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Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Competencies of Language and Communication Students

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Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Competencies of Language and Communication Students

Introduction

Literacy, a vital survival tool in today's knowledge society (Richmond et al., 2008) means knowing how to "read" media texts (Inan & Temur, 2012) as it involves more than the encoding and decoding of linguistic elements (Kinzer, 2010). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2013) emphasizes that being literate means having the ability to interpret and make informed judgments as skillful prosumers of media texts.

In 2011, UNESCO's Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Curriculum and Competency Framework combined media literacy and information literacy (Alagaran, 2012) into one umbrella. The framework is contained in Wilson et al.'s (2011) UNESCO MIL Curriculum for Teachers which aims to capacitate educators the "essential competencies that allow citizens to engage with media and other information providers effectively, and develop critical thinking and life-long learning skills for socializing and becoming active citizens" (p.187). MIL's ecology (UNESCO, 2011) is a composite of 12 literacies: (1) media literacy, the ability to read, analyse, evaluate, produce communication in different formats, (2) information literacy, the ability to recognize when information is needed, and to locate, evaluate, effectively use and communicate information in various formats, (3) library literacy, the ability to utilize a library, (4) Freedom of Expression (FOE) and Freedom of Information (FOI) literacies, the ability to recognize and assert the basic human rights on access to information held by public bodies, and of free speech, (5) digital literacy, the ability to use digital technology and communication tools network to locate, evaluate, use and create information, (6) computer literacy, the ability to use, access and create information through a computer, (7) internet literacy, the ability to seek out information utilizing the internet, (8) games literacy, the ability to play, make or understand meanings with respect to games, (9) cinema literacy, the ability to understand and appreciate moving images, (10) television literacy, the ability to critically evaluate television content (11) news literacy, the ability to access, analyse, evaluate and participate in news' various forms, and (12) advertising literacy, the ability to critically decode advertising messages. These literacies are mapped out to support the learning and teaching of MIL as one would come across them in the process. It was also UNESCO's way of harmonizing the various literacies in the light of the converging delivery platforms; hence, the use of MIL covers all other literacies outlined in its ecology.

In addition, there are three MIL broad components which are also the bases of the UNESCO-developed MIL Competency Matrix under the Global MIL Assessment Framework: Country Readiness and Competencies (2013) Tier Two; these are Access, Evaluate and Create.

Media education has substantially matured in Western countries (Fedorov, 2003), especially in English-speaking countries (Kellner & Share, 2005; Cheung, 2009; Polakevičová & Lincényi, 2016). Polakevičová & Lincényi (2016) surfaced that Canada introduced media education in 1987; Australia also made media literacy as a compulsory component in their English subject in the 20th century. United Kingdom teaches critical thinking and analysis of media text as part of their English subject (Brestovancy, 2010 as cited in Polakevičová & Lincényi, 2016). In the United States (U.S.), while Fandelová & Lesková in 2010, as cited in Polakevičová & Lincényi (2016) reported that the country lags among English-speaking countries due to each state having its own administration, the U.S. Media Literacy Policy Report released in 2020 revealed that Ohio and Florida have the strongest media literacy education among K-12 schools. Additionally, the various approaches in media education from the protectionist approach (Kellner & Share, 2005; Polakevičová & Lincényi, 2016), to the shift to the empowerment paradigm such as MIL (Wilson, 2012; Cheung 2009; Cheung & Chau, 2017), critical media literacy (Kellner & Share, 2005), critical thinking (Wade, 2014; Fedorov, 2003) and sociocultural approaches (Fedorov, 2003; Polakevičová & Lincényi, 2016) also provide evidence to the state of media education among Western countries.

MIL: Asian Context

Although media education is still relatively young across Asian countries, their digital media use is quite high thereby creating problems (Cheung, 2009). The Global Digital Reports 2021 surface that the Philippines remains to be number one as regards hours spent on the internet despite the country's low internet connection speeds (Kemp, 2021). The report also reveals the relatively high media consumption of Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. This becomes problematic as media education should develop and mature over time, especially with the noticeable high rates of the countries' media consumption.

Moreover, the West heavily influenced media education in Asian societies. Japan started in 1992 with the Japanese-version of Ontario's Ministry of Education book, "Media Literacy" (Shibata, 2002). Canadian pioneer, Barry Duncan, has also been a prominent media education figure in Taiwan, Hong Kong and South Korea, while United Kingdom's David Buckingham, supervised Asian

post graduate students (Cheung, 2009). Hence, these Asian countries underwent the same Western pedagogic protectionist approach in its initial stage of media education. Like most Western countries, media education in Hong Kong (Cheung & Chau, 2017), and Singapore (Weninger et al., 2017) is integrated in their English curriculum.

