

Teaching Media and Information Literacy; Presentation of a course for teachers and school librarians

The following presentation aims to present and share experiences from the course in Media and Information Literacy (MIL) at the University of Borås as a part of the professional development of teachers and school librarians.

Background

The course *Media and Information Literacy in Education* has been offered every year as an independent professional development course since 2014 at the University of Borås, Sweden. The course is aimed at teachers and school librarians and focuses on how cooperation between these professions can strengthen the development of students' media and information literacies. The UNESCO framework for media and information literacies, (Wilson, Grizzle, Tuazon, Akyempong & Cheung, 2011) forms the basis for the course and it is complemented by current research highlighting the area. After the course, participants are expected to be able to describe different aspects of the concept media and information literacy and how MIL can be understood in different contexts. The course participants will also be able to give practical examples of how MIL can be integrated into different subjects and educational contexts. The course is completely online via a learning platform, and the participants can take part in lectures that are streamed or recorded in advance. All communication is via video conferencing or chat and the participants are encouraged and challenged to use digital tools for communication and in assignments. The main course assignment is to design a development project for the participant's own school. This means that the course generates many different projects for participants to share and discuss.

Collaborations

In the course *Media and Information Literacy in Education*, several forms of collaboration have been initiated and developed. We present these in two categories, the first describes collaboration at university level. The second category describes collaboration developed at the local level between teachers and librarians.

Collaboration within the university

The course is given in cooperation between the Department for Teacher Education and the Department for Library and Information Science at the Faculty for Librarianship, Information, Education and IT. It is both organizationally cross-border and interdisciplinary, which we have experienced as rewarding and constructive. In addition, we have become more aware that both teachers and school librarians work with MIL, and that interaction between these roles contributes to the development of perspectives and dimensions of the concept.

A number of external partners have been invited to lecture and discuss MIL in the course. *The Swedish Media Council* has participated in a presentation of the agency's activities and digital resources that can be used to support MIL and which they publish on their website. They also conduct periodic surveys on children and youth's media habits, the results of which they present in the course. Their publications are also included in the course literature.

Nordicom, (Nordicom Clearinghouse at the University of Gothenburg) is a Nordic knowledge center in the media and communications sector, and researchers from Nordicom have lectured in the course. Their mission is to make both Swedish and international research outcomes visible.

UR, the Swedish Educational Broadcasting Company that produces television and radio programs for schools, has also participated in the course by giving lectures. For a number of years, UR has produced MIL material for teachers and school staff for instance on how bias is formed in the media. They also produce television programs for school children about source criticism and advertising. In the course they demonstrate how to use the resources they provide for educators and students and which are freely available for working with different aspects of MIL.

Filmpedagogerna [Film in education] an organisation in the Västra Götaland region in Sweden, work to support and develop MIL within the region's municipalities and schools, mainly through film. They collaborate with international stakeholders in MIL where they provide training and create digital resources in line with the UNESCO framework.

Collaborations between participants

The course is aimed at teachers and school librarians, and they can choose to work together on their development project. Co-operation between these professions is a recurrent main issue in research where it is usually librarians who try to become integrally involved in teaching (see: Gärdén School Library's role for student learning: A research and knowledge overview 2010-2015). Librarians have been teaching aspects of MIL for some time in particular source criticism and information retrieval although teachers have not always been fully aware of this. During the course, we provide examples of constructive collaboration in order to make visible and discuss potential barriers to cooperation. Here we emphasize the responsibilities and duties of these two professional roles, as well as the importance of creating organizational conditions that facilitate cooperation. Participants in our courses represent teaching in all age groups, from the youngest children to adult education, thus increasing awareness that competence in MIL is significant to all levels in educational organizations.

Development projects as assignments

Participants on the course design projects based on their own professional framework thus increasing the relevance of their assignments to their workplaces. Early in the course, participants conduct a survey about how MIL is presented in the teaching at their own schools thus revealing how MIL as a concept is valid at all the various participants' workplaces. The projects are developed and planned within the scope of regular teaching which we hope will increase the sustainability of MIL development after completion of the course.

Examples of projects

A wide variety of development projects have been created and implemented by the course participants. Source criticism is a recurring theme and has appeared as both educational content in itself and embedded in other subjects. Another topic dealt with is how advertising affects us, and students have also designed their own advertising campaigns. Students have also acted as producers in several projects, for example, presenting book tips via digital tools, writing their own e-books and publishing articles in Wikipedia. News media has also appeared as a theme where questions about the accessibility of news, freedom of speech and press ethics have been in focus. In these projects, the students themselves have been able to produce news, for example through film and podcasts. Some projects have focused on professional development, and in these cases the course participants have developed materials for further education at their workplace, often digital resources.

On completion of the course

One question the course instructors have discussed is how these projects have been received by the students who were involved and how they will be sustained. That question has yet no answer today. However, MIL as a concept has grown and become established within schools and Swedish society during the years that the course has been taught.

International dissemination

The next step in the course's development is to adapt and provide it in Kenya with whom we collaborate. In May, course instructors were invited to Kenya and met representatives from the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), the Center for Media and Information Literacy in Kenya (CMIL) and several universities connected to MIL. The Swedish course was presented and we subsequently discussed possibilities for creating a common course for participants from both Kenya and Sweden. The meeting resulted in many issues that have to be further processed. Areas that need to be discussed are; How the course can be developed and adapted for professional teachers and school librarians in Kenya. The aim is that content is based on the conditions of the countries in terms of cultural, economic and social aspects. What educational teaching methods and assignments are required to enable participants from Sweden and Kenya to meet and share experiences in the course? The goal is that methods and tools in the course can be used by course instructors and participants wherever they come from. Similarly, examinations need to be designed to meet the educational requirements of the different countries.