Mapping the media education approaches in instructional materials development: Conjunctions and disjunctions

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative inquiry centered on the critical exploration of media education approaches that guided the praxis of student assessment reform, particularly textbook task design. Correspondingly, this instructional media research is predicated on the fundamental premise that textbooks and the student tasks contained therein are informed and shaped by the academic authors’ positionalities, paradigms, and pedagogies. By focusing on the purposiveness of designing textbook tasks as a social practice, this research was able to identify and unpack the conjunctions as well as disjunctions of what the academic authors as media producers intend the students to learn, answer, perform, tackle, and act upon in relation to the media education approach(es) that the former adopt and implement. Drawing on Kellner and Share’s (2007) classifications (i.e., “protectionist, media arts education, media literacy movement, critical media literacy”), the study sought to identify and make critical sense of the nuances of these four media education approaches when applied in conceptualizing and developing textbook tasks in Media and Information Literacy instructional materials within the context of the Philippine education and development realities.

Keywords: media education approaches, curricular ideologies, instructional materials development, assessment reform, critical media literacy.
INTRODUCTION

This critico-evaluative review of the present Media and Information Literacy textbooks is unquestionably a policy imperative considering that the subject of interest covers the preliminary batch (i.e., first and second editions) of the published instructional materials since the course was first offered under the Philippine K-12 (Kinder to Grade 12) basic education curriculum. Given its wide adoption as a pedagogical tool, textbook can potentially influence and shape the learning experience of students through the lessons it presents, the issues it mediates, and the tasks it prescribes. This education policy review is envisioned to contribute to the goal of improving the future editions of the existing set of textbooks as well as guiding the production of the subsequent set of new publication titles in the Philippines and in other similarly situated context. Ultimately, this qualitative inquiry aims to play a humble part in academic policy development, publication excellence, and assessment reform in the Philippine education sector by advocating for a critical and change-oriented media and information literacy education. Within this context, creative and critical media and information literacy is conceived as a transformative approach that seeks not only to produce media outputs and participate in the broader media ecosystem but also problematize the social forces and structures that perpetuate disempowering ideologies, discourses, knowledge regimes, representations, pedagogies, policies, and practices.

In the Philippines, Media and Information Literacy textbooks are produced mainly by private commercial publishing firms. Within this setup, textbook authors are privately commissioned by publishing houses to work on a particular subject area intended for a specific grade/year level. In producing the manuscript, the academic authors as content specialists are guided by the Philippine education department’s curriculum guide (CG) as well as the publishing firm’s in-house production and editorial policies. In this context, the crucial decision of what media education approach to adopt by the academic authors is conceived to be influenced by the interplay of micro (i.e., personal), meso (i.e., institutional), and macro (i.e., societal) factors. Incidentally, the decisions and choices that the textbook authors make as educators and curriculum implementers have corresponding implications in the discursive, pedagogical, and practical terms.

Early implementation difficulties and dilemmas

In the study of Bautista (2021, p. 22), it was revealed that the “lack of preparedness and inadequacy of materials” in Media and Information Literacy during the initial years of its implementation forced some teachers to resort to “familiar strategies” (i.e., orthodox pedagogical approaches). In the same research, Bautista (2021, p. 10) indicated that “there were few books aligned with the Department of Education’s curriculum guide” and that “private schools found it difficult to teach the subject because they felt that their books were inadequate.” It was also revealed that Media and Information Literacy teachers had a difficult time conceptualizing and formulating “relevant and appropriate performance task activities” to meet the learning objectives of the Media and Information Literacy curriculum guide (Bautista, 2021, p. 9), thereby rendering the designing and development of useful textbook tasks a pressing demand among classroom teachers. It is also within this localized context that a responsive, appropriate, relevant, inclusive, and engaging set of textbook tasks becomes a necessary and compelling element of instructional materials for a relatively new subject offering. In the same study, Bautista (2021, p. 5) discovered that the selection and assignment of academic personnel to teach media and information literacy is mainly in consideration of the curriculum’s technical nature (i.e., “text, visual, and multimedia”), thus undermining the socio-economic, political, cultural, and ethical dimensions of the course. As such, this finding points to the overriding need to make the instructional materials strong in media text analysis, critical inquiry, and civic application.

Media literacy education problems and pitfalls

As an embodied curriculum, the role of textbook is indispensable in carrying out effective and grounded teaching and learning. It expands and deepens the curriculum as well as provides context to the concepts and constructs for a more situated understanding and application. However, the promise and potential of textbook is undermined when academic publishers and authors fail to render the conceptualization of the instructional materials and learning assessments context-conscious, critical, and civic-oriented. In addition to this longstanding limitation is the lack of awareness about the problems and pitfalls in making sense of media education as a social practice.
Apparently, the development of media literacy education does not proceed steadily and unchallenged. As a politico-communicative act, it is also subject to intense contradictions. Media scholar David Buckingham (2019) argued about the three main pitfalls in media education. First is the tendency of media education to assume a strong "protectionist" stance and policing role. This approach, according to Buckingham (2019, p. 66), may "wean children off media altogether". Correspondingly, it is also perceived by learners themselves as imposing, rigid and controlling, thereby depriving them of personal autonomy and political agency. Second is the premise that media education serves as a panacea of sort in unmasking and confronting mainstream propaganda and information dysfunctions. This assumption, he contended, presupposes that learners will automatically gain political awareness when exposed to alternative principles and practices, failing to take into serious account that consciousness-raising and political education involve a complex, dialectical, and protracted process.

Last is the argument that the “advent of Media Studies 2.0” where students now are fully exposed and immersed would instinctively and automatically enable them “to become creative, to express themselves, and to achieve liberation.” He forewarned that this notion creates a wrong impression that in the era of digital transformation the teaching of creativity and critical thinking becomes redundant and hence a pointless exercise. It can then be argued that these three interanimiting media education pitfalls can be tackled by media education approaches that are promotive of human agency, ideological education, and lifelong learning.

Curriculum ideologies and paradigms

Textbooks are concrete embodiments of the curriculum. As politico-cultural artifacts, textbooks are influenced and shaped by curriculum ideologies and, by and large, these ideological underpinnings are also reflected and communicated in the rendering of the instructional materials either as a coherent whole (i.e., conjunctions) or in contradictory terms (i.e., disjunctions). According to curriculum specialist Michael Stephen Schiro (2013), every curriculum ideology possesses specific set of assumptions about idealized knowledge types, learning styles, instructional modalities, and assessment strategies in relation to the political standpoint and value system that it espouses. With the primary goal of organizing the body of constructs and principles surrounding the teaching-learning process and practice, Schiro (2013) outlined and expounded on the four curriculum ideologies, namely (1) Scholar Academic, (2) Social Efficiency, (3) Learner-Centered, and (4) Social Reconstruction. Scholar Academic ideology subscribes to the idea that the refined knowledge that was developed over the decades must be taught and handed down to the younger generations of scholars, with the two-pronged objectives of (1) advancing the academic discipline and (2) broadening its base of scholar-adherents. This is programmed through a system of formal, rigid, and hierarchical structure and mechanism. Social Efficiency ideology believes that the end-goal of formal education is to efficiently and effectively facilitate the students’ acquisition of practical knowledge, skills, and values to fulfill the functional requirements of the workplace and technical demands of the prospective clients. Learner-Centered ideology as the name implies accords central importance to the inherent attributes and potentialities of the students in determining, defining, and influencing their learning experience. This learning takes place within the context of the students’ interaction with their physico-geographic, politico-economic, and socio-academic environments. Lastly, Social Reconstruction ideology works on the fundamental premise that the structural flaws in the education system and the social context where it is historically situated require critical interrogation in the broader scale and of thoroughgoing character. Within this context, education (i.e., media education in the case of this social inquiry) is conceived as a “social process through which society is reconstructed”, and can thus be alternatively and collectively conceived, mediated, and transformed (Schiro, 2013, p. 6).

