

Advancing MILID

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This article describes the recent activity of the Gabinete of Communication and Education at the Autonomous University of Barcelona in relation to the Cooperation Programme on UNESCO-UNAOC UNITWIN Global Chair on Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue. The main objectives of this activity were: A) The consolidation of a European strategy for the promotion of media and information literacy by developing new lines of research and dissemination. B) Advances in networking and research training in the field of media and information literacy. In this context the article presents the outline of two research projects: 1) EMEDUS – that aims to analyze the various media literacy education approaches in national curricula across the European Union's 27 Member State and to develop recommendations to sustain educational policy at national and European policy levels; 2) DINAMIC – that is creating new indicators of MIL which refer to individuals and institutions. The article also presents other training and dissemination activities carried out by the Gabinete.

Introduction

In recent years, and especially in 2012, the activity of the Department of Communication and Education from the UAB (henceforth to be known as “the department” in this report) has produced results in MILID (media and information literacy and intercultural dialogue) by reinforcing the lines of action and research on projects it is involved in with other international partners.

Progress has been achieved in the following areas:

- a) **The consolidation of a European strategy** for the promotion of media and information literacy by developing new lines of research and dissemination.
- b) **Advances in networking and research training** in the field of media and information literacy that has achieved a quantum leap.

This progress has taken place in different geographical areas: Spain and Europe, on the one hand, Latin America and the Caribbean, on the other, with the view

to ultimately going global. In this endeavor the constitution of the UNITWIN Cooperation Programme on Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue has meant a major step forward.

In order to understand this series of advances, it is necessary to put the actions in a time perspective.

Traditionally, the lines of action and research carried out by the Department of Communication of the UAB have moved in the realms of the vast intersection between communication and education: a) research on new communication models, cultural and educational television, journalism, social media, etc., b) the impact of new media-ethics, responsibilities, regulations, risks and opportunities, c) childhood, youth and media, active citizenship and new forms of participation and political mobilization.

However, in recent years all this has taken a new direction under the banner of media and information literacy and intercultural dialogue (MILID). MILID encompasses the ability of individuals, groups and institutions to use the media for their own purposes with autonomy and consciousness, and to participate in the social sphere, and more precisely, in intercultural dialogue.

In other words, in recent times, the main and constant object of action-research carried out by the department has been the possibility of empowerment that the media and ICT's provide to individuals, groups and institutions. And this has contributed, through a series of happy circumstances, to the consolidation of a European policy on media literacy and the establishment of a network of universities dedicated to promoting MILID.

Let us briefly review the major milestones of this course of action.

Towards a European Policy on Media Literacy: From Promoting Digital Literacy to the EMEDUS and DINAMIC Projects

Since 2004, when the European Commission appointed Pérez Tornero to draft a report on Promoting Digital Literacy, the department began research on digital literacy (later renamed media and information literacy) in conjunction with the European Union, which continues to the present.

In that report, two qualitative changes in the strategy of promoting digital competence were proposed:

- a) Considering digital capabilities not only as a technical skill, but mainly as a process of cultural and institutional transformation. Put another way, it is openly recognized that acquiring digital skills profoundly transforms the language, symbols, imagery and routines of individuals, groups and institutions.

- b) Proposing policies that promote digital capabilities using eco-systemic and cultural vision that carefully consider the specific contexts and times in which the new digital culture can sustain itself and develop in a specific social system. Without a comprehensive and systematic view on this topic, any process will be partial and unstable.

That study was accompanied by a series of recommendations to the European Commission, and was continued in another study called the Study on the Current Trends and Approaches on Media Literacy in Europe, whose aim was to know, from a global point of view, the state of media literacy in Europe.

Here, the formal and informal dimensions of media education, as well as its legal regulations, were studied and a benchmarking of some countries was carried out.

The result was a vision of all the strengths and weaknesses of the subject in Europe, which opened the possibility of establishing some recommendations:

- a) Promoting a policy in favor of media literacy focused on creating a proper definition for it as well as a shared conceptual framework.
- b) Defining criteria, indicators and systems for monitoring the development of media literacy in various countries.
- c) Establishing policies for cooperation and consultation between the various actors taken from common values such as creativity, participation, personal autonomy and critical thinking.

