

Enhancing media literacy skill building in pedagogical universities: Our view and experience

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Abstract. The article presents a review of the integration of media literacy content in foreign language courses at pedagogical higher education institutions. This study is aimed to share and present for academic discussion some of the authors' perspectives that proved to be successful in mastering media literacy skills as well as in developing language competencies in EFL learners. A particular focus has been made on the methodological base, the principles and strategies of media literacy skill building as well as on the criteria for the selection of learning materials and techniques that ensure the effective implementation of media literacy programs into the existing syllabi. The use of contemporary teaching methods such as flipped classroom, problem-based learning, group projects, capitalizing on higher order thinking skills and interactive classroom activities is viewed as an integrated approach aimed to develop critical perception of media products alongside with a range of sociocultural and communicative competences in students of pedagogy. One of the main objectives of integrating media literacy content into a variety of tertiary courses is to enhance emotional resilience to manipulative influences of the media which is achieved through activating critical thinking skills referring to information flow as well as to students' own media consumption habits. The pilot implementation being conducted in the terms of the international project "Learn to Discern", preserved its original methodological constituents which included media literacy as such, information literacy, critical thinking, digital and visual literacy and fact checking skills.

Keywords: *media literacy, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), higher-order thinking skills, blended learning, socio-cultural competencies, learners.*

Бучацька Світлана, Зарічна Олена, Матієнко Олена, Хуртенко Оксана. Формування навичок з медіаграмотності в педагогічних університетах: наш погляд та досвід.

Анотація. У статті представлено результати інтеграції інфо-медійної грамотності в іншомовні навчальні курси у педагогічних закладах вищої освіти (ЗВО). Особливу увагу сфокусовано на методичній базі, принципам та педагогічним умовам, а також критеріях відбору навчальних матеріалів та методичних прийомів, які забезпечують ефективне впровадження програм медіа грамотності в існуючі силабуси. Використання сучасних методів навчання, таких як обернений клас, проблемне навчання, групові та дискусійні форми роботи, актуалізація операцій мислення вищого порядку та інтерактивні форми роботи в аудиторії розглядаються як

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інтегрований підхід, спрямований на розвиток критичного сприйняття медіа-продуктів, а також ряду соціокультурних та комунікативних компетенцій у майбутніх педагогів. Однією з головних цілей інтеграції інфо-медійної грамотності в різноманітні освітні курси та навчальні дисципліни є підвищення емоційної стійкості до маніпулятивного впливу медіа, що досягається шляхом активізації навичок критичного мислення щодо потоку інформації, а також особистих навичок споживання медіа у студентів. У пілотному впровадженні в рамках міжнародного проєкту «Вивчай та розрізняй» були збережені оригінальні методичні складові, серед яких медіаграмотність як така, інформаційна грамотність, критичне мислення, цифрова та візуальна грамотність та навички перевірки фактів (факт чекінг). Ця стаття має за мету поділитися деякими ідеями авторів, які виявилися успішними в опануванні навичок медіаграмотності, а також у розвитку мовних навичок у тих, хто вивчає англійську мову як іноземну.

Ключові слова: медіаграмотність, предметно-мовне інтегроване навчання (CLIL), операції мислення вищого порядку, змішане навчання, соціокультурні компетенції, студенти.

Introduction

The digital age we live in and the information we consume daily encompasses a diversity of media and the content they broadcast or post on each platform can seriously affect the lives of people. In the conditions of a constant increase of manipulative content in modern mass media, the absence of a legislative framework that could establish the standards of journalistic ethics as well as track and neutralize the means of massive influence on people's consciousness, a critically low number of quality media products, implementation of media literacy courses or at least relevant modules in general educational disciplines of higher educational institutions appears to be a matter of pivotal importance.

The International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), supported by the Embassy of the United States of America and the Embassy of Great Britain in Ukraine, in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Press Academy initiated an educational project aiming to help Ukrainian schoolchildren and students acquire skills of critical information perception and realize the value of high-quality information by means of integrating special modules into the school subject syllabi (IREX, 2019). The project is being widely implemented in the educational practice of secondary schools, and the proposed methodologies ensure the development of an effective sustainable model of media literacy development in schoolchildren.