Despite the long-standing contradictions between and among these curricular ideologies, one cannot discount the fact that there are also identifiable points of intersection wherein it is possible to constructively combine elements and themes in developing new and more socio-politically viable and socio-culturally aligned frameworks and approaches. For instance, the place-oriented attributes of Learner-Centered ideology complement well the empowering pedagogical orientation of the Social Reconstruction ideology to serve the goal of achieving a culturally appropriate, socially relevant, and inclusive media education.

Based on the foregoing, (curricular) ideology therefore not only provides individuals and institutions a subjective lens though which to interpret and represent the social (and academic) world but also the action
component to determine “what it ought to be” (Steger, 2003, p. 93). Consistent with the Social Reconstruction framework, ideology provides a “guide and compass for social and political action” (Steger, 2003, p. 93) and therefore serves also as a unifying thread to collectively carry out the much-desired educational and social change. Given its strong transformative orientation, this non-orthodox curriculum ideology also affords the researchers to critically examine the commitment and firmness of curriculum implementors (i.e., textbook authors forming part of them) in leveraging the potential of media and information literacy textbook tasks to interrogate the prevailing social structure and advance a new and alternative media, education, and social order.

Regrettably, the inhibiting nature of mainstream pedagogy only provides the students with very limited opportunity to shape, determine, and assert their own learning process. This pertains to the tasks with very restrictive instructions leaving no room for student creativity, initiative, and agency. Essentially, learning also depends heavily on the instructional design that is planned and adopted by the textbook author. In directed inquiry, the learners rigidly follow the detailed procedure and guide questions laid down by the textbook task. Under guided inquiry, learners are afforded the opportunity to formulate the process (or part/s of the process) in carrying out the task. Through open inquiry, the learners independently conceptualize the specific objectives, develop the detailed procedures, and formulate the particular questions based on the textbook task’s general instruction. The roles of the teachers and students across these three levels of inquiry, therefore, vary significantly in terms of extent, influence, and impact.

**FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY**

As a “mobilizational and inspirational force” in the movement for social change, ideology “enables people to achieve what are otherwise seemingly unimaginable and unattainable goals” (Tayag, n.d.; Ecktein, 1975 as cited in Tayag, n.d.). Ideology, therefore, emboldens individuals and groups to (1) interrogate pressing issues in question, (2) imagine an alternative future, and (3) mobilize their ranks into collective reflective action. Within the parameter of this study, ideology is also conceived to underpin the curriculum frameworks, media education approaches, and genre norms that govern textbook writing and textbook task design. As a theoretical and methodological bases for this qualitative research, critical discourse analysis was employed considering its “multiplicity of analysis”, “plurality of approach”, and “multiplicity of conceptions” (Al Maghlouth, 2017, pp. 56, 57, 69), thus allowing the researcher to explore and examine the text (i.e., textbook task), the social practice (i.e., media education approach of the textbook authors), and the broader context (i.e., educational and development ecologies).

**Media education approaches and frameworks**

Media scholars Douglas Kellner and Jeff Share (2007) forwarded their conceptualization of four media education approaches upon which the academic authors and their textbook tasks were examined in this qualitative media research. The first one being the protectionist approach which argues that the role of media education is to “inoculate people against the dangers of media manipulation and addiction” (Kellner & Share, 2007, p. 2). Kellner and Share (2007) argued that the ideologies from both sides of the political spectrum instrumentalize formal media education to “blame the media”, i.e., conservatives viewing media as a threat to society’s moral fabric while some of the progressive segments attributing to media the rise of ultra-individualism and ultra-consumerism. The second approach pertains to media arts education which centers on the creative, aesthetic, and technical dimensions of media production and consumption, leading to the tendency of “favoring individualistic self-expression over socially conscious analysis” (Kellner & Share, 2007, p. 3). The third approach refers to the media literacy movement which accords heavy premium on the composite set of literacy skills (i.e., media literacy, information literacy, technological literacy, digital literacy, library literacy, etc.) but is found wanting of the socio-historical and socio-ideological analysis needed to problematize the “role of language and communication to define relationships of power and domination” (Kellner & Share, 2007, p. 4). Critical media literacy is the fourth approach and the alternative one which they earnestly advocate for in engendering education, communication, and media activism. Consistent with the notion that literacy involves “family of practices”, critical media literacy integrates some of the viable attributes of the three previous approaches but with particular emphasis on “ideology critique”, “politics of representation”, and “alternative media production” (Keller & Share, 2007, pp. 4-5). As a multi-perspectival inquiry, critical media literacy employs various literacies, technologies, and tools to surface the narratives of the marginalized and privilege their
subdued voices. This runs parallel with the critical discourse inquiry of Al Maghlouth (2017) where he strategically utilized a multileveled approach that combined textual, intertextual, and socio-cognitive analysis in making critical sense of women and social change as represented in blogposts.

In this sense, the adoption of critical perspective in examining media form and content is valuable in producing learners who are equipped with analytical and evaluative skills. Critical thinking enables the students to become conscious and reflective about the knowledge and information that they acquire in school and through media. Along this line, critical media text analysis allows the discovery of new perspectives about the text (and its context) that may not be readily apparent through plain reading or that may not be achievable by only employing traditional pedagogical approaches and learning modalities.

**Discourse communities and subcommunities**

This qualitative textbook research also adopted the concept of *discourse community* defined by linguist John Swales (1990) as a collectivity of individuals with shared discourses understood and communicated as a coherent set of identities, subjectivities, values, goals, practices, genres, and language styles. Within this parameter, terminologies and jargons also form part of what make up a discourse community. For instance, the specific academic sector where the textbook writers in the field of media and communication belong would constitute as a distinct discourse community. It can also be assumed that in a particular discourse community there are also subcultures within them, i.e., *discourse sub-communities* (e.g., mainstream media studies vis-à-vis critical media studies, media arts education vis-à-vis critical media literacy, among others). Correspondingly, the process of critically making sense of discourse communities and subcommunities enabled this researcher to identify the media education approaches that the academic authors employed in conceptualizing, formulating, and designing textbook tasks.