MIL: The Philippine Context

While most western countries have a fully developed media education programs, Asian societies have yet to develop and mature. In the Philippines, media education is reflected in the lone MIL subject that started only in 2016, through the enactment of Republic Act No. 10533 that added senior high into the educational system. Hence, media education in the country is very much in its infancy.

The importance of MIL skills go beyond merely equipping people with skills in the consumption and production of media texts to empowering them to express themselves, their societal awareness (Lim & Nekmat, 2008), as well as their development in a democratic society (Jolls & Johnsen, 2017). In the Hunger Games Trilogy for example, Latham and Hollister (2014) found that the protagonist- narrator, Katniss Everdeen, overwhelmingly resonates among young people today because of her high levels of MIL skills – surviving the games, influencing oppressed people using her media spotlight, outsmarting the game developers, and sparking a revolution to topple an oppressive government – all because of her critical thinking coupled with her skilful use and evaluation of media texts. Media-and-information literate students have a more positive, but nuanced perspectives on journalism, and value decision-making about media messages (Hobbs et al., 2013; McDougall et al., 2015) that enable them to thrive in a rapidly-evolving mediascape (Bhatia, 2016).

However, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2016) report that the knowledge and skills students learn from the academe alarmingly fall short of the expected knowledge and skills – critical thinking, problem solving, communication and collaboration (Kinzer, 2010) which are also MIL competencies – needed in this 21st century environment. Yuan (2015) also found a striking disconnect between the students' meaning making through digital texts at home, and their digital literacy practices within their school. Voss (2011) explains that students today are like Midas surrounded by gold, but are not skilful enough at converting their ICT exposure into a functional “currency.”

Curriculum development has always been beset by challenges not only in terms of new perspectives and ICT development, but also along content and pedagogy (Alagaran, 2015). Kellner and Share (2005) suggest the development of curricula and pedagogies on literacies and competencies, in order for education to remain relevant. Hobbs (2011) likewise highlight media education's focus on the critical analysis of media texts, which is aptly interlinked with the primary goal of schools in helping the students acquire various MIL skills (Williams, 2015), that is instrumental to the learning transformation of the ever-changing digital environment (Thoman & Jolls, 2004), and is crucial to the development of the knowledge society (Lee, 2012).

Problem Statement

Since teachers are primary agents of change (UNESCO 2011, 2013) and play a key role in this 21st century learning environment (Gretter & Yadav, 2016), they need to ensure that their curriculum develops the much-needed MIL competencies, so their students can take full advantage of knowledge societies thereby becoming empowered global citizens (UNESCO, 2013). Morano (2014) stressed the glaring lack of research to guide teachers in the training of students equipped with 21st century competencies. Inan and Temur's survey (2012) of prospective teachers, surfaced that they had a low level of reaction to media texts. Capacitating prospective teachers with MIL competencies is critical for them to transmit these to tomorrow's workers (Felini, 2014). Empowering them can only be possible through MIL integration in the language majors of the Bachelor of Secondary Education, because although they have courses in Technology for Teaching and Learning in the new K-12 curriculum (CMO No. 75 s. 2017), there is an obvious lack of a cohesive and holistic MIL coverage in the said courses.

Conversely, Alagaran (2012) laments on the unbalanced BA Communication curriculum, which is concentrated on being good communicators and media producers, disregarding the fact that the students are also media consumers. CMO Number 35 series of 2017 indicate the numerous classes on media production and interpersonal communication in the BA Communication program, but there is no single subject or course that includes MIL in any of its course description. Alagaran (2015) further expresses the seeming lack of attention given to the consumer aspects of Communication students, as their curriculum only focuses on their being producers. With the dawn of prosumership, Communication students need to be critical and discriminating users of media texts (Alagaran, 2012) to facilitate their balanced formation as empowered media and communication practitioners in the future (Alagaran, 2015). He suggests a revisit of the Communication curriculum to make it more

responsive to the Post-2015 development agenda and to ensure that the future media practitioners possess a balanced MIL competencies.

Since the curriculum is the first step in the introduction of relevant MIL program in academic institutions (Wilson, 2012) that has been applied only in K-12 education (Koltay, 2011); and in the Philippines, only in Grade 11 or 12, there is an overwhelming need that MIL be also implemented as stand-alone course or through integration in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), specifically the Language and Communication programs. This is because the origins of media education lie in English teaching (Buckingham et al., 2005) which heavily utilizes media texts that is very much central to media education (Buckingham et al., 2005; Cheung & Chau, 2017).