However, the question of implementing the proposed model into the curriculum of higher education institutions (HEIs) still remains open. The training of future teachers, who are actually supposed to provide school students with media literacy skills while giving instruction in their subject fields, still requires methodological argumentation, determination of psycho-pedagogical conditions, and the implementation of this content into the existing courses and syllabi. In the framework of the international project "Learn to Discern" several pilot projects of implementing media literacy knowledge and skills in the syllabi of major and elective disciplines or special courses for students of higher education institutions according to the project methodology were conducted by the teachers of Vinnytsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi State Pedagogical University. Among the

certified syllabi we had analysed were “Methods of teaching foreign languages (English)” (Kynal, Dovhaliuk, & Krykun, 2020) for undergraduates majoring in English and German languages and “The methodology of teaching literature: development of competences through the integration of media literacy” (Vinnychuk et al., 2020) for students majoring in Ukrainian Language and Literature and Ukrainian and English language and whose outcomes and ideas were exploited in our implementation project.

The aim of this article is to present as well as subject to academic discussion the methodological basis for integrating media literacy into foreign language courses at HEIs based on materials from a pilot study conducted within the international project “Learn to Discern” (IREX, Learn to Discern in Education, 2020).

Among the points that we intend to cover in the article are the following:

- The goals of the experimental course.
- Procedural principles and strategies of the implementation.
- The content and subject lines of the course.
- A model of binary planning.
- An analysis of the learning outcomes through the study of the students’ achievements in singular media literacy skills.

Literature Review

The need for an urgent response of the academia to the unprecedentedly fast and in large unrestricted expansion of manipulative media content was met by a conglomerate of researchers, who in their collaborative effort developed a solid theoretical base for implementing media literacy in educational programs.

The field of media literacy emerged in the late 1970s, marked by focused efforts on developing curricula and conducting research (Arke, 2012; Aufderheide, 1993). The 1992 National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy initiated by leading media scholars was the starting point of the media literacy movement to expand notions of literacy and help people understand, produce and negotiate meanings in a culture made up of powerful images, words and sounds. The event’s most sound and significant aims for scholars and educators, which is crucially important for Ukrainian media consumption now, were to shape a national framework for media literacy and agree on a basic definition which spelled out media literacy as “the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and communicate messages in a variety of forms” (Aufderheide, 1993).

The comprehensive research initiatives in media literacy supported by UNESCO have been followed by curricula development and media leaders’ reports and discussions providing policy guidance. The successful example of efficient ongoing surveys on media literacy among adults and children provided by British Ofcom (the UK's Office of Communication) and Canadian MediaSmarts may be taken into consideration by Ukrainian educators and media experts in testing the impact of media education on media literacy and producing research and policy recommendations aimed at promoting

safe media usage. Although Ukraine lacks a national policy for media literacy education now, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and organizations such as the Ukrainian Press Academy in partnership with The International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), have made an attempt to advocate Media Literacy Education for state-level policies.

The above concepts of media literacy education have been enhanced by Renee Hobbs, who claims that media literacy is a dynamic practice, fostering both individual and communal engagement with media as informed citizens. This refers to a flexible approach that combines personal and collective aspects, aiming not just to protect against harmful messages but to empower individuals to interact with media as active citizens (Hobbs, 2010; Hobbs, 2017).

Analysing the extension of the concept of media literacy from its traditional focus on print and audiovisual media to encompass the internet and other new media, S. Livingstone emphasizes on the understanding of media literacy so as to exploit the historically and culturally conditioned relationship among three processes: the symbolic and material representation of knowledge, culture and values; the diffusion of interpretative skills and abilities across a (stratified) population; and the institutional, especially, the state management of the power that access to and skilled use of knowledge brings to those who are 'literate' (Livingstone, 2011).

The significance of media education is evident in the policies adopted by European nations and the Council of Europe with the established teacher-training programs aimed at promoting and developing media education in recent years. The research focused on the nature of "media literacy" in an era of digital culture, the role of computer games and other media in the formation of "moral panics," and the history and practice of media education in Britain has been a valuable example of implementing media literacy in educational programs (Buckingham, 2003). Although the vast range of studies focus on theoretical foundations of media literacy and the impact of media literacy education on the ability to identify, access, and use electronic information from the network, we found the lack of research suggesting effective syllabi for undergraduate students improving their literacy skills to be productive and effective in both their personal and professional lives.

The joint venture of IREX and Ukrainian universities on introducing media literacy content in the university syllabi was the first step of addressing the issue of the absence of standardized national curricula for media literacy mentioned by Lemish and Potter (Lemish, 2015; Potter, 2013).