**Research procedure**

The commercial mass production of Media and Information Literacy textbooks was in response to the pressing demand to provide instructional materials for MIL. The intended readers are Grades 11 and 12 who are believed to be digital natives and are therefore massive consumers and producers of media content. The period of textbook production covered by this study is from 2016 to 2019. With only seven textbooks included in this study, the result then does not reflect the entire publication and instructional terrain of media and information literacy education. However, considering the qualitative nature of this media education inquiry and instead of aiming for generalizability, the researcher endeavored to unearth and examine the imbedded and otherwise concealed subjectivities and complexities of designing student tasks and assessments. With the objective of mapping the media education approaches in designing and developing textbook tasks, this research procedure was adopted.

1. Identified the list of Media and Information Literacy textbooks that were in circulation during the study period.
2. Procured the titles with the broadest circulation and limited the scope of the study to this shortlist: “Media and Information Literacy: Empowering the Discerning Audiences” (Alagaran, 2019, Abiva Publishing House); “From Cave to Cloud: Media and Information Literacy for Today” (Campos, 2016, Phoenix Publishing); “Media and Information Literacy” (Cantor, 2019, Vibal Group); “Media and Information Literacy” (Liquigan, 2016, Diwa); Media and Information Literacy: Enhancing Education through Effective Communication (Magpile, 2016, Intelligente Publishing); “Media and Information Literacy: Being a B.E.S.T. Digital Citizen for Senior High School” (Yuvienco, 2017, C&E Publishing); and “Media and Information Literacy” (Zarate, 2016, Rex Bookstore).
3. Double-checked the textbooks for missing pages and went on with the skimming and scanning of the textbook task sections to preliminarily identify the emerging patterns of media education approaches based on the existing categories of Kellner and Share (2007). The analysis and categorization of the data according to specific media education approaches was carried out iteratively and solely by the researcher.
4. Conducted the close and critical reading of the textbook tasks and proceeded with the coding, categorization, theming, and analysis employing Kellner and Share’s classification of the four media education approaches. To ensure plausibility and dependability, this research also encompassed the textbook authors’ (a) preface that describes the section and subsection of the textbook tasks, (b) prelude to every student task and learning activity,
(c) situationer for each case analysis, (d) instantiation of context in the simulation exercises as well as the (e) required and recommended reading and viewing tasks as subjects of analysis or enrichment materials.

This qualitative inquiry on message and context, however, will not cover the reception and perception of the teachers and students based on their actual use of the instructional materials (i.e., the assigning and carrying out of the prescribed textbook tasks). This limitation serves as an opportunity for future studies which this same researcher or other communication and media scholars can pursue in the future.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Underpinnings and embodiments of media education approaches

Most of the authors are affiliated with universities and colleges as educators, handling courses in Communication, English, Media Studies, and/or Film Studies, among others. In myriad of ways and in varying degrees, the University of the Philippines (UP) background of all the featured authors appeared to have contributed to the social and philosophical grounding of the textbook task conceptualization in terms of discursive orientation and pedagogical approach. Most of the authors have also obtained advanced degrees in Communication, Broadcast Communication, and Media Studies, with two of them holding doctoral degrees (i.e., Dr. Alagaran and Dr. Zarate) as of this writing.

OBSERVABLY, the academic authors with previous employment in broadcast media, specifically in major television networks, make productive use of these media outfits’ content as case studies for media text analysis in both or either of the technico-functional and/or critico-evaluative dimension(s) such as in the cases of Liquigan (2016), Zarate (2016), and Cantor (2019).

Alagaran’s engagement with the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as a consultant on media and information literacy has considerably shaped the framework which guided his writing of the textbook and, by extension, the formulation of the textbook tasks. As a media scholar and educator, Alagaran (2019) adopts the triple E of Media and Information Literacy model which he himself originally developed. In this holistic model, Alagaran (2019) views the set of media and information literacy competencies being classified into three areas of application, i.e., explore (“identify, access, and retrieve information and media skillfully”), engage (“analyze and evaluate media and information critically”), and empower (e.g., “create or produce, share or communicate, and use information and media content ethically, safely, and responsibly for decision-making and taking-action”).

As a knowledge management (KM) consultant, Yuvienco (2017) holds an academic degree in statistics and business administration and this complementary background also manifests strongly in his textbook tasks and assessments, especially on topics pertaining to emerging digital media and technologies. Believing that “information and communication technology is a potent tool to bridge cultural/generational divides”, Yuvienco’s (2017) tasks reflect the need to study and document indigenous knowledge and indigenous media as a strategy in promoting cultural heritage preservation and management. Yuvienco’s approach also gives central importance to the technological dimension of media literacy education as reflected in his strong interest on e-learning, instructional technology, and innovative pedagogy. He organized the textbook structure using the Build, Engage, Sustain, and Transform (BEST) framework with its components operating consistently along the inquiry-based instructional approaches that employ problem-solving, case analysis, and experiential learning to engender active student involvement and engagement.

Apart from his scholarly background, Liquigan (2016) also served as a practitioner in the media industry working before as a news writer and producer as well as serving as a magazine and online content writer. Liquigan’s (2016) fields of academic interest include communication/media theory and literacy, communication research, media law and ethics, broadcasting and journalism principles, popular culture and language. This broad range of substantive areas is also reflected as subjects of analysis in the student tasks and learning activities of his instructional material. Liquigan’s previous experience as a content creator is also manifested in the myriad of roles that he required the students to enact and perform in the assigned context-specific simulation exercises.

The formal training of Magpile in teacher education majoring in history proved to be very influential in foregrounding socio-historical issues such as the dark years of Martial Law in her textbook tasks and assessments. Her background in religious education as well as in school guidance and counseling are also crucial in embedding the values perspective in media and information literacy. This is particularly
advantageous in underscoring the typically forgotten socio-ethical dimension of the subject area. Her inclination in the Arts and Humanities is likewise strongly reflected in the wide range of creative learning strategies and activities in the student tasks (i.e., poster making, letter writing, skit performance, storytelling, flyer making, biography writing, documentary filming, interpretative dancing, book reviews, food reviews, book cover designing, art demonstration, and radio drama adaptation, among others). Magpile views the textbook task in each lesson as means to “measure the students’ learning abilities” and “gauge their understanding and insight about media and information literacy.”

The diverse background of Cantor as a media practitioner in various media platforms immensely contributed to the effective rendering of textbook tasks in a broad range of media formats and contexts (i.e., multi-modal and multi-contextual). Furthermore, Cantor’s engagement with feminist non-governmental organizations has also strongly influenced the gender-oriented advocacy that characterized most of her case studies and issue analyses. As concretization of gender justice in the textbook tasks, Cantor (2019) foregrounded for reflection and analysis various forms of discrimination, stigmatization, and stereotype being experienced by individuals from different sexual orientations and gender identities in the entire gender spectrum, i.e., women (pp. 206, 228, 230, 231, 248, 249), gays (p. 225), lesbians (p. 217), and men (pp. 211-212). Consistent with her social advocacy in the diverse but interconnected areas of “cultural journalism, gender sensitivity, LGBTQ rights, children’s educational media, advocacy filmmaking, and media literacy”, Cantor conceived the formulation of the textbook tasks to reflect this strong social justice framework and socio-sectoral orientation.

