

Critical thinking and Artificial Intelligence: the role of Media and Information Literacy

The new UNESCO resource Media and Information Literate Citizens: Think critically, Click Wisely (Second Edition of the UNESCO Model Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Educators and Learners), launched in 2021, succeeds in increasing the weight of artificial intelligence within the media and information literacy paradigms. In physical, digital, or immersive realities, our decisions are no longer individual. A.I. algorithms, and all the bias issues they involve, are present in our daily lives. The concept of “free will” indeed seems to have been buried by history.

In that sense, in a complex, fast and unequal world, fundamental concepts in the field of education and human rights, such as “critical thinking” and “reality”, need to be revisited in order to imagine a healthy and citizen relationship with the media.

Critical thinking, in its evolutionary line from Antiquity to the present day, has undergone transformations. It ceased to be a liberal value, and synonymous with rationality, to become an element of Critical Theory thanks to the Frankfurt School and flowed, mainly due to the studies of the educator John Dewey, into a fundamental element for the construction of universal education - underlined by UNESCO documents and parameters. In McPeck's studies, it became, in the 1980s, a multi-layered concept: a set of skills necessary for citizens to analyze and evaluate reality - and may interfere in it.

On the other hand, since the development of radio, theories, practices and methodologies have been created so that we can understand the media as a fundamental element in the mediation of this same reality.

Media and Information Literacy embraces critical thinking when it sees media as a way of seeing the world - and understand reality as information. That is, indeed, a critical point. The popularization of the personal computer and cyberculture in the 1990s took us to a hybrid time, flooded with artificial intelligence algorithms. The development of artificial intelligence has grown substantially in the last ten years - this has been further accelerated by online activities multiplied during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the metaverse, for example, what can we consider real? How to exercise our citizenship in environments of immersive reality? In his recent best-selling “Reality+”, David J. Chalmers delves into the philosophical questions that define what is real. For him, digital is not a “second-hand” reality - the hybrid world is real, even with unequal access across the globe.

Exercising critical thinking in “complex realities” like these makes it urgent for Media and Information Literacy to be present in lifelong learning processes as public policies - from the cradle to the grave, and not only at school. Leaving the access and quality of media and information literacy behind is increasingly accentuating the world's inequality.

Alexandre Le Voci Sayad
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Cites

CHALMERS, D. Reality + Virtual Worlds and Problems of Philosophy, Norton: 2022.
MCPECK, J.E. Critical Thinking and Education. Routledge: 1981.
UNESCO MIL Curriculum for Teachers and Learners
<https://en.unesco.org/news/media-and-information-literate-citizens-think-critically-click-wisely>

NOTE FROM UNESCO

UNESCO is pleased to announce the Global Media and Information Literacy Week 2022 theme:
Nurturing Trust: A Media and Information Literacy Imperative

Please send via email (gapmil@lists.unesco.org) any suggestions that you have concerning:

1. Issues to be addressed
2. Sub-themes
3. Innovative ideas to take Global Media and Information Literacy Week to another level

Global Media and Information Literacy Week 2022 Feature Conference and Youth Agenda Forum is hosted by Nigeria.

UNESCO is looking forward to the usual collaboration with all members of the UNESCO Media and Information Literacy Alliance. Together we will achieve Media and Information Literacy for All.

Alton Grizzle, Programme Specialist in Communication and Information, UNESCO, Paris.

NEWS

1 - The Media and Information Literacy Forum and exhibition, organized by UNESCO, incorporated the three fundamental principles of the Dubai Expo 2020 - innovation, collaboration, and inspiration among debates, speeches and a virtual exhibition. For more information, access <https://events.unesco.org/event?id=539659702>

2 - The Cameroonian Association for Media Education (EDUK-MEDIA) organized a reflection seminar with on the Faculty of Health Sciences of the Catholic University of Central Africa. Professor Divina Frau Meigs in Cameroon led this activity on the theme: "MIL and fake news : health professionals on the front line".

<https://www.facebook.com/2118416268378783/posts/3181794802040919/>

3 - The Global Center for Journalism and Communication, University of Agder (Norway), The Institute for International Communication, St John's University (USA), The Media Institute, University of Prishtina, (Kosovo) and Digital Communication Network Global, and the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Greece) organize the 4-webinars serie "Press and Democracy - A Global Conversation" up to April 22nd.

[https://stjohnsuniversity-](https://stjohnsuniversity-xfnjl.formstack.com/forms/press_and_democracy_event1)

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4 - The Media Studies and Journalism Department of University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB) and the International Association of Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) Bangladesh organized the Dhaka Media Summit - form March 11th to 13th. <https://www.facebook.com/DMS.MSJ.ULAB/>

5 - In February the Media & Learning Association organized the webseminar" Teacher Education in Digital & Media Literacy - the challenges in Initial Teacher Education" with worldwide MIL experts. To watch:

<https://media-and-learning.eu/event/teacher-education-digital-and-media-literacy-the-challenges-in-initial-teacher-education/>

Meet the unesco MIL Alliance ISC

<https://en.unesco.org/themes/media-and-information-literacy/gapmil/isc>

Are you a member of the Unesco Media and Information Literacy Alliance? To join, visit and contact the steering committee,

<https://en.unesco.org/themes/media-and-information-literacy/gapmil/about>

If you would like to offer an editorial to the MIL Alliance update or share a news item, please send an e-mail to
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