The evolution of the theoretical background for educators' response to the situation of hyper-informationalism can be traced to the stage of developing strategies and approaches in the educational milieu. These can be found in academic writings of e.g. Bulger and Davison who suggested a scheme of action consisting of five consequential steps: developing a coherent understanding of the media environment; improving cross-disciplinary collaboration; leveraging the current media crisis to consolidate stakeholders; prioritizing the creation of a national media literacy evidence base,

developing curricula for addressing action in addition to interpretation (Bulger, & Davison, 2018).

A neat conceptual scheme enjoying huge success in educational endeavors throughout the world was introduced, by the Learn to Discern project (L2D) of IREX (IREX, 2019). Its fast and celebratedly successful implementation on different stages of education is majorly due to exclusively practical and universally implementable model of media literacy training as well as institutional support and enthusiasm of all the participating individuals and institutions. The initiative was eagerly and duly supported by educational institutions of school and tertiary education all around Ukraine.

The two-year pilot project on dissemination of the L2D training program found its ardent response in the introduction of special Media Literacy modules into the existing university syllabi. The collaborative efforts of Ukrainian universities on developing training materials for English classes are featured in the manual “The Curriculum for Teaching English through Media Literacy” (Goshylyk et al., 2022). The focus was made on interactive methods of media literacy training and internalization as well as a conscious approach to the parameters of emotional intelligence and their effect on personal media choices.

Method

Context of Research and Participants

Integration of specific learning modules related to media literacy was carried out at Vinnytsia State Pedagogical University (VSPU) through mutual collaborative efforts of the administration bodies, the academic staff and a wide sector of the student theatre comprising groups of various fields of study, both philological and non-philological (278 students in total) within 2020-2023 years. The participants who enrolled in Media Literacy course were divided into three groups according to their proficiency level: Basic, Intermediate and Advanced.

Data Collection and Analysis

With the purpose of objectively assessing the effectiveness of introducing media literacy content into the subject matter of the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) courses we applied a set of criteria reflecting media literacy competences for a direct observation and an analysis of a commented feedback from students.

Pilot Project Design

The goal setting of the project was determined by the fundamental competencies that constitute the content of media literacy:

1. Media Literacy (understanding how media work: owners, journalistic standards, editorial policies; ability to analyze advertising products, identify types of advertising messages).

2. Information Literacy (ability to track and work with sources and primary sources; ability to discern facts from opinions).

3. Critical Thinking (ability to evaluate and interpret events; ability to trace causal relationships and analyze motivations and reasons for actions).

4. Digital Literacy (understanding the digital footprint, privacy management; ability to prevent risks in communication – cyber bullying, grooming).

5. Visual Literacy (ability to analyze visual images i.e. photos, logos, symbols, infographics, the influence of color schemes on information perception).

6. Resilience to influences, fact checking (ability to identify manifestations of propaganda; ability to identify fakes and manipulation tools, including those rendered through pseudo-experts, clickbait headlines, manipulative photos, videos, texts, statistics).

The procedural principles for the implementation of the project were established in compliance with those that IREX strives to meet in all its trainings:

1. Exercising the learner-centered approach;

2. Provide comfortable formats of interaction heeding inclusion sensitive participants;

3. Using a variety of activities involving multisensory as well as kinesthetic approaches;

4. Relying on the background knowledge, experience and personal involvement of the students in the subject matter;

5. Engaging in direct observation and deriving feedback from students immediately before and after each stage of the project.

Seeking an optimal mixed-content scenario for the project that would logically incorporate into the course of EFL learning and meet the topical structure of the respective courses, our working group developed a training module on media literacy, which was included in the syllabus “Foreign language for professional communication”. Apart from it we tested a training module of “Practical Course of English” implementing Very Verified online, interactive media and information literacy course developed by IREX for English language learners (Buchatska & Zarichna, 2020). Based on the Learn to Discern curriculum, Very Verified focuses on critical and analytic thinking skills, with an emphasis on teaching how to consume news without dictating what to consume (Very Verified, 2019). It is tailored around the following topics:

- *Media and information landscape.*
- *Human cognitive biases.*
- *The incentive structures behind the media and information sectors (ranging from media ownership to social media algorithms).*
- *How information structures and human cognitive biases can make those who engage with information vulnerable to manipulation.*