Film studies scholar Campos mainstreamed film and society as cases and contexts in the numerous media text analyses of his student tasks and learning activities. As a pedagogical approach, the film was employed as a learning tool to critically apprehend the complex and dialectical process of social change in various local communities with diverse socio-cultural contexts. The textbooks title “From Cave to Cloud” also reflects the author’s deep interest in socio-historical analysis and this is consistently shown in a related scholarly engagement, i.e., teaching the history of Philippine and world cinemas. Ultimately, Campos (2016) envisions his instructional material to contribute in developing media and information literacy as a personal and social pursuit. Campos’ approach is effective and commendable in mainstreaming dialectics in his discursive instantiations and pedagogical interpositions. Through his trademark socio-philosophical questions, Campos succeeded in framing alternative discourses about invention/innovation as a knowledge product. According to him, “the dissemination of an invention is not always premised on benefiting the society”, arguing further that “different groups of people wage figurative and literal battles to make an invention a social necessity or to stop one from being such” (Campos, 2016, p. 33, [emphasis added]). Eventually, when new media technology emerges (i.e., printing press) the “older knowledge monopolies” cease to operate paving the way for the “social forces […] to form new knowledge monopolies” (Campos, 2016, p. 33). Through these reflective contextualizations, students will be able to realize that new inventions bring about winners and losers when these products become “social necessities” and that people from different social classes vary greatly in their level of access and control over these highly-coveted economic, technological, and cultural resources.

As a media scholar and educator, Zarate possesses a strong interdisciplinary background given her formal training in Political Science, Philippine Literature, and Philippine Studies from her baccalaureate, master’s, and doctoral education, respectively. This complementary Social Science and Humanities orientation has substantially influenced how she framed and crafted the textbook tasks that encompassed an extensive line up of compelling development issues and debates. As a media practitioner, she worked as the head writer of top-rated educational programs in a major television network and this familiarity with the broadcast media ecology served her well in critically introducing and mainstreaming the “political economy of media” and ‘media as business’ perspectives in the MIL counter-discourses.

Zarate’s Media and Information Literacy textbook is structured based on the Center for Media Literacy’s interanimating five core principles, namely: (1) social construction of media messages, (2) rule-governed use of creative language in constructing media messages, (3) varying reception of different people to the same media message, (4) diverse viewpoints embedded in media, and (5) underlying profit/power objective as the bottom line of most media content. According to Zarate, this set of principles must coherently govern the critical apprehension of the various but interlinked stages of media creation, circulation, and consumption.
In making sense of media and information literacy, five of the seven featured textbook authors adopted the UNESCO definitions in intersecting as well as varying dimensions of emphasis. Consistent with the media literacy movement approach, Alagaran highlights the multiple competencies and tools needed to apply MIL in various levels of engagement, i.e., personal, professional, and societal. For his part, Yuvienco affirms the crucial set of competencies and skills necessary in becoming a lifelong learner, which parallels with the media arts education and media literacy movement orientations of his textbook tasks and assessments. Reflective of their pluralist orientation, Liquigan and Magpile point out the use of media in “assertive and non-assertive way” as well as the attribute of a media literate individual to “think independently.”

Cantor foregrounds the advantages and affordances of MIL in engendering active citizenship and this aligns coherently with her critical and advocacy-oriented textbook task design. In recognizing the agentive function of media, Campos underscores the role of criticality and reflectivity among learners in activating media as a social and socializing force. Lastly, Zarate maintains her consistent critical outlook in employing MIL in understanding how media system operates and how it is subjected to abuse and misuse. Table 1 summarizes the definitions of media and information literacy adopted by the textbook authors.

<table>
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<th>Definition</th>
<th>Textbook Author</th>
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<tr>
<td>“Media and information literacy is defined as a set of competencies that empowers citizens to access, retrieve, understand, evaluate, use, create as well as share information and media content in all formats, using various tools in a critical, ethical, and effective way in order to participate and engage in personal, professional, and societal activities.”</td>
<td>UNESCO, 2013 as cited in Alagaran, 2019, p. 21</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Media literacy refers to knowledge of how media works, skills at accessing and appreciating media, and criticality and creativity in using, understanding, and engaging with media. The first step in media literacy is to recognize that media is a powerful social and socializing force…”</td>
<td>Campos, 2016, p. 58</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Media and information literacy is the essential competencies (knowledge, skills, and attitude) that allow citizens to engage with media and other information providers effectively and develop critical thinking and lifelong learning skills for socializing and becoming active citizens.”</td>
<td>UNESCO as cited in Cantor, 2016, p. 291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Media literacy involves the understanding and using of media in either an assertive or non-assertive way, including an informed and critical understanding of media, what techniques they employ, and their effects.”</td>
<td>UNESCO as cited in Liquigan, 2016, p. 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Media literacy enables a person to become competent in processing and assessing the form of media one uses. A media literate person is able to think independently and makes his own opinion instead of relying on what the media dictates.”</td>
<td>Magpile, 2016, p. 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Media and information literacy refers to the essential competencies and skills that allow citizens to engage with media and other information providers effectively and develop critical thinking and lifelong learning skills to socialize and become active citizens.”</td>
<td>UNESCO as cited in Yuvienco, 2017, p. 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Media and information literacy is concerned with the process of understanding and using media and other information providers, as well as information and communication technologies. It is concerned with helping teachers and students develop an informed and critical understanding of how various media and technologies operate, how they can be abused, how they organize information and create meaning, and how to evaluate the information they present.”</td>
<td>UNESCO, 2007 as cited in Zarate, 2016, p. 30</td>
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**Textbook task types and styles**

By and large, textbook authors vary in their conceptualization and adoption of task types and styles (Table 2). For instance, Magpile (2016), Liquigan (2016), and Alagaran (2019) use a combination of objective and subjective question types. Liquigan (2016) and Magpile (2016) employ tasks that heavily require the students to perform specific role assignments through various context-based simulation exercises. Magpile (2016) seeks to ascertain learners’ expectation and prior knowledge in every lesson to facilitate the
acquisition of new knowledge and engender self-reflectivity. Alagaran (2019) aims to maximize student learning in both school and home settings by interposing “MIL Time” with their parents. Zarate (2016), Alagaran (2019), and Liquigan (2016) incorporate community-based media and information literacy seminars as well as multisectoral dialogues and advocacies to promote public sphere media education. Campos (2016), Cantor (2019), and Zarate (2016) mainstream critical media text analyses and case studies in numerous student tasks and learning activities to reveal various forms of power asymmetry and structural violence. In promoting the multimodal learning of students, Cantor (2019), Magpile (2016), Liquigan (2016), and Yuvienco (2017) sought to incorporate a significant number of media production that employ various media types and platforms. Yuvienco (2017), Liquigan (2016), and Campos (2016) tasks also entail the adoption of diverse supplementary reading and viewing materials to enrich the discourse through literature review. Campos (2016) and Zarate (2016) consistently engage the learners with their profound politico-philosophical lines of inquiry to sharpen their analytic mind. Exposure to this type of open-ended and divergent line of questions allows learners to develop their capacity for critical issue analysis and be transformed into a self-reflective media prosumer. Yuvienco (2017) and Magpile (2016) make use of cross-disciplinary approach to promote integrative education. And lastly, Liquigan (2016) conceptualized the formulation of culminating activities and performance tasks according to various tracks of study (i.e., arts, sports, technical-vocational, and academic), taking into full account the diverse substantive interests and inclinations of students.