This study had immediate consequences: The European Commission decided to establish the indicators that should measure the degree of development of media literacy in Europe.

The study that suggested such indicators is titled: *Study on Assessment Criteria for Media Literacy Levels*. And these indicators were incorporated in a European Audiovisual Services Directive in 2008, making them a reference to follow in all European countries.

Furthermore, many of the recommendations and principles arising from the studies cited -and promoted by a group of experts in Media Literacy that the Commission sponsored for 4 years- led to a genuine European strategy on media literacy, which resulted in a recommendation by the European Parliament on media education.

In 2012, the Commission is renewing its efforts to clarify the role of media literacy in the development of European society and, more specifically, in education.

Once again the UAB, through the Department of Communication and Education ("Department"), along with an extensive network of European part-

ners, is participating in this effort and is undertaking a study called EMEDUS, whose aim is to provide the European Commission with new proposals to promote media education in the context of lifelong learning. The main result of this study will be to create a solid platform of relationship between the actors who, directly or indirectly, participate in media literacy and media education. To do this, the project aims to substantiate the basis for the construction of European Media Literacy, which undoubtedly will be an important milestone in the European Union's policy on the matter.

With this process, one can say that Europe has adopted a pragmatic framework for understanding media literacy and, at the same time, has a complete system of benchmarks and indicators to promote a specific policy on the subject.

A new research project called DINAMIC, (Developing Individual and Corporate Media Literacy Indicators) represents a significant advance with respect to the study of indicators, particularly with respect to Spain. In this case it goes beyond countries and proposes new indicators of media and information literacy (MIL), which refer to individuals and institutions. (See Table 4)

International networks for training in media literacy and its dissemination

During 2011-2012 a breakthrough took place in the creation and promotion of international networks. In large part this advance is thanks to several seminars and international conferences that took place in this time as well as to the deepening and extension of training tasks related to MIL.

With this end the Department had a hand in organizing the following events:

- **2010: International Congress on Media Literacy and Digital Cultures (Sevilla)**, This was held during the Spanish Presidency of the European Union. Its aim was to provide a forum for debate, reflection and analysis of initiatives, projects, research and trends on media literacy in Europe and Latin America. It was attended by over 300 professionals and researchers from Latin America and Europe and more than 40 television companies dedicated to culture and education.
- **2011: EBU Training Assembly**. During the 2011-2012 academic year, the Department worked extensively with the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), with RTVE and the Spanish Radio and Television Institute, to develop a conference on new media and training. The goal was to foresee and prepare for emerging services and content in the audiovisual field that require new professional competences and training strategies to meet this need. It was the first time that the EBU organized a meeting of this kind at a university in direct contact with students.

- **2011: International Conference on Communication and Education:** (Barcelona). Global experts participated and focused their attention on media literacy strategies around the world. An analysis of the progress made on Media Literacy in Europe was taken as a starting point. This information was proposed and synthesized in several studies done by the Department and these were compared with those carried out in countries in the Arab world and Latin America especially. The result was a step towards the integration of different concepts and strategies of Media Literacy. Beyond cultural and national differences it is possible to move towards a new paradigm which, using an expression from UNESCO, will be called Media and Information Literacy. Latent consensus was perceived during the course of the conference in Barcelona.
- **2012: MILID WEEK (Barcelona, May)** This was the first of a series of meetings which, henceforth, will be organized annually within the University Twining and Networking (UNITWIN) Cooperation Program on Media and Information Literacy (UNESCO-UNAOC). Various representatives from eight universities, including China, Egypt, West Indies, Australia, Brazil, and the US actively participated during the meeting and the outcome was the launch of the strategic plan UNITWIN MEDIA AND COOPERATION PROGRAMME ON INFORMATION LITERACY. This program was launched earlier at the Fez Conference in 2011 which, in Barcelona, took one step further in the shape of an action plan for two years. All universities in the network participated and agreed on operating principles and, as a result, the impact has been great. In a short time, additional applications from universities, institutions and associations worldwide to participate in the plan were received. The network is beginning to establish itself as an important reference for the movement of media and information literacy in the world.
- **2012: First expert panel meeting of EMEDUS Project (Barcelona, November) European Media Literacy Education Study.** The EMEDUS project seeks to diagnose the situation of media education in Europe and proposes courses of action to governments and the European Commission. The first meeting of the expert panel served to highlight the need to enhance coordination, agree on strategies, create national councils for the promotion of media literacy and advance the development of media literacy in compulsory education. New lines of work were also proposed such as incorporating media literacy in developing smart cities and fomenting creativity and communication.
- **2012: EURANET ACADEMY (Paris, Warsaw, Munich)** The Department has not neglected its direct involvement with the media and media professionals. During 2012 it has been very active in the EURANET network and