As mentioned above, we strived to design our trainings considering our audience's needs, interests and media consumption habits in order to fully engage the students' cognitive structures and thus derive the most reliable data for the project analysis. The subject-thematic content of this module is presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Content and learning objectives of the training module on media literacy

<i>Topic 1. Media Landscape. Media Owners</i>		
Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify personal media consumption habits • Recognize how the media evoke emotional reactions from the consumers 	
	<p>Understand how the media work: owners, journalistic standards, editorial policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tracing the influence of sharing certain media content within a friends' or professional community • Reflect on how ownership might (or might not) affect content • Learn strategies to help them better recognize and understand the emotional reactions they might have to news and media 	
	<i>Topic 2. Media Content. Analysis of media messages.</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize different types of media content and different ways of conveying information, such as informing, propaganda, social and commercial advertising, PR • Be able to distinguish facts from judgments • Identify bots and trolls, the ability to counter them • Emotional intelligence (recognizing the impact on our emotions) • Identify and counter hate speech • Identify fakes and tools of manipulation (experts, headlines, photos, videos, text, statistics, etc.) 	
<i>Topic 3. Social Media. Identification of one's own stereotypes</i>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn to question the authenticity of social media accounts • Learn the common signs of fake accounts • Understand the concept of stereotype and the mechanisms of its occurrence • Be able to identify stereotypes and discrimination • Understand the role of algorithms in social media • Learn ethical communication skills • Further develop critical thinking and analytical skills for assessing media 	
<i>Topic 4. Misinformation and Manipulation. Manipulative Technologies</i>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve their understanding of major principles of media • Understand the difference between information and persuasion • Understand visual material as text • Be able to analyze/read images and symbols of visual text • Understand the meaning and impact of the meaningful and historical context 	

of an image

- Identify manifestations of propaganda
- Be able to analyze and verify photo forgeries, detect manipulative image effects

Topic 5. Search and verification of information

- Be able to effectively search for information
 - Improve fact checking skills: text checking, photo checking, video checking
 - Learn strategies for managing their emotions when looking at news and other content
 - Understand copyright and plagiarism
 - Be aware of the Internet search algorithm by keywords, the use of symbols and hash tags
 - Be able to find and work with sources and primary sources
-

Considering the specifics of the content and taking into account the functional features of communicative methods, we defined the following strategies for the effective integration of media literacy course materials in English classes both for English language and non-language majors:

1. Ensuring the subjective student's point of view throughout the entire process of working out the problem situation, from planning to assessment and conclusions.
2. Implementation of content and language integrated learning (CLIL) in the context of which professional content (fundamentals of journalism, advertising, psycholinguistics) is at the same time a means of learning English, as well as the development of media literacy (Dafouz et al., 2007).
3. Actualization of the psycho-emotional factor of information perception and analysis, development of emotional intelligence and resilience to influences.

Procedures

The integration of media literacy into language courses involves binary planning (separately for language and subject content) and conducting the educational process in two parallel directions. In this regard, we developed a special model of the lesson plan of content and language integrated learning, which reflected this feature (Zarichna et al., 2020).

It should be noted that the structure of goals in this model also included a social-communicative aspect, as well as the development of higher-order thinking operations (H.O.Ts) according to Bloom's theory (Fortanet-Gómez, & Bellés-Fortuño, 2008). It was also suggested that the logics of subject-language integrated learning involves a gradual transition from the activation of basic day-to-day communicative skills – BICS (basic interpersonal communicative skills) to the development of cognitive/academic language competencies CALP (cognitive/academic language proficiency) (Cummins, 1984).

Table 2

A Sample of Binary Planning According to the Concept of Content and Language Integrated Learning

General Topic	Media Literacy. Mass Media
Content of the subject aspect	Enhancing emotional resilience
Language Means/Tools	Psychological terminology: <i>emotional intelligence: recognizing emotions, anger management, mental filters etc.</i> Adjectives characterizing emotional states: <i>excited, impressed, anxious, confused, puzzled, etc.</i> Present Simple active and passive tenses, degrees of comparison of adjectives and adverbs Grammatical structures for expressing a point of view and giving advice: <i>should, had better, why not..., a good idea is..., in my view, as far as... is concerned etc.</i>
H.O.T. skills	Predictive/Prognostic thinking; analytical and critical thinking; comparison, classification, cause-and-effect, emotional intelligence skills
Communicative competences	Communicative competences
BICS stage	1) Introductory discussion 2) Creation of an infographics that conveys the individual emotional experience of consuming media products and its analysis (wheel of emotions). Algorithm "cause-effect-solution". 3) Creation of a group poster based on the results of the discussion.
CALP stage	1) Introduction of subject content with preliminary processing of linguistic means and psychological terminology. 2) Work with subject-language hand-outs using memorization techniques. 3) Self-assessment and feedback.