With the rapidly changing ICT and media landscapes, acquiring the critical global competency, MIL, is non-negotiable. Though there are challenges in the implementation of an effective media education program, the greater concern, especially in the Philippines where MIL has just been implemented, is the notable need to ensure that it is integrated in the Language and Communication programs of HEIs. Hence, this study explores MIL in an Asian context, specifically the level of MIL competencies of graduating Language and Communication students in the Philippines, as measured in the adapted UNESCO MIL Competency Matrix (Tier 2). It specifically aims to answer:

What are the competency levels of graduating language and communication students along UNESCO's (2013) MIL Components:

- a. access;
- b. evaluate; and
- c. create?

This study will contribute to the academic literature by (1) recognizing the need to develop global MIL competencies needed in today's knowledge society, (2) addressing UNESCO's call for professionals as principal agents of change, as instruments to the cultivation of media and information literate citizens, as well as the identification of MIL strengths and weaknesses so that appropriate policies would be developed (3) encouraging CHED to make some policy changes on MIL, and (4) integrating future changes in the Language and Communication Programs.

Method

This research employed Descriptive Research Design to describe systematically and accurately the facts and characteristics of a given population or area of interest, provide an accurate portrayal of characteristics of a particular individual, situation or group; discover relationships between or among selected variables; and answer questions based on the ongoing events (Dulock, 1993) cited in Association of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nurses (2018).

There were 137 student-respondents who answered the research tool. They were the graduating students of the Bachelor of Secondary Education, majors in English (21) and Filipino (5), and Bachelor of Arts in Communication (111) at a university during the Academic Year 2017-2018.

To provide supplementary data, an interview with a UNESCO MIL expert based in the Philippines was also conducted.

Research Instruments

The major tool that was utilized is an assessment tool adapted from the MIL Assessment Framework, particularly, the detailed MIL Competency Matrix (Tier Two) developed by UNESCO in 2013. The Matrix is “for assessing competencies at the individual and institutional level” the results of which will enable the country or even the educational sector “to make informed decisions . . . for interventions aimed at the further development of MIL, by fostering an enabling environment and enhancing the competencies of their citizens” (p.18).

The adapted MIL Competency Survey is composed of three MIL components: Access, Evaluate and Create. Each having four major components; Access has four competencies with 28 performance criteria, Evaluate has four competencies associated with 42 performance criteria, and Create has four competencies connected with 35 performance criteria. Though the UNESCO tool had a total of 113 performance criteria, the adapted tool only had 102 as eight of the criteria were combined to create four sets, and five of the criteria were omitted as its applicability in the country’s context is repetitive (“Define” and “Recognize” the “need for information and media content” were phrased in the adapted survey as “I recognize my need for information and media content”; “Retrieves different types of information” and “Selects, organizes and holds onto the retrieved information and media content using appropriate technologies and tools” were phrased as “I select, organize and manage retrieved information and media content using appropriate technologies and tools.”; “Assumes that retrieved

information and media content could be useful in the future” and “Applies basic requirements of holding information and media content” were phrased as “I recognize that retrieved information and media content could be useful in the future.”; “Examines information and media content gathered, and its sources as well as media and information providers” and “Evaluates information and media content gathered, its sources and media and information providers” were phrased “I evaluate information and media content I gathered, including their sources.”), alluded to (“Formulates a general statement/question based on information need into a form of an active statement/question, vocalizes, writes down, types, constructs, expresses using any technique in an explicit and efficient manner” was deleted as it is implied in “Connects and consults with other individual groups, organizations, or levels to formulate a general statement/question” which was phrased as “I connect and consult other individuals, groups, organizations to formulate a general statement/question/solution.”; “Determines the availability, costs, time, benefits and applicability of acquiring the needed information and media content, applying the methods and strategies formulated above” was alluding to “Determines the methods and strategies for accessing information and media content” so it was phrased “I determine the method and strategy for accessing information and media content.”; “Accesses selected information and media content through a variety of media and other information providers” is also implied in “Explores, determines and situates the place/site where information and media content could be found and located” so it was phrased “I locate the physical and virtual place/cite where information and media could be found.”), or fuzzy (“Applies basic requirements of holding information and media content” and “Understands the importance of life cycle of information and media content for evaluation” were not included as its applicability to the country is low and that the respondents’ education curriculum does not address in part or in whole the statements identified; also, the respondents are not covered by the K to 12 curriculum as well as the MIL subject in senior high). These changes were approved by the three language experts who performed a content validity of the adapted tool. UNESCO explicitly states that the “national adaptation of questionnaires is recommended since countries can be at very different stages of development” (p. 72).

