INTEGRATING MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY (MIL) IN OPEN AND DISTANCE eLEARNING (ODeL) IN THE PHILIPPINES: SOME POLICY AND ACTION AGENDA

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Introduction

- Distance education has come of age in the Philippines.

- From broadcast-based school-on-the-air courses to a more structured, school-based distance learning system at present

- There are now 26 tertiary schools in the Philippines that offer distance education courses

Introduction

- With the advent of computers, multimedia and Internet, educators and school administrators are now encouraged and challenged to develop strategies to maximize the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in education.

Introduction

- However, the emergence of media and Internet culture does have its own drawbacks such as the "cut and paste" mentality which allows learners to copy information from proprietary sources without proper attribution.

Introduction

- This also makes lurkers to passively accept anything from the Internet as legitimate.

- Learners get exposed as well to objectionable, disturbing or inappropriate materials on the Internet.

- Sometimes, they also upload information and messages on the Internet irresponsibly without thinking of the repercussions of their actions.

Introduction

- …Now that anyone with an Internet connection can publish and disseminate content with no editorial review process, consumers of Web content need to be editors as well as readers. They need to know how to identify the source of a piece of information, gauge the source's reputation, compare the information with what's already known, and make a judgment about its authenticity and relevance. We must teach students how to actively question and evaluate published information… (Richardson, 2006)

UNESCO's Media and Information Literacy Program

- Media and information literacy (MIL) as "knowledge and understanding of how the media operate, how they construct meaning, how they can be used, and how to evaluate the information they present. This also implies knowledge and understanding of personal and social values, responsibilities relating to the ethical use of technology and information, as well as participation in democratic and cultural dialogue." (UNESCO, 2008)

UNESCO's Media and Information Literacy Program

Media literacy includes how to:

- Understand the role and functions of media in democratic societies

- Understand the conditions under which media can fulfill their functions

UNESCO's Media and Information Literacy Program

- Critically evaluate media content in the light of media functions

- Engage with media for self-expression and democratic participation

- Review skills (including ICTs) needed to produce user-generated content

- Define and articulate information needs

UNESCO's Media and Information Literacy Program

Information literacy includes how to:

- Locate and access information

- Assess information

- Organize information

- Make ethical use of information

- Communicate information

- Use ICT skills for information processing

UNESCO's Media and Information Literacy Program

- Media and information literacy is needed not only to protect ourselves from the harmful effects of media and Internet but also to empower us to make wise choices about media and information that are useful to our everyday lives and our ability to communicate and participate in discussions that directly affect us.

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The Philippines' Open and Distance Learning Policy

- The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) through its Technical Committee for Distance Education has developed CHED Memorandum Order #27, series 2005 entitled "Policies and Guidelines on Distance Education" to provide guidelines in the management of distance education programs at the tertiary level.

The Philippines' Open and Distance Learning Policy

- The memorandum order includes the implementing guidelines on qualifications of higher education institutions to offer distance education programs, institutional management and commitment, and components of distance education such as curriculum and delivery system, instructional materials development, delivery mode/strategies and student support services.

The Philippines' Open and Distance Learning Policy

- Distance education, as defined in this memorandum order, refers to "a mode of educational delivery whereby teacher and learner are separated in time and space, and instruction is delivered through specially designed materials and methods using appropriate technologies and supported by organizational and administrative structures and arrangements" (CHED, 2005).

The Philippines' Open and Distance Learning Policy

- E-learning is a subset of distance education. It is not what distance education is all about. However, since Internet and other modern technologies are becoming readily available, e-learning could be covered extensively in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of the memorandum order.

The Philippines' Open and Distance Learning Policy

- How to access, evaluate and use instructional materials by, with and through the media and Internet should likewise be properly addressed.

- Distance education tutors and facilitators now deal with learners who spend most of their time using media and Internet and producing materials using digital tools.

The Philippines' Open and Distance Learning Policy

- Open learning as a philosophy of learning and the amount of flexibility needed should likewise be covered in the IRR.

- The media and information literacy requirements may be subsumed by the components of IRR on instructional materials development and student support services.

Areas for Integrating Media and Information Literacy in ODeL

- Provide guidelines in locating media and information sources with emphasis on how to achieve cyber wellness and Internet safety without prejudice to discovery-based learning and bricolage reasoning

Areas for Integrating Media and Information Literacy in ODeL

- Develop guidelines on online activities that will allow them to use and review podcasts, webinars, blogs, wikis, videos, music, among others, and explain how and why messages in these media or platforms are created and produced in informing, entertaining or persuading learners and tutors

Areas for Integrating Media and Information Literacy in ODeL

- Provide guidelines on how search engines work

- Organize teams online for class project coordination, implementation and management

Areas for Integrating Media and Information Literacy in ODeL

- Provide guidelines on how to assess the value, authenticity, validity and reliability of media and Internet information and materials

- Introduce activities in the modules that will allow learners to understand, analyze and think critically about issues covered by media and Internet

Areas for Integrating Media and Information Literacy in ODeL

- Use digital tools to communicate, collaborate, mobilize groups to tutor and facilitate courses more coherently and responsibly; accomplish, produce and evaluate course requirements; and manage interaction and feedback more deliberately.

Areas for Integrating Media and Information Literacy in ODeL

- Provide activities in the modules that will enable learners to sharpen their research skills, organize information gained from media and Internet, and communicate what they have learned through media outputs and projects.

Some Policy and Action Agenda

- What are some of the policy and action agenda that can be integrated in a new set of guidelines on open and distance learning to address MIL concerns?

- *Definition of Terms*. Include all terms related to open and distance learning such as open learning, open educational resources, open calendar, e-learning, online learning, resource-based learning, instructional design, among others.

Some Policy and Action Agenda

- *Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions to Offer Distance Education Programs*. A provision for stand-alone distance education institutions which would like to offer new distance education programs should be included. The present guidelines require accreditation of programs in the residential mode before such could be allowed to offer an equivalent program via distance mode. At present, there is no accrediting body for distance education programs.

Some Policy and Action Agenda

- *Curriculum and Delivery System.* Curriculum development for open and distance learning must always be based on competency mapping to identify the content, structure, and sequencing of courses. Since learner-centeredness is highlighted in the Guiding Principles, curriculum should be based on analysis of learners' needs and competencies.

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Some Policy and Action Agenda

- Media and information literacy competencies should likewise be included in the analysis to determine the learners' readiness to take courses online, level of digital literacy and fluency and information navigation skills. These competencies will also be the basis for developing the instructional design of courses and study guides. The Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) will discuss how competency mapping can be done for the different programs.

Some Policy and Action Agenda

- *Instructional Materials Development*. Design of distance education modules should be handled by an instructional designer who is knowledgeable in distance-based instructional systems development.

- MIL should be part of the design, especially for the instructional strategies and activities to produce learners who are more engaged in, creative and critical users and creators of course requirements through media and Internet

Some Policy and Action Agenda

- After all, media and Internet are the sources of information and knowledge in open and distance learning. Therefore, design should include locating, analyzing, evaluating, using, producing and communicating information.

Some Policy and Action Agenda

- *Delivery Mode/Strategies*. The IRR should include guidelines on the use of e-learning as a delivery mode. They should include provisions on the design, development, implementation and evaluation of e-learning and m-learning programs.

Some Policy and Action Agenda

- This will ensure appropriate and effective management of programs related to blended learning, interactivity of courses, use of social media, locating and evaluating sources for resource-based learning, among others.

- *Student Support Services*. The IRR should include the collaboration among subject matter specialists