A sample of BICS stage exercise:

Team 1. You will receive a list of questions for a survey. Move around the classroom and interview your fellow-students. Analyze the answers of the respondents and deliver a team report on the data collected.

Team 2. Answer the questions of the interviewers. Try to remember your first time at university in detail. Be specific about the things you did as well as your feelings.

A sample of CALP stage exercise:

You are a student counselor. Analyze the following problems first-year students face. Identify the stage of culture shock, specify the symptoms. Discuss possible solutions.

The general criteria for the selection of educational content are determined by the need for maximum involvement of students in understanding, transforming the material, as well as creating, on this basis, their own ideas of the informational phenomena under consideration. Among them, we highlight the following:

1. *Communicative resource*: the information offered for discussion should engage all the mental filters of the participants - memory, associations, ideas, reasoning, evaluations, etc. Besides, the topic should be based on the personal and professional interests of the participants, as well as update their knowledge and experience as much as possible.

2. *Multifacetedness of the problem*: consideration of different thematic directions from the standpoint of critical analysis and problem-based learning is provided by the ambiguity of the topic, the presence of different approaches to its consideration and interpretation.

Designing the course we took Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) as the ground for our experiential learning which is a holistic, cyclical process that emphasizes that effective learning occurs when direct experience is tied to personal reflection, opportunities to make relevant connections to the experience, and the ability to demonstrate the appropriate use of the knowledge or skill (Tsang, 2021).

Therefore, active training enabled students to engage with training content in an interactive manner, shaping and supporting a participant's learning processes. The drafted activities were tailored so that the participants were acquiring knowledge, skills, and attitudes rather than simply receiving them. Warming up and brainstorming activities are most effective when you have a group of people and are able to build on each other's ideas.

The short overview of Module 2 procedure (see Table 2):

Activity 1: My information consumption (15 min)

At the beginning the students are asked to complete the log, filling in what media they consume regularly (YouTube, twitter, radio, TV shows, etc.), and what content they consume on each platform. For example, they might check Facebook or Instagram as soon as they wake up, listen to a podcast on the way to university on the bus, and watch some show on YouTube or favourite TV channel at lunch. Everyone is told to list as much as possible and whatever comes to mind. The participants are reminded to include all media here — it doesn't just have to be the news.

Activity 2: Video Discussion (20 min)

The students watch video from https://study.ed-era.com/courses_online course on media literacy in which they learn about types of media content and how to identify markers of persuasive content.

Activity 3: Team work (30 min)

The trainer divides the students into groups and gives each group a different type of communication content: “*reporting*,” “*opinion*,” “*advertising*,” “*social advertising*,” “*PR*,” or “*propaganda*.” Each group will choose one example from their category to

analyze. They should decide whether their content type counts as “*information*” or “*persuasion*,” and write the content type in the relevant box.

Results

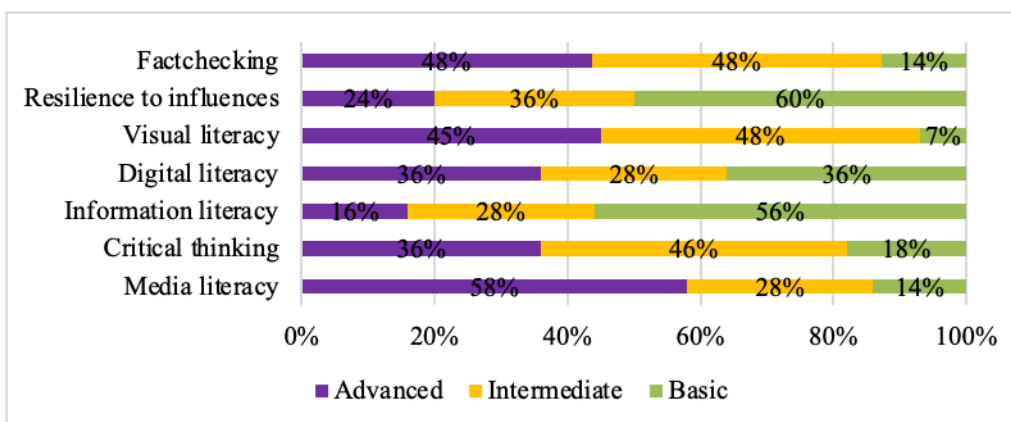
To investigate the effectiveness of the model of content and language integrated learning in the context of the development of information and media literacy, we conducted testing of participants at the beginning and at the end of the pilot training. How the metrics split is shown in the charts below (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2).