Furthermore, the tool utilized the three-point Likert scale that UNESCO (2013) proposed for the grading of the various MIL competency levels:

1. Basic – indicates that the “respondent has basic level of knowledge, training, or experience on MIL, but significant improvements are needed for effective application” (p. 60).

2. Intermediate – indicates that “the respondent has a good level of knowledge and skills acquired from practice and training on MIL, but there are gaps in certain areas” (p.60).
3. Advanced – indicates the “respondent has a very good level of knowledge and skills acquired from practice and training on MIL” (p. 60).

Though the tool was adapted, it still underwent content validity and reliability testing. Using the Aiken’s V Validity Coefficient, the computed validity coefficient is 0.98. This is greater than the threshold of 0.70; hence, the adapted survey questionnaire is assumed to be valid. The reliability testing with 32 BA Communication students from another University also yields “reliable” assessment, particularly:

Table 1
Reliability Analysis

Instrument	Reliability Tool	Reliability Coefficient	Assessment
Part I – Access	Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient	0.896	Reliable
Part II – Evaluate	Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient	0.906	Reliable
Part III – Create	Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient	0.888	Reliable
Parts I, II & III combined	Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient	0.954	Reliable

Research Procedures

Data Gathering

The researcher first sought the permission of the biggest University north of the Philippine capital; their school, as well as their departments of Professional Education, and the Languages and Communication. The said University was selected on the bases of (1) their program offerings that included both BA Communication and BS Education, (2) having the biggest student population, (3) and the city being the “educational capital of the north” (Damian, 2020). After the permission was obtained, details of the research were personally discussed with the respondents. Ethical standards were observed during the entire conduct of the study. At the onset, all the respondents were informed that their participation in the study was voluntary and that anonymity will be observed to protect their privacy.

After the willing participants were given orientation and were able to give their consent, the tool was administered. They were given ample time to answer

the tool to ensure that the data gathered were the true representations of their perceived level of MIL. No incentives were given to the participants.

To provide support to the data gathered from the respondents, an interview with a UNESCO MIL expert was sought. The researcher first obtained the permission of the expert for a possible sit-down recorded interview through a letter. After the expert gave his consent, the interview was scheduled.

Treatment of Data

The research problem was answered through a UNESCO (2013) three-point Likert scale:

Table 2

Assessment of Proficiency Levels for Grading the Various MIL Competencies

Level	Range	Description	Interpretation
1	1.00 – 1.66	Basic	Basic level of knowledge, training or experience on MIL, but significant improvements are needed for effective application.
2	1.67 – 2.33	Intermediate	Good level of knowledge and skills acquired from practice and training on MIL, but there are gaps in certain areas.
3	2.34 – 3.00	Advanced	Very Good level of knowledge and skills acquired from practice and training on MIL.

In addition to the aforementioned, an interview with a UNESCO MIL expert was also utilized. The information collected provided supporting data to the results that surfaced from the survey.

Ethical Consideration

Of extreme importance in any study is its adherence to ethical guidelines; hence, just like a MIL standard, the researcher sought to ensure that a systematic and honest approach was undertaken.

Since the major tool that was utilized is an assessment tool adapted from the UNESCO MIL Competency Matrix (Tier Two) under the MIL Assessment Framework, permission to adapt was sought through UNESCO MIL program specialist, Alton Grizzle. The permission was granted.

All the respondents were assured that their identities would remain confidential. The expert participant was also assured anonymity, despite his being easily identifiable. Also, to avoid bias, the researcher observed bracketing.

Results and Discussion

The General MIL Competency Levels of the Language and Communication Graduates

The general results of the MIL Competency Survey among graduating Language and Communication students yielded a general Intermediate level as can be seen in Table 3. While this may be a good sign, the self-assessment results also mean that the respondents themselves are not so proficient with the said competency as they feel they still have a room for improvement.

Table 3
General MIL Competency Levels

Competencies along the MIL Components	Mean	Description
1. Access	2.0266	Intermediate
2. Evaluation	2.0199	Intermediate
3. Creation	2.0210	Intermediate
Overall	2.0225	Intermediate

Since the respondents were born into a digital world, they are comfortable with the use and access of technological devices. The ubiquity of gadgets and other electronic equipment also add to the easy access of individuals to these. All these provide support as to why Access turned out to be the highest mean, despite all components being Intermediate.