Table 2. Textbook task types and styles

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<th>Task types and styles</th>
<th>Textbook authors</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Objective types</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>True or false. “Facebook is an example of print media.”</td>
<td>Magpile, 2016, p. 13</td>
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<td>Puzzle. “moving image”</td>
<td>Liquigan, 2016, p. 37</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multiple choice. “Which of the following is not an element of radio drama? a. lights, b. music, c. dialogue, d. sound effects”</td>
<td>Alagaran, 2019, p. 161</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Context-based simulation exercises</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>“Think of yourself as a program monitor/analyst in a television network. Your job is to watch the programs of the network in a particular timeslot or segment of the day…”</td>
<td>Liquigan, 2016, p. 44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“You are a historian interested to know about the local history of a remote town in the province…”</td>
<td>Magpile, 2016, p. 44</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Establishing prior knowledge</strong></td>
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<td>“What do I already know?”</td>
<td>Magpile, 2016, p. 2</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Media and information literacy time with parents</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>“Ask your parents how they have adapted or adjusted to the new forms of media such as computer tablets, smart phones, and other forms of digital media…”</td>
<td>Alagaran, 2019, p. 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community-based media and information literacy seminars</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Create a theme for your community dialogue, something that will resonate the questions and challenges you would like to register as the youth who are viewed as the future leaders and administrators of the nation…”</td>
<td>Zarate, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Based on the priority issue, plan a project for the community and decide what and how the information needs of the specific audiences must be addressed…”</td>
<td>Alagaran, 2019, p. 113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“As a class project, you must organize an alternative classroom learning experience in the form of a seminar-workshop…”</td>
<td>Liquigan, 2016, p. 122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Critical media text analyses and case studies</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“What is the significance of the scene where children play with boat toys? Does it add a deeper dimension to the personalities and the perceived aspirations of the children?”</td>
<td>Campos, 2016, p. 112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“With so many comparisons existing in a single frame (i.e., the rich-looking clothes vs. the not-so-affluent local clothing, the skin color, etc.), what kind of messaging do these types of photo say?”</td>
<td>Cantor, 2019, p. 203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“What are the implications of this media text…to having to see Coca-Cola products generously displayed in several scenes in this media text?”</td>
<td>Zarate, 2016, p. 73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Task types and styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multi-platform media production</th>
<th>Textbook authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Each group will do one short film. They can choose if they want to do a narrative fiction film or a documentary film...”</td>
<td>Cantor, 2019, p. 277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Make a creative and informative brochure showcasing the unique features of a new invention...”</td>
<td>Magpile, 2016, p. 120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“You are tasked to write a timeline of the history of Philippine news media which will be included in a textbook on media history...”</td>
<td>Liquigan, 2016, p. 114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Create a post that documents an indigenous knowledge material from an elder in your community...”</td>
<td>Yuvienco, 2017, p. 56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Supplementary readings and viewing materials

- “For a more precise timeline, an article titled ‘Communication Media in the Philippines: 1521-1986’ by Florangel Rosario-Braid and Ramon R. Tuazon (1999) can be a useful source to develop a similar timeline.” | Yuvienco, 2017, p. 21
- “Read the ‘Development of Community Media in Southeast Asia’. The article discusses the development and prevalence of community media in the Asian region.” | Liquigan, 2016, p. 54
- “How many journalists in the Philippines have been killed in the line of duty? Check out the websites and compare the varying figures: Committee to Protect Journalists, International Press Institute, Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility...” | Campos, 2016, p. 186

### Politico-philosophical lines of inquiry

- “If you were part of the wilderness community that memorizes, embodies, and mediates books, which book would you like to be?” | Campos, 2016, p. 11
- “Do you agree with the premises of the main informant that poverty is largely due to breeding large families?” | Zarate, 2016, p. 91

### Cross-disciplinary approach

- Cross-connect tip: 21st Century Literature from the Philippines and the World
  - “If you were to create an adaptation of a literacy text into musical form, what melody would you use?” | Yuviecco, 2017, p. 68
- Let’s integrate: Business. “Are you interested in starting a business quite reluctant to invest due to false media advertisement with pitch that seems hazy?” | Magpile, 2016, p. 232

### Tasks based on tracks and strands

| Track: Sports | “Your task is to create a short video presentation featuring Philippine sports milestone and highlighting the need for sports in the Philippines...” | Yuviecco, 2017, p. 119

### Media text analysis

Media text analysis forms as a staple part of the student tasks and learning activities in most of the textbook titles under review. The media texts that are instantiated for analysis include television news programs, newspaper front-pages, news story headlines, news photos, commercial advertisements, billboards, public service announcements (PSA), infomercials, noontime variety shows, comedy shows, and songs, among others. In employing media text analysis, Alagaran (2019, p. 140), for instance, requires learners to identify the individuals and institutions behind the media texts and this includes examining their social milieu as media producers. Critically conscious of what goes beyond the product selling, Campos (2016, p. 80) asks about what values and lifestyles are being promoted and privileged in this commercial practice. In deconstructing media texts, Alagaran (2019, p. 146) requires the students to pay careful attention to the elements and dimensions while Zarate (2016, pp. 58 and 93) underscores structure, chronology, and orientation. More specifically, Alagaran (2019, p. 97) asks how each element contributes to the creation of the advertisement and how an element affects the entire rendering of the advertisement when taken out of the equation. Zarate (2016, pp. 58, 93), on the other hand, focuses on the sequence of the news presentation (i.e., content) and its implicit agenda (i.e., intent) as well as social implications (i.e., impact). Correspondingly, Campos (2016, pp. 76-77) and Zarate (2016, p. 93) pay particular attention to the news inserts and movie subtexts as well as the hidden logic that explains the adoption of these media codes and conventions. This type of exercise also lets the students observe the patterns of inclusion and omission in media outputs, and, more pertinently, unmask the underlying motivations of the media content creators and business groups. Media text analysis also allows learners to identify the “consistent patterns or formulas” governing the media content (Liquigan, 2016, p. 55). For instance, cultural anthropologist Michael Tan (2012) keenly observed “crime, cleavage, and...”
celebrities” as formulaic themes in packaging mainstreamed and sensationalized news reporting.

Commandably, an early introduction of learners to the rudiments of discourse analysis is initiated by Alagaran (2019, pp. 140-142, 146-147, 157-158) through the creator-content-consumer model. The set of perceptive questions involves comparing media products based on the following relevant considerations: social background of the producer (creator); slant of the media message (content); presence of politically charged labels, adjectives, verbs, signs, and symbols (content); use/non-use of politically correct and gender sensitive language (content); prospective gain of the user (consumer); and emotions that are stirred up by the media exposure (consumer); among others.