Learning outcomes show improvements in all areas of media and information literacy and ability to detect and resist manipulation. As demonstrated in table 3, there is significant increase (20%) of media literacy skills in the advanced level group of students who proved to be successful in understanding how media work and recognizing how the media evoke emotional reactions from the consumers. The participants learned to reflect on how ownership might (or might not) affect contents, which turned to be quite difficult for respondents of the intermediate and basic level groups though.

Based on the results of the pivotal training, it can be concluded that practicing in visual images analysis and verifying photo forgeries was beneficial for participants to improve their visual literacy skills (31%) in the advanced group. However, for the intermediate group representatives the tools exploited in the training seemed complicated to understand visual material as text and analyze images and symbols of visual texts.

Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 illustrate the significant increase (24%) of students’ resilience to influences and their ability to identify manifestations of propaganda; ability to identify fakes and manipulation tools.

Figure 1
Indicators of Media Literacy Before Pilot Training



Unexpectedly, the results revealed no notable differences in information literacy (10%) as well as in critical thinking (5%) after pilot training. Obviously, ability to discern facts from opinions along with ability to evaluate and interpret events; trace

causal relationships and analyze motivations and reasons for actions are essential for evaluating media messages effectively and requires much time and efforts.

It should be noted that less improvement in digital literacy skills (18%) in basic level group does cause concern, since this particular skill enables students to prevent risks in communication – cyber bullying, and especially in privacy management.

Figure 2
Indicators of Media Literacy After Pilot Training

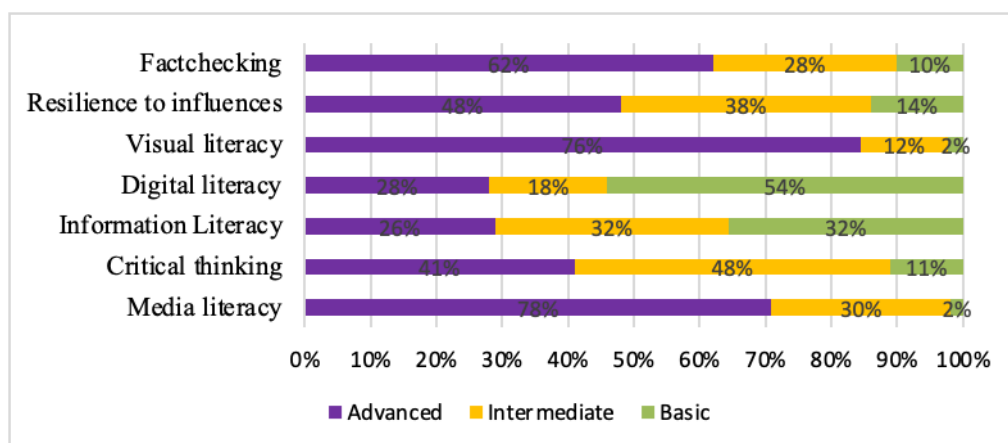


Table 3
Dynamics of Media Literacy Development Before and After Pilot Training

Media literacy indicators	Levels of students' media literacy skills development					
	Before pilot training			After pilot training		
	Basic	Intermediate	Advanced	Basic	Intermediate	Advanced
Media Literacy	14%	28%	58%	2%	30%	78%
Information Literacy	56%	28%	16%	32%	32%	26%
Critical Thinking	18%	46%	36%	11%	48%	41%
Digital Literacy	36%	28%	36%	54%	18%	28%
Visual Literacy	7%	48%	45%	2%	12%	76%
Resilience to influences	60%	36%	24%	14%	38%	48%

The research demonstrated that media literacy training cannot only promote students' critical approaches to media consumption and increase awareness of media effects but also influence behavioral changes

Within our project implementation, the team of colleagues were eager to find pedagogical tools that help their students engage in conversations about media, popular culture, and digital communication technology as a means to guide their learning. Our responsibility as media literacy mentors was and is to reach out, to learn from our colleagues in other fields, and to bridge the various disciplines by making the critical connections necessary to enlarge the field. Learning to analyze news and advertising, distinguishing between propaganda, opinion and information, examining the representation of gender, race and class in entertainment and information media, understanding media economics and ownership, and exploring the ways in which violence and sexuality are depicted in media messages continue to matter as important life skills.