Also, since the Intermediate competency level translate to being average; it follows that it can still be improved to ensure that the respondents are globally MIL competent especially that their career choices would not only greatly impact society’s unstoppable encounter with media messages, but also the next generation of workers.

MIL Component 1: Access

Under UNESCO’s MIL framework (2013), the Access component pertains to the ability of utilizing suitable technologies in order to access, retrieve and store media texts. Retrieval of which is not only limited to the use of the

internet, but also includes information and content from libraries, personal files, museums or from other sources that may be physically or electronically stored.

Table 4
General Competency Levels along Access

MIL Major Competencies on Access	Mean	Description
a. Definition and articulation of a need for media and information	2.0839	Intermediate
b. Search and location of information and media content	1.9258	Intermediate
c. Access to information, media content and information providers	2.1332	Intermediate
d. Retrieval and retention of information and media content	1.9620	Intermediate
Overall	2.0266	Intermediate

As can be seen from Table 4, the respondents have an overall *Intermediate* competency level across all the four major competencies. This indicates that they have a “good level of knowledge and skills acquired from practice and training on MIL, but there are gaps in certain areas” (UNESCO Global MIL Assessment Framework, 2013 p. 60).

The same table further shows that the respondents obtained the highest mean along the major competency *Access to information, media content and information provider*. The finding correlates to the advances in technology which simplified the finding and retrieving of media and information texts. The ubiquity of media also contributes to the ease of access that individuals experience. This result is also supported by the Global Digital 2021 Report (Kemp, 2021) which surfaced the steady growth of internet users around the globe. The same study reports that Filipinos spend the longest time on the internet with an average of 10 hours per day. Among the three MIL components, Access, is the foundational step for an individual to move on to the spiral progression of Evaluation, which necessitates critical thinking and analysis, before moving on to the advanced skill of Creation, which involves complex adherence to existing codes, standards, ethics and laws. The ability of one to effectively and appropriately access media content will impact his or her process skills of Evaluation and ethical Creation.

As regards the second Access major competency, Table 5 shows a glaring result in the performance criterion, *I recognize the role of metadata*, as respondents assessed themselves as only having a Basic level. This means that they recognize that “significant improvements are needed” (UNESCO Global MIL Assessment Framework, 2013 p. 60) by them. The term – metadata – is

Table 5

Access: Search and Location of Information and Media Content

Search and location of information and media content	Basic		Intermediate		Advanced		Mean	Description
	1		2		3			
	f	%	f	%	f	%		
a. I use search strategies to find appropriate media and information sources.	28	20.4	83	60.6	26	19.0	1.99	Intermediate
b. I locate the physical and virtual place/site where information and media content could be found.	30	21.9	77	56.2	30	21.9	2.00	Intermediate
c. I evaluate the author/producer of information and media content I use.	49	35.8	63	46.0	25	18.2	1.82	Intermediate
d. I recognize the role of metadata.	84	61.3	48	35.0	5	3.6	1.42	Basic
e. I prioritize potential information sources by type of information source, date, topic, author, keywords, etc.	25	18.2	85	62.0	27	19.7	2.01	Intermediate
f. I recognize the diversity of information and media content provided by information providers and media.	13	9.5	85	62.0	39	28.5	2.19	Intermediate
g. I distinguish formats of information and media resources.	44	32.1	70	51.1	23	16.8	1.85	Intermediate
h. I recognize the importance and relevance of tools for locating information and media content.	29	21.2	79	57.7	29	21.2	2.00	Intermediate
i. I recognize the limitations, challenges and possibilities of locating information and media content due to technical, legal, economic, social-cultural, political and other reasons.	26	19.0	83	60.6	28	20.4	2.01	Intermediate
j. I refine my search strategy, if required.	37	27.0	79	57.7	21	15.3	1.88	Intermediate
k. I locate information sources, using appropriate tools.	29	21.2	79	57.7	29	21.2	2.00	Intermediate

confusing to the respondents as the respondents directly ask the researcher to clarify the term. Cole (2012) reveals that metadata is hard to define as it is commonly described as “data about data” where data may be mistakenly construed as *information* instead of the raw numbers captured from a specific standard (Brown, 2019). Gilliland (2008) also states that metadata is fuzzy; thus, hard to define. Mayernick and Acker (2018) reveal that the

definitions between data and metadata create the confusion.

Hence, it can be gathered that since the respondents are not technically adept of ICT terminologies like “metadata,” the overt low competency level that they rated themselves with is reflective of the term’s fuzziness. Ofcom (2017) surfaced that adults have an unclear understanding of websites’ use of data and metadata and this obscures their confidence online. Quite clearly, confusion on the definition of a term impacts reader comprehension.