What is his/her political affiliation, what media organization he or/she represents? What was covered and not covered? (Alagaran, 2019, p. 140)

How do the elements contribute to the overall execution of the advertisement? Take out one or two elements from this advertisement and see what happens. (Alagaran, 2019, p. 97)

**Mini-case studies.** Cantor (2019) optimized the use of critical mini-case studies in applying the various thematic approaches (e.g., gender-based, culture-based, identity-based, genre-based, format-based, etc.) in doing media and social analysis. The mini-case studies are set in the context of local media controversies, particularly those that centered on gender politics, human rights issues, and ethical dilemmas. Case study method trains learners to analyze and evaluate a contentious and complex subject of inquiry and apprehend it in its multidimensionality, i.e., politico-economic, socio-historical, and ethico-moral underpinnings. It also provides them with a contextual understanding of the interacting relationships of the social forces, factors, and conditions surrounding the issue under examination. At the same time, students get to critically discern the how’s and why’s of the phenomenon in its specific situated and nuanced condition (e.g., materiality, spatiality, temporality, relationality, and historicity). Cantor’s (2019) critical mini-case studies include socio-sectoral issues that deal with cultural appropriation (pp. 202-203), body politics (pp. 206-207), “fake news” (pp. 208-209), gender discrimination (pp. 212-213, 217), ethical journalism (p. 215), brownface (p. 220), sexualization of minors (pp. 223-224), discrimination based on physical appearance (pp. 225-226), victim-blaming (p. 228), and discrimination based on civil status and type of family structure (pp. 230-231).

**Context-based simulation exercises.** In the textbook tasks, one of the strategies employed by the academic authors to help learners internalize and apply the MIL lessons is through context-based simulation exercises. In these textbook tasks, students are instructed to perform diverse social and professional roles in various scenarios and settings. Generally, task instructions in this type of learning strategy include the following dimensions and elements: (1) role assignment, (2) stakeholders involved, (3) output or performance required, (4) target audience, (5) situational or institutional context, (6) duration, and (7) available or needed resources. The specific tasks in this exercise normally require the students to contemplate, strategize, and act upon the hypothetical scenario and the surrounding social circumstances instantiated by the textbook authors. This learning strategy also allows students to engage in dynamic interaction with their co-learners by collaboratively applying the media and information literacy core concepts, competencies, and values as a team. As an interactive learning approach, students are presented with an opportunity to (1) internalize and perform various social roles, (2) apply the composite set of media and information literacy skills, and (3) enhance their problem-solving capabilities. However, some student tasks are mainly conceived and formulated from the functionalist lens, devoid of the complexities and contradictions that mark the relationships between the social forces in the development community. Specific tasks of this nature align with the Social Efficiency curricular ideology and the media literacy movement approach considering the emphasis accorded by the academic authors to the need to fulfill the demands of the industry and the imperative to learn the composite MIL know-hows. By alternatively adopting what this research refers to as critical context-based simulation exercises, learners will be able to make a deeper sense of how the various social and sectoral groups in society and the standpoints that they represent not only intersect but also challenge each other as they compete and struggle for economic resources, political influence, and symbolic capital. This alternative conception, on the other hand, represents the Social Reconstruction curricular ideology and critical media literacy approach.

Discernably, a recurring pattern that emerged in the role assignments is requiring students to perform the functions of marketing practitioner, advertising specialist, content creator, web designer, and visual artist, which are customarily situated within the business context. From the Parsonian lens, formal education serves the socializing and agentive function of “sifting
and sorting” students according to the roles and responsibilities that they will perform later in their adult personal and professional lives. Curricular-wise and within the context of the present Philippine educational system, this is implemented through various interrelated mechanisms such as the classification of learners according to tracks (e.g., academic, technical-vocational, etc.) and strands of study (e.g., Humanities and Social Sciences or HUMSS; Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics or STEM; Accountancy, Business and Management or ABM; and General Academic or GA). Within the parameter of this current study, the “identity construction” of learners is potentially accomplished and facilitated through the role instantiation and role allocation being performed and enacted in the textbook tasks. However, the idea of mainstreamed role allocation and role instantiation is being criticized by social activists and progressive scholars for its tendency to promote and engender specific lines of work along the dominant economic framework and regime (i.e., neoliberal ideology and capitalist system).

Meanwhile, with respect to role assignments which are situated in the non-commercial realm (i.e., public), it has been observed that the rendering and depiction do not commonly involve the necessary elements and sufficient degree of complexities and contradictions that characterize Philippine local realities, except for the instantiated social issues surrounding “cyberbullying, unhealthy food, plagiarism, and media abuse” (Liquigan, 2016; Magpile, 2016). This set of instantiated socio-sectoral issues is a crucial step in making critical sense of the complex social relationships between individuals and groups and the broader media and development ecologies where they are predicated.

In the existing lineup, an encouraging learning activity is the task instantiated by Magpile (2016, p. 105) that requires the student to perform the role of being a food critic. The task in question assigns the learners to review a “famous food product in the market” to inform the public of its “good and bad effects.” Potentially, this task can also be further enhanced by adopting the approach of journalist and media scholar Michael Pollan (2008) in educating the consumers and policymakers about the health, ecological, and social impacts of heavily processed commercial food products through his critical analyses and commentaries. Critically aware of their connivance in rendering people’s consumption habits unhealthy and unsustainable, Pollan (2008) exposes and opposes the unholy alliance of mainstream food marketers, food scientists, and food regulatory agencies by revealing how they (1) resorted to misleading advertising, (2) lent their credence to hegemonic food consumption ideologies, and (3) reneged their mandate to protect the public welfare, respectively. Correspondingly, this proposed social lens in framing textbook tasks runs parallel with the Social Reconstruction curricular ideology and critical media literacy approach.

Diversity and hybridity in textbook task types and styles

Media scholar David Buckingham (2019, p. 71) maintains that media education must involve the understanding of “sociological dimensions of institutions and audiences.” He noted further that this may encompass “more active approaches” that cover “first-hand researches, including interviews or surveys, web-based researches involving case studies, and simulations of the production of specific media campaigns.” This strongly points to the need in directing the learning process along the sociological path, i.e., with emphasis being accorded to the critical understanding of socialization, social interaction, social institutions, social inequality, social movement, collective behavior, and social change and how these concepts and constructs relate to information, communication, and media. Buckingham (2019) believes that such analytical and dimensional focus necessitates a strong research orientation and, correspondingly, those above-enumerated data collection strategies and learning approaches that he recommends require active social engagement with the collaborators and interlocutors from the academic and local communities. With particular reference to the textbook tasks under review, these pertain to the interposed (1) key informant interviews with the elderslies in the community (Alagaran, 2019; Liquigan, 2016; Yuvienco, 2017), (2) mini-surveys about students’ media lifestyle, preference, and habit (Alagaran, 2019; Cantor, 2019), and (3) mini-case studies employing various media platforms (Cantor, 2019), among others.