Discussion

In addition to the significant increase in the relevant parameters of media literacy shown in the diagram, students demonstrated an increase in motivation to study modern means of media influence on human life, the development of their own emotional intelligence and resilience to influences, as well as to the integrated study of content and a foreign language.

The results of our experimental study proved that students who participated in a 6-week English integrated media course incorporated extensive critical media analysis of print, audio, and visual texts that media literacy instruction improved their text analysis skills, including the ability to identify the purpose, target audience, point of view, construction techniques used in media messages, and the ability to identify omitted information from a news media broadcast in written, audio, or visual formats.

The participants learned how to identify their own media consumption habits, recognize how media evokes emotional reactions from the consumers and what is more, realized their responsibility when sharing media content. Learning strategies which were exploited helped them better recognize and understand the emotional reactions they might have to news and media.

Conclusions

Due to the fact that media literacy is no longer a “talk-shop” concept discussed in exclusively academic circles, a predominant number of the project participants, possessing certain awareness of the subject, showed certain overconfidence in their media literacy skills and habitual media consumption practices. In the course of the project, however, such parameters as e.g. emotional resilience and visual literacy had to undergo considerable improvements. Having certain general knowledge of manipulative strategies, the students at the same time get easily affected by quite recognizable manipulations in feed algorithms, especially combinations of visual images and

clickbait. This leads to the conclusion that the awareness of media manipulations and recognition of one's own unhealthy media consumption habits does not at all guarantee the proper behavior in the media environment. This calls for close collaboration of educators with representatives of cognitive psychology who would provide us with effective tools of developing emotional intelligence in its parameters of identification and proper management of one's own emotions and thus enhancing emotional resilience against surging manipulative influences of the media.

The study of the main pillars of media literacy in the form of singular modules integrated in non-degree university courses, with all its remarkable results in the realization of the initial goals, is yet, in our view, not a perfect method of developing media literacy in students of pedagogy who will further translate its standpoints to the young generation and act or will act as voters and media consumers themselves. This form of content integration lacks substantiality and consequentiality of a wholesome course which ought to belong to the compulsory block of university courses and thus involve sufficient psychological trainings, investigations, projects, debates et cetera. Thus we would advocate the creation of a standardized syllabus for pedagogical higher educational institutions relying of close collaboration with all the parties having been involved in the Learn to Discern initiative.

In this regard, we would opt for flexible and adaptable formats of syllabus structure that would react immediately to the rapidly growing complexity, and variedness of media manipulations and keep pace with them (e.g. the AI capacities and potential as the object of misuse or the challenges posed by AR).

An extra plea would relate to the successiveness of secondary school media literacy content and that belonging to the university stage of education: so far the content introduced on these two stages is, with admittedly proper age adaptations, has been the same. In our view, the manipulative strategies with all their subtlety und sophistication can be reviewed and analyzed at a deeper level than is featured in the hitherto developed IREX dissemination materials. This urgently calls for close cross-disciplinary collaboration and maximization of the applicability of the professional content for courses of non-degree syllabi.

Notwithstanding the fact that the general thematic lines, strategies and practical implementation guidelines have been already organized into a systematic conception, there is a set of open questions for whose discussion we kindly invite the academic community: 1) whether media literacy syllabi should be developed with regard of narrow specialization of university courses or whether they should remain independent of the degree course content; 2) how flexible modules should work, through the traditional annual adaptation of university syllabi conducted by teachers, or in cooperation with students, journalists and psychologists in a non-traditional format of off-plan, rather keep-pace interventions into the existing syllabi; 3) how educators can reach audiences that do not belong either to the school or to the university stage; 4) how educators can ensure the prevention of media literacy "backfire" which might result in

overskeptical perception of media content and avoidance of active citizenship and participation in the political life.

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