Metadata’s importance cannot be denied; people deal with it on a daily basis as both traditional and new media are metadata-laden. From a book’s metadata found in its cover page, table of contents, index, etc.; product packaging labels that indicates its contents, weight, expiration dates; to a Twitter account that contains 144 metadata fields such as the tweeter’s screen name, user identification, Uniform Resource Locator (URL), geolocation, favorites, and followers, among others – metadata indeed yields rich information about data. As metadata is mined by marketing researchers to target their markets, used by investigative reporters and fact-checkers to validate sources and corroborate information they gathered, it can also be utilized by data miners for unwarranted surveillance thereby threatening people’s privacy, cybersecurity and democracy.

Because information technology and metadata are inseparable, understanding metadata is necessary for one to be a truly empowered digital citizen and to be more circumspect in the roles and impacts that metadata play in our online and offline lives.

MIL Component 2: Evaluate

Table 6
General Competency Levels along Evaluation

MIL Major Competencies on Evaluation	Mean	Description
a. Understanding of information and media	2.2839	Intermediate
b. Assessment of information and media content, and media and information providers	1.9248	Intermediate
c. Evaluation of information and media content, and media and information providers	1.9588	Intermediate
d. Organization of information and media content, and media and information providers	1.9165	Intermediate
Overall	2.0199	Intermediate

The Evaluation component of MIL denotes the core skills of an individual in appraising, assessing and understanding of media texts critically and competently. The respondents assessed themselves with Intermediate level in all its four major competencies.

The results indicate that living in this media-saturated world necessitates knowing how to read media texts (Hobbs & Frost, 2003; Inan & Temur, 2012) as not being able to effectively do equates to lost opportunities (Kellner & Share, 2005). Looking at a magazine advertisement for weight loss for example, one may be able to see a compelling statement like “lose 10 pounds in 3 days” with accompanying before- and after- product intake photo of the model. If the person has knowledge of persuasion techniques and photo manipulation, s/he will be able to detect the use of glittering generalities or photoshopping inconsistencies which will stop him/her from purchasing the product. Media education’s goal is to develop students who are not only critical, but are also reflective thinkers (Wade, 2014) as they must learn to operate beyond knowledge and understanding. Students must be able to interpret media texts and make informed decisions and judgment, reflective of skilful MIL prosumers (UNESCO, 2013).

Hence, though the general Evaluation competency level of the respondents is intermediate, it can still be upgraded. UNESCO (2013) highlights that the MIL competencies exist in a continuum which can be developed and improved over time.

It is also quite interesting that Table 7 surfaces a statistical tie – *Basic* and *Intermediate* – in the performance criteria, *I create arguments for the drawn conclusions*. These suggest that respondents recognize their need to improve on their case building and conclusion-making. The results are corroborated by the UNESCO MIL expert who said that MIL competencies allow prosumers to be engaged and empowered for them to make informed decisions based on their critical discernment of media texts. He added that making informed choices boosts the country’s growth in economy, politics and socio-cultural aspects. Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2016) indeed emphasize the glaring mismatch between the knowledge and skills students learn from the academe, and the expected knowledge and skills essential to the digital environment. Yuan (2015) also surfaces the salient disconnect between the students’ meaning-making of media texts at home, and their MIL practices within their school curricula.

Table 7

Evaluation Competency Levels along Evaluation of Information and Media Content, and Media and Information Providers

Evaluation of information and media content, and media and information providers	Basic		Interme- diate		Advanced		Mea n	Description
	1		2		3			
	f	%	f	%	f	%		
a. I recognize the limitations and subjectivity of evaluation.	27	19.7	90	65.7	20	14.6	1.95	Intermediate
b. I identify and synthesize related needs/ issues and ask additional questions.	33	24.1	95	69.3	9	6.6	1.82	Intermediate
c. I evaluate information and media content I gathered, including their sources.	23	16.8	78	56.9	36	26.3	2.09	Intermediate
d. I compare information from different media and information sources.	14	10.2	71	51.8	52	38.0	2.28	Intermediate
e. I draw conclusions from information and media content gathered, using various techniques, and I make judgment thereafter	32	23.4	81	59.1	24	17.5	1.94	Intermediate
f. I create arguments for the drawn conclusions.	61	44.5	61	44.5	15	10.9	1.66	Basic