initiated, together with its various partners, the creation of the EURANET ACADEMY, one of whose first projects is the creation of a European and International master's degree in Journalism. It is not a conventional master's but one in which special attention is paid to critical knowledge about journalism and the role that journalism has in promoting active, media literate citizens. This is an experimental laboratory for the promotion of cosmopolitan and advanced journalism, which is sensitive to citizen needs in the construction of journalistic discourse and in which the factor of innovation, anticipation and quality become the leitmotif for teaching and research.

- **2012: Telecentres in Latin America.** The continued work with the Telecenter Network in Latin America should be noted, especially with the University of Monterrey and the UNAM; the latter with which a project of cooperation in media and information literacy is being prepared.
- **2012: Presence in European forums.** Two European events are also noteworthy: the first is the conference organized by the *Media Literacy Unit of the European Commission on Media Literacy in Times of Crisis* and the need to promote creativity in finding feasible solutions. The conference was held on 16 November in Brussels.

The second meeting was the *Media & Learning Conference* organized by the MEDEA Association on 14 and 15 November in Brussels. This was an opportunity to exchange knowledge and trends on how education is incorporating media literacy and how the media, such as the BBC, is producing excellent educational material. More than 200 people from all over Europe met to discuss the goals and experiences while the Department of Communication and Education shared its EMEDUS research cited above.

Table 1. European Media Policy

Timeline of Media Literacy Development – European Commission Official Documents			
Year	Date	Author	Title
1982	Jan, 1982	UNESCO	Grünwald Declaration on Media Education ¹
1989	Oct, 1989	European Union	Television Without Frontiers Directive (TVWF) ²
	Oct, Nov 1989	UNESCO	General Actes ³
1990	Jul, 1990	UNESCO	New Directions in Media Education, Toulouse Colloquy ⁴
1991	Jul, 1991	European Commission	MEDIA Programme ⁵
1999	Jan, 1999	European Commission	Safer Internet Programme ⁶
	April, 1999	UNESCO	Congress in Vienna “Educating for the Media and the Digital Age” ⁷
2000	March, 2000	European Commission	Lisbon European Council ⁸
	May, 2000	European Commission	eLearning Programme. Designing tomorrow’s education ⁹
	Jun, 2000	European Council	Recommendation 1466 (2000) of Media Education from the Parliamentary Assembly, Council of Europe ¹⁰
2002	Feb, 2002	UNESCO	“Youth Media Education Seminar in Seville” ¹¹
	Nov, 2002	European Commission	Proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council adopting a multi-annual programme (2004-2006) for the effective integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in education and training systems in Europe (eLearning Programme) ¹²
	Dec, 2002	European Parliament	Recommendation 1586 (2002) The digital divide and education ¹³
2004	N/M, 2004	UK Film Council and BFI	Promoting Digital Literacy European Charter for Media Literacy ¹⁴
2005	Oct, 2005	UNESCO	L’éducation aux médias enjeu des sociétés du savoir ¹⁵
	Nov, 2005	UNESCO	The Alexandria Proclamation ¹⁶
	Nov, 2005	European Parliament and Council	Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on film heritage and the competitiveness of related industrial activities ¹⁷