In tackling social and sectoral issues through community fora or community dialogues similar with the one interposed by Zarate (2016, pp. 132-133), it is nearly impossible in sociological terms not to touch on any development issue pertaining to social inequality and social change, for instance, considering the encompassing character of sociology as a field of
Content- and pedagogy-wise, the textbook authors are afforded with varying levels of flexibility in designing and developing the instructional materials. This is vividly manifested in the observable variety in textbook tasks and assessments in terms of thrust, content, and format. Correspondingly, each textbook task types and styles represents a particular or a combination of media education approach(es). And in diverse ways and various levels, these textbook task types and styles may either foster or hinder the progressive embodiments of pedagogical praxis. In this sense, a specific media education approach can then be set in one-to-one correspondence with a particular discourse community of academic authors. To illustrate and situate this diverse set of media education approaches, the textbook task design of each academic authors was correspondingly examined and categorized. For instance, Yuvienco (2017) provided the learners with a consistent exposure and training in the application of the technological and technical aspects of media and information literacy education by employing various media platforms and modalities. Alagaran (2019) approached learning with a strong home and school contextual applications and with the use of the composite set of competencies in media and information literacy. Liquigan (2016) introduced a wide range of themes, texts, and tasks that manifest his pluralist orientation. Magpile (2016) instantiated various student tasks and learning activities that centered on the analysis and application of media, communication, and information ethics. Cantor (2019) strategically focused on media text analysis, mainly about popular culture, and employed the gender perspective and human rights framework. Campos (2016) provided strong political and philosophical dimensions in his predominantly self-reflective tasks. Zarate (2016) conceived the textbook tasks with the clear set of political objectives of promoting “active citizenship engagement” and situating learning in the context of social and sectoral issues “derived from the local scene.”

Prepare to create an interactive video. It should consist of a gameplan that contains annotations [...] to make your YouTube video more interactive explore the search result. It offers you links to tips from adding annotation to creating, adding clickable links, etc. Use those tips to enhance your videos. (Yuvienco, 2017, p. 145)

What are the different types of literacy that constitute the ecology of MIL? Cite examples for each type of literacy. (Alagaran, 2019, p. 24)

The advocacy page will be evaluated using the following considerations: level of participation as well as comments by the visitors during the first week of publication of the advocacy page. (Liquigan, 2016, p. 141)

Draw a happy face if the statement conveys a positive attitude. Draw a sad face if otherwise. You asked permission from the interviewee if you can record the interview (Magpile, 2016, p. 66)

View an episode of a gag show in television (e.g., “Banana Split” or “Bubble Gang”). Be mindful of how stereotypes are generated in these sequences. (Zarate, 2016, p. 102)

What are the implications if an exploitative company can afford airtime and column space, but the people that this company exploits cannot afford the same media means to be heard? (Campos, 2016, p. 68)

Tune in to at least NBN program featuring government events. Using the programs format and content of this government-owned and controlled channel as specimen, cite the limitations—and even dangers—that it can potentially pose to public interest. (Zarate, 2016, p. 123)

According to critical discourse analyst Hilary Janks (1997, p. 20), hybridity is a productive and dynamic aspect of discursive analysis because it is within this social configuration that “different interests are played out.” She further added that “of the many different discourses available in the society to be drawn from, different texts privilege different ones.” In the specific case of the assigned context-based simulation exercises, students are socially and paradigmatically positioned to perform various roles that are instantiated in a wide range of social settings. It can be argued, therefore, that in consideration of the entire set of exercises and based on the foregoing examination, the categories of context-based simulation exercises that emerged include traditional and non-traditional social roles in the context of mainstream and non-mainstream social arrangements.

In the same context-based simulation exercises, students were observed to be socially positioned in various roles that can be categorized to be falling within the private and public realms. The role instantiations in the private domain have a recurring business theme while those in the public sector are for the most part un-politicized, thereby lacking the necessary elements and sufficient degree of complexities and contradictions that characterize the broader development ecology.

Words when used in a specific context provide them with “social and symbolic content” that convey meanings and “forms a coherent cultural system” (Bonvillain, 2008, p. 386). As a coherent whole, this set
of words results to “a unity of the verbally constituted consciousness” (Volosinov, 1973 as cited in Bonvillain, 2008, p. 386). However, this level of coherence may differ in varying degrees within a particular textbook and across the seven textbook titles considering the converging and diverging curricular ideologies, pedagogical values, and media education approaches of the academic authors. This is also demonstrated in the varying inclination of the textbook authors to deviate from the conventional nature of didactic media and, at the same time, accommodate alternative ideological, discursive, and pedagogical positions. To illustrate, Magpile (2016) and Liquigan (2016) reflect the pluralist orientation as evidenced by the varied role assignments to students that represent both the private and public agenda. Zarate (2016) and Campos (2016) embody the progressive tradition in envisioning textbook tasks and assessments along the critical standpoint (i.e., political economy). Alagaran (2019) displays consistent alignment with the media literacy movement approach as revealed by his diversified tasks that require various media and information literacy skills and competencies and the application of critical media literacy in textbook tasks that involve social and sectoral issues. Yuvienco (2017) straddles between media arts education and media literacy movement approaches as shown by the student tasks that necessitate learners to demonstrate both aesthetic talent and MIL composite skills set. Employing critical media literacy, Cantor (2019) consistently demonstrated strong human rights and gender perspectives as evidenced by her instantiated media text analyses centering on issues about marginalization and misrepresentation.

**SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on Kellner and Share’s (2007) typology of media education approaches, Alagaran discernably belongs to the media literacy movement approach given his strong emphasis on the composite set of skills and competencies in MIL. On the other hand, the third area of application in Alagaran’s model (i.e., empowerment) as embodied in some of his textbook tasks also aligns him to a certain extent with the critical media literacy approach. Yuvienco’s instructional material can be classified along media arts education approach considering the consistent creative, aesthetic, and technical emphasis of the textbook tasks as well as the media literacy movement approach given the importance he accorded to the broad range of MIL competencies. The varied discursive and pedagogical attributes of Liquigan’s textbook tasks correspond well with the media literacy movement approach along the pluralist tradition considering the multiple literacies and perspectives which his task design seeks to develop and engender among students. In consonance with the multiple intelligences theory, Magpile (2016) seeks to “give the students the opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills by creating samples of different media platforms”. Correspondingly, this crosscutting pedagogy aligns well with the media literacy movement approach commendably complemented with her strong values-oriented framework. The compelling gender and human rights framing of Cantor’s philosophy and pedagogy powerfully reflects the critical media literacy approach. The same is true given her adoption of diverse and broad set of instantiated socio-sectoral issues as cases and contexts for critical analysis and interrogation. Campos’ textbook tasks possess very strong sociopolitical philosophical character considering the depth and profoundness of his reflection questions and discussion prompts. For Campos (2016), his textbook is “meant to distract the learner from complacent and unthinking use of media and information”, which is what critical media literacy as a transformative social praxis essentially aim for and accomplish.