Quite notable too, is the result shown in Table 8 as respondents assessed themselves with a *Basic* competency along, *I demonstrate the importance of indexing selected information and media content through indexation.*

The result along *indexation* conveys that significant improvements are needed by the respondents in terms of knowledge and skills alongside indexation, while some improvements are still necessary alongside other organization competencies. Weise (2010) defines indexing as the “process of capturing relevant metadata associated with your records” (para. 1). Closely related to indexing is metadata, which also surfaced to be of basic competency level among the respondents. With metadata considered by scholars as a fuzzy concept (Cole, 2012; Gilliland, 2008; Mayernick & Acker, 2018), it is not surprising that indexing is also confusing among the respondents because of its connection to metadata. PC Mag (2018) emphasize that indexing characteristics are so complex as content is organized using indexing tags and metadata that link these to other content types. Hence, the importance of indexing among the respondents is

obscured by its connections with tagging systems and metadata. Jolls and Johnsen (2018) suggest that MIL process skills (e.g. understanding metadata roles and indexation) are essential for citizens to efficiently manage information, wisely consume and responsibly produce media texts.

Table 8
Evaluation Competency Levels along Organization of Information and Media Content, and Media and Information Providers

Organization of information and media content, and media and information providers	Basic 1		Intermediate 2		Advanced 3		Mean	Description
	f	%	f	%	f	%		
a. I outline/write my own notes and I summarize.	31	22.6	58	42.3	48	35.0	2.12	Intermediate
b. I revise, refine, frame and narrow down my problem/ issue /question.	34	24.8	69	50.4	34	24.8	2.00	Intermediate
c. I group and organize information and media content.	25	18.2	77	56.2	35	25.5	2.07	Intermediate
d. I demonstrate the importance of indexing selected information and media content through indexation.	69	50.4	58	42.3	10	7.3	1.57	Basic
e. I use tools and format for organization of information and media content.	41	29.9	80	58.4	16	11.7	1.82	Intermediate
f. I compile relevant information and media content based on evaluation for future use.	34	24.8	69	50.4	34	24.8	2.00	Intermediate
g. I rewrite information and media content from one format to another.	54	39.4	62	45.3	21	15.3	1.76	Intermediate
h. I synthesize information and media content from several formats such as print, audio, video.	33	24.1	75	54.7	29	21.2	1.97	Intermediate

MIL Competency 3: Create

Creation is defined by UNESCO (2013) as the ability to master media production know-how, new knowledge and effectively communicate with others

in an ethical and effective manner. This also involves the ability to display adherence to intellectual property as well as the participation and monitoring of democratic processes.

Table 9 presents that respondents have an Intermediate competency level in all four major competencies.

Table 9
General Competency Levels along Creation

MIL Major Competencies on Create	Mean	Description
a. Creation of knowledge and creative expression	1.9606	Intermediate
b. Communication of information, media content and knowledge in an ethical and effective manner	2.1102	Intermediate
c. Participation in societal-public activities as active citizen	2.0164	Intermediate
d. Monitoring influence of information, media content, knowledge production and use	1.9920	Intermediate
Overall	2.0210	Intermediate

However, in terms of the *application of international standards, requirements, recommendations for new knowledge in an ethical manner*, the respondents have a *Basic* competency level as can be seen in Table 10. It could be established that if media made it easier for people to consume content, it also made it easier for people to create content (Jolls & Johnsen, 2017). With no adequate MIL competencies, problems on the irresponsible and unethical use of media are sure to prevail (Jolls & Johnsen, 2017) resulting in ethical conflicts (Jenkins, 2006).

Since MIL demands the ethical use of ICT, as well as ethical and democratic participation in intercultural dialogues (Wilson, 2012), an MIL process framework to guide content creators to produce materials within the legal and moral bounds, is crucial. Alagaran’s Explore, Engage, Empower model (2015) provides a general process framework of understanding, utilizing and practicing MIL; it is a guide to media text creators to produce materials within moral and legal bounds. UNESCO (2010) outlines that MIL’s ultimate goal is to empower individuals to make their own decisions, be more engaged in both civic and economic life, and to move beyond knowledge broker dependence to becoming knowledge builders – all within the confines of international standards and ethics of knowledge creation.