2006	March, 2006	European Commission	The Media Literacy Expert Group ¹⁸
	Sep, 2006	Council of Europe	Recommendation Rec (2006)12 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on empowering children in the new information and communications environment ¹⁹
	Dec, 2006	European Parliament and Council	Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on key competences for lifelong learning ²⁰
	Dec, 2006	European Commission	Public consultation on Media Literacy. Making sense of today's media content ²¹
	Dec, 2006	European Parliament and Council	Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of minors and human dignity and on the right of reply in relation to the competitiveness of the European audiovisual and on-line information services industry ²²
	Dec, 2006	European Parliament and Council	Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning ²³
	Dec, 2006	European Parliament	European Parliament resolution of 16 December 2008 on media literacy in a digital world ²⁴
2007	Jun, 2007	UNESCO	Paris Agenda or 12 recommendations for media education ²⁵
	Jun, 2007	UNESCO	L'éducation aux médias: avancées, obstacles, orientations, nouvelles depuis Grünwald: ver un changement d'échelle? ²⁶
	Nov, 2007	European Commission	European i2010 initiative on e-Inclusion to be a part of the information society ²⁷
	Dec, 2007	European Commission	Current Trends and Approaches to Media Literacy in Europe (2007) ²⁸ European Audiovisual Media Service Directive (AMSD) ²⁹
2008	Feb, 2008	European Parliament	Recommendation 1799 (2007) of Parliament Assembly of the Council of Europe of The image of women in advertising ³⁰
	May, 2008	European Council	Council conclusions of 22 May 2008 on a European approach to media literacy in the digital environment ³¹
	Oct, 2008	European Union	Opinion of the Committee of the Regions on 'Media literacy' and 'Creative content online' ³²
	Nov-Dec, 2008	European Commission	Working paper and recommendations from Digital Literacy High Level Expert Group e-Inclusion ³³

2009	Jul, 2009	Council of Europe	Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on measures to protect children against harmful content and behaviour and to promote their active participation in the new information and communications environment ³⁴
	July, Aug, 2009	European Commission	Study on Assessment Criteria for Media Literacy Levels (2009) - A comprehensive view of the concept of media literacy and an understanding of how media literacy levels in Europe should be assessed Commission Recommendation on media literacy in the digital environment for a more competitive audiovisual and content industry and an inclusive knowledge society ³⁵
	Nov, 2009	Council of Europe	Council conclusions on media literacy in the digital environment ³⁶
2010 2012	March, 2010	Council of Europe	Council Resolution on the enforcement of intellectual property rights in the internal market ³⁷
	May, 2010	European Union	Opinion of the Committee of the Regions on regional perspectives in developing media literacy and media education in EU educational policy ³⁸
	May, 2012	European Commission	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions A Digital Agenda for Europe ³⁹ EMEDUS European Media Literacy Education Study ⁴⁰ .

Table 2. Emedus Project

EMEDUS supports the development of policies on lifelong media literacy education at European and national levels. Specific objectives of this research project are to: • Analyze the various media literacy education approaches in national curricula across the European Union's 27 Member States; • Analyze teachers' resources on media education, skills and competences and their relevance; • Research informal learning and media resources available on media education, with specific attention to minorities; • Contribute to the harmonization of tools used to measure media literacy skills and competences across different disciplines of education; • Develop policy recommendations to sustain educational policies at national and European levels; • Disseminate findings to a wide network of stakeholders involved in media literacy education across Europe. What are the challenges? • Media literacy is now a recognised fundamental skill for people of all ages to enhance their interests and exercise their rights as citizens in today's societies. • Yet the concept of media literacy remains differently understood across the EU Member States. The end-points of media literacy education, the pedagogical tools, the necessary competences of teachers and evaluation methods also remain disparate – in the various countries, at various educational levels and in different learning sectors (formal, informal and non-formal). • A thorough understanding of the current state of play will enable policy-makers to formulate policies that are based on best practices and are relevant in all national and social contexts.

Table 3. European indicators on MEDIA LITERACY

These indicators, based on the assessment study discussed above, and the study Towards Media and Information Literacy Indicators of UNESCO (2011), measure the development of different European countries in terms of media literacy.

COMPONENT	INDICATOR
DIMENSION	USE
Computer	Individuals who have participated in at least 5 of the computer related activities. (see word).
Internet	Individuals who have participated in at least 5 activities on the Internet
Balanced and active use of media	Individuals regularly (at least once a week, within the last three months) use the Internet
	Access to newspapers
	Individuals accessing Internet through a mobile phone via UMTS (3G)
	Individuals at least five times, within the last twelve months, going to the cinema
	Individuals at least five times, within the last twelve months, reading a book
	Individuals at least every day, within the last three months, watching television
	Individuals at least every day, within the last three months, listening to the radio
	Individuals at least every day, within the last three months, playing videogames
Advanced Internet use	Individuals having ordered/bought goods or services for private use over the Internet in the last three months
	Internet banking
	Interacting with public authorities
DIMENSION	CRITICAL UNDERSTANDING
Understanding Media content and the way it works	Reading texts (assessment, Testing)
	Classifying written and audiovisual texts (Assessment): analyzes, examines and extracts relevant media and information (UNESCO)
	Distinguishing media content (Assessment) Identifies the best and most useful media and information (UNESCO)
	Elements to which the user attaches importance to rely on information (Assessment)
	Protects personal data (UNESCO)
	Classifying media platforms and interactions systems (Assesment)
	Chooses appropriate media and information sources (UNESCO)

