has a different idea of what is newsworthy and the quality of what they post may differ widely.

In professional journalism, what counts as news depends on various factors, such as the time and location where something happened, the target audience, and an editor or reporter's judgment. The robbery of a shop in a small village, for instance, is important news for a local newspaper because it is relevant to the local community. But the same story is unlikely to be considered newsworthy by the national press or by a reporter in a different country

What questions should news answer?

News in professional media outlets should inform the audience about what happened, when and where it happened, and who was involved. A good news article will also provide information about how and why something happened. When looking for the answers to these questions, consumers should keep in mind that the answers and the way the news is written might not be neutral. For example, different reporters might have different ideas about why something happened, depending on factors like their political opinions, upbringing, circle of friends, etc. They may also come up with different answers to the key questions depending on whom they interviewed for their news story or how thoroughly they did their research. Good journalists will try to report neutrally and present the different sides of a story. But no one, even the best journalists, is completely neutral. The same piece of information is often seen differently by different people, and can be interpreted or

presented in various ways. Media messages reflect the values and points of view of media makers.

COURSE N04

Essentials of news

A journalist is free to use various means of research. These include research interviews, public records, reports by the government, NGOs, and institutes, as well as news reports published by other media like newspapers, radio and television, apps, the Internet, even social networks and blogs.

But: journalists should never rely on just one source. Information must be checked and compared among various sources.

News should never express the journalist's opinion; it should always be objective in describing a fact or event.

News about controversial issues should offer more than one point of view.

News writing should be as neutral as possible, avoiding loaded or highly emotional words.

After research on various sources and viewpoints is complete, the information has to be structured and organized.

News consists of two parts:

the lead and the body.

- The first part “the lead” provides brief information about an event that has happened, is happening, or is about to happen. This information addresses the main “who, what, when, where, why and how” questions.
- The second part “the body” contains additional information and explanations, and addresses the consequences of the event.

News writing requires simple, easy-to-understand language as well as specific topic-related vocabulary.

NOTE :

-You have to read these two first parts.

-Try to understand the meaning of the text since it is a matter of your concern (i.e. your field of study).

-you have to look for (search) for relevant vocabulary.