Consistent with critical media literacy, Zarate invoked in her preface discourse analyst Teun van Dijk’s definition of social power as the unequal political arrangement governing the relationship between groups that involved the control of thought and action of the less powerful by the more powerful counterpart. Correspondingly, Zarate (2016) underscored that in the course design the “strong connections of media and society, specifically to its power structures” must serve as the framework in guiding the process of inquiry. In this way, students will be able to develop a critical understanding of how the unequal power relations come into play “from media institutions to big businesses, and even political blocs” (Zarate, 2016). Thus, this runs parallel with the Center for Media Literacy’s fifth core construct about the centrality and criticality of economic and political dimensions (i.e., political economy) when producing, distributing, and consuming media content. Commendably, all academic authors manifest the attribute of learner-centeredness as demonstrated in the student tasks that require self-assessment, self-reflection, role playing, context-based application, and media production, among others. Table 3 summarizes the corresponding media education approaches of the featured textbook authors.
Table 3. Textbook authors and their corresponding media education approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Textbook author</th>
<th>Textbook and year of publication</th>
<th>Media education approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alagaran, J.R.Q.</td>
<td>Media and Information Literacy: Empowering the Discerning Audiences (2019)</td>
<td>Media literacy movement (with attributes of critical media literacy); Learner-centered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yuvienco, J.C.</td>
<td>Media and Information Literacy: Being a B.E.S.T. Digital Citizen for Senior High School (2017)</td>
<td>Media arts education; Media literacy movement; Learner-centered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquigan, B.C.</td>
<td>Media and Information Literacy (2016)</td>
<td>Media literacy movement (with pluralist orientation); Learner-centered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magpile, C.M.</td>
<td>Media and Information Literacy: Enhancing Education through Effective Communication (2016)</td>
<td>Media literacy movement (with pluralist and strong values orientation); Learner-centered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cantor, O.L.</td>
<td>Media and Information Literacy (2019)</td>
<td>Critical media literacy (with strong human rights and gender orientation); Learner-centered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campos, P.C.</td>
<td>From Cave to Cloud: Media and Information Literacy for Today (2016)</td>
<td>Critical media literacy; Learner-centered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zarate, M.J.E.</td>
<td>Media and Information Literacy (2016)</td>
<td>Critical media literacy; Learner-centered</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Applying Branston and Stafford’s (2010, p.172) conception of ideology, the ideas and discourses that are contained in the textbooks task are “usually partial and selective as all positions are.” This explains why textbook tasks vary in terms of breath and depth as well as values and vistas. The selective and purposive approach in framing cases and contexts in the textbook task makes this social practice unarguably politico-normative and hence ideological. Aside from the pedagogical and political dimensions, textbook authors also factor in the tight schedule of the course (i.e., running for one semester only), limited textbook space (i.e., 215 pages on the average), and other resource considerations. As such, the decision about which topics, themes, and techniques to adopt and prioritize also have logistical considerations apart from the default pedagogical and political standpoints needed to contemplate on, commit to, and carry out by the publishing and writing team. This study, therefore, allows the education stakeholders to be conscious and cautious of their respective positionalities as reflected and embodied in the specific curricular ideologies and media education approaches of the instructional materials that they produce, distribute, and/or utilize. This self-reflexivity also enables both educators and learners to understand that textbooks and the student tasks contained therein can never be value-free and, as such, serve to support or undermine particular position, perspective, and practice.

Based on the foregoing analysis and evaluation, the following recommendations are earnestly forwarded in relation to how this social inquiry can potentially contribute to instructional, media, and social reform.

Textbooks belong to a specific type of media, i.e., print media. As a specific recommendation, instructional materials in media and information literacy must also allot a substantial discussion about book (or textbook) as a ‘form of media’ as well as require tasks pertaining to the political economy of book production, distribution, and utilization, including contentious topics surrounding this knowledge product such as “book banning” and “book burning” similar to the ones instantiated by Campos (2016). The practice of incorporating tasks in instructional materials that critically and discursively analyze books as well as textbooks will help learners develop the skill of critical reflectivity in evaluating their exposure to didactic forms of media. Having been long accustomed to the orthodox discursive lenses and pedagogical values, mainstream textbook stakeholders run the risk of failing to critically apprehend this media form, thereby turning a blind eye to what Gonsalvez (2013) pointed out in her citizenship education study as possible “gaps, exclusions, and oversights.” While there were few tasks and learning activities that deal with the critical
appraisal of books, there were none about textbooks in particular except for a true or false question regarding the need for textbooks to follow a prescribed curriculum (Magpile, 2016, p. 163) and a timeline output for a textbook on media history (Liquigan, 2016, p. 114). An alternative textbook that is true to its transformative, liberating, and empowering attributes should also include tasks that will contemplatively make sense and assess this pedagogical device as a cultural product in general and as an instructional media in particular (i.e., a set of textbook tasks discursively and reflectively problematizing textbooks).

Textbook tasks framed along the critical media literacy approach instantiate cases and contexts that reveal how media is strategically linked to the centers of economic, political, and cultural power. As critical media and information scholars, students must not only learn where to locate and how to utilize information but, more crucially, how to also identify and analyze the ideological, political, and discursive positions of its producers and users. Under authoritarian regimes, in particular, journalist Maria Ressa (2020) asserts that information becomes the first casualty of the strategic maneuver by tyrants to distort established facts and manipulate public opinion. Through this propaganda tactic, despots underhandedly control the narrative and instrumentalize it in their politico-ideological favor. According to political economist Roland Simbulan (2022), the “bigger challenge is how to counter the fascist liars in the infosphere” and part of this cyber-struggle is to “creatively curate the most watched influencers and proactively produce reactions to correct disinformation and false narratives.” In the historical context of national hero Jose Rizal’s valuable contribution in the struggle against colonial and despotic rule, knowledge served as a very crucial element. In our contemporary fight for human rights and against social exclusions, this pursuit for knowledge as a fundamental human goal remains unchanged whereby critical media and information literacy continue to have a very substantial role to play. Within this context, alternative education as argued by Freire and Giroux then becomes both a practice of freedom and an act of resistance, consistent with the Social Reconstruction curricular ideology and critical media literacy approach.

In textbook task design, a particular task culture may also emerge and develop in a specific subject area, and such may proceed noticeably or unnoticeably (Bakken & Andersson-Bakken, 2017; Dahl, 1997; and Valverde et al., 2002 as cited in Anderson-Bakken, et al. 2020). Task culture pertains to the values and conventions that govern the conceptualization, formulation, and employment of tasks. Essentially, the task culture is a ‘subculture within the subject culture’ (Höttecke & Silva, 2011 as cited in Anderson-Bakken, Jegstad, & Bakken, 2020). If it is conceived to emerge only over a long period of extended pedagogical practice, then one can argue that the specific media and information literacy task culture as a relatively new subject area in the Philippine K-12 (Kinder to Grade 12) education curriculum would not qualify to have developed one yet. However, if media education is to be perceived as a substantive field that has long been taught by the textbook authors as a stand-alone subject, then it can be claimed to have started possessing elements that would already constitute as a distinct task culture. As a research and policy implication of this study, the MIL task culture can conceivably be a viable subject of participatory action research to further improve the craft of critical media education praxis in general and critical textbook task design in particular where MIL curriculum developers, assessment specialists, classroom teachers, student-researchers, and local communities alike are all thoughtfully invested and democratically involved. Within this context, the specific categories of MIL task culture that shall emerge and manifest can then be associated in correspondence with specific discourse communities, curricular ideologies, and media education approaches.

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