Knowledge about media and media regulation	Media concentration (Assessment) Media control (UNESCO)
	Knowledge and opinion regarding the media regulation subject (Assesment) Media regulation and policy ownership (UNESCO)
	Do you know which institution sanctions possible violations of the law operated by TV stations? (Assessment) Existence of regulatory authorities (UNESCO)
	Do you know the authorized institution to turn to when you notice something insulting, injurious or offensive on TV, radio or Internet? If the answer is yes, name it. (Assessment) Existence of regulatory authorities (UNESCO)
	Rules and rights applicable to media content (assessment) Media regulation and policy ownership (UNESCO) Rules and rights applicable to media content (TESTING)
	Perceptions of the watershed (ASSESSMENT) Perceptions of the watershed (TESTING)
	Knowledge about regulation on internet (ASSESSMENT) Media regulation and policy ownership (UNESCO) Knowledge about regulation on internet (TESTING)
	Author/ User rights (ASSESSMENT) Demonstrates ethical use of information (UNESCO) Author/ User rights (TESTING)
Use behaviour	Exploring information and critical search of information (ASSESSMENT) Analyzes, examines and extracts relevant media and information (UNESCO) Exploring information and critical search of information (TESTING)
	Checks made when visiting new websites (ASSESSMENT) Determines appropriate and revelant use of information (UNESCO)
	Judgements made about a website before entering personal details (ASSESSMENT) Protects personal data (UNESCO) Judgements made about a website before entering personal details (TESTING)
DIMENSION	COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS. SOCIAL BEHAVIOR
Engaging with social networking sites	Individuals engaged with social networking websites activities
Creating content to communicate and interact	Individuals creating content to communicate and interact
DIMENSION	COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION
e-Participation	Individuals participating in citizenship activities
Using Social Networking Sites to Engage in Politics and Social Issues	Individuals using social networking websites to engage in politics and social issues
DIMENSION	COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS. CONTENT CREATION
User-created content	Individuals creating content in order to communicate.

Table 4. New media literacy indicators applied to people, institutions and corporations: Project DINAMIC

The Department of Communication and Education is also currently coordinating a research & development project funded by the Ministry of Science and Innovation called "DINAMIC": "Developing Individual and Corporate Media Literacy Indicators" ("Desarrollo de Indicadores de Alfabetización Mediática Individuales, Corporativos y Ciudadanos", 2012-2013). Unlike the indicators for countries, DINAMIC seeks to establish measurement and assessment systems for operational, cognitive and especially critical skills of people, and thus reveal the consequences that these skills have in personal and institutional development.

The essentials of project DINAMIC:

The main objective of the new initiative is to design a system of indicators for Media Literacy applicable to individuals, companies, corporations and collectives. In terms of inputs, DINAMIC will assess the skills and capabilities of individuals, both with respect to the use of ICT's and their potential to solve problems such as content creation, among others.

The first phase of the project will involve the analysis of the current situation of measuring indicators for Media Literacy defined by the international scientific community. In turn, the starting point will be the European indicators already developed by the research team of the department: Current Trends and Approaches to media literacy in Europe (2007) and the Study on Assessment Criteria for Media Literacy Levels (2009), both reference points in Europe.

The second stage of the project will include the development of a pilot study based on the application of tests and trials in order to rigorously measure the level of media literacy achieved by individuals and groups. The study will be applied in companies, schools, the media and government agencies.

The third phase of the project will include expansion of the field work to more sectors. Once tested, the DINAMIC indicators system will be presented as a rigorous measurement tool capable of assessing the level of media literacy of both individuals and groups in different settings (schools, businesses, government agencies and the media).

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Notes

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