Table 10
Creation of Knowledge and Creative Expression

Creation of knowledge and creative expression	Basic		Intermediate		Advanced		Mean	Description
	1		2		3			
	f	%	f	f	%	f		
a. I recognize that existing info. & media content could be combined with original thought to produce new info. & knowledge.	18	13.1	83	60.6	36	26.3	2.13	Intermediate
b. I organize the information & media content gathered, in a manner that supports the purposes and format of new info. media content or knowledge.	29	21.2	86	62.8	22	16.1	1.95	Intermediate
c. I recognize the importance of socio-cultural aspects of the target audience, such as gender, race, age, etc.	15	10.9	58	42.6	64	46.7	2.36	Advanced
d. I present info. & media content gathered using tools formats into a new context.	32	23.4	89	65.0	16	11.7	1.88	Intermediate
e. I reflect and, if needed, revise the creation process.	32	23.4	74	54.0	31	22.6	1.99	Intermediate
f. I apply international standards, requirements, recommendations for new knowledge creation in an ethical manner.	67	48.9	54	39.4	16	11.7	1.63	Basic
g. I recognize the importance of info. accessibility standards & recommendations for reaching out to target audience.	25	18.2	84	61.3	28	20.4	2.02	Intermediate
h. I customize information & media content, applying info accessibility standards & recommendations.	45	32.8	83	60.6	9	6.6	1.74	Intermediate
i. I use various tools for the creation & aesthetic presentation of new knowledge in various formats.	49	35.8	65	47.4	23	16.8	1.81	Intermediate
j. I recognize that new knowledge may have various far-reaching purposes & consequences.	26	19.0	72	52.6	39	28.5	2.09	Intermediate

International standards are established for uniformity of practices for prosumers in this global village. But some people may not be well aware of these standards; thus, may result in non-compliance. Also, ethics, a difficult concept (Velasquez et al., 2010) becomes more complicated with cultural relativism (Harman, 2014).

Consequently, CHED has identified MIL as a national priority under the Competence category as mandated in CMO 3 series of 2016. This highlights the need for Language and Communication students to be equipped with advanced MIL competencies for them to be critical, ethical and responsible prosumers of media texts.

While the study positively surfaced a general intermediate MIL competency levels, self-reported assessments may not always surface actual performance indicators. Since the tool entails self-reporting, the respondents assessed their own competencies to the degree by which they think they are able to perform each criteria (Hargittai, 2009). Lavrakas (2008) notes that respondents may not be very willing to comply even if survey researchers attempt to gather accurate and truthful accounts; hence, their tendency is to misreport consciously or subconsciously for self-concept protection, social desirability issues, or embarrassment and fear that such disclosure may bring them harm. This misreporting risk (Hargittai, 2005) lead scholars to not properly estimate correlates (Ansolabehere & Hersh, 2012) and appropriately make their conclusions (Lavrakas, 2008).

Moreover, we also have to consider that an intermediate MIL competency level vary across regions and communities (Catts, 2010) and that what constitutes a satisfactory level will change over time as changes in technological infrastructure may require new MIL competencies (UNESCO, 2010).

As regards to the new K-12 curriculum where senior high school students take MIL as a stand-alone subject, the UNESCO MIL expert revealed that the Department of Education admits to have “committed a blunder in the MIL curriculum” as its emphasis is on educational technology. Though part of MIL is teaching using media, Consortium for Media Literacy (2011) cautions that “media literacy is not teaching with media, it’s teaching about media” (p.1). Media education is engaging the students in an empowerment spiral of awareness, analysis, reflection and action – as students themselves can become significant sources of insight and knowledge (Consortium for Media Literacy, 2011).

Conclusion and Recommendation for Future Studies

This study has provided a portraiture of the MIL competency levels of Language and Communication students in the Philippines. It also offered a glimpse of MIL in the country both in the institutional and individual levels. Though the study did not present a nationwide survey, it does provide pertinent data regarding respondents' access, evaluation and creation of media texts in this age of prosumership.

In a country where MIL has just been recently instigated, the results of this study may be utilized to enhance existing MIL programs or serve as a springboard for the integration of MIL into the college curriculum, especially for the Language and Communication programs who would greatly impact tomorrow's teachers and communication professionals.

With the ubiquity of media and speed of information, HEIs have the academic, moral, civic and ethical duties to prepare the workforce of tomorrow and equip them with the necessary set of competencies that lead them to become empowered digital citizens actively operating in a democratic society. While MIL is not a new concept, concerted efforts must be made to ensure that this composite set of twenty-first century competencies driven by technology will enable students and teachers alike to critically engage with the converging modes of media and information.

Since media and information change over time, it may be worthy to adapt or develop a MIL competency survey that will cater to the changing times. It will also be interesting to make a comparative analysis of the competency levels of the old-curriculum graduates to that of the K to 12 curriculum. Exploring the lived experiences of Language and Communication students, may also be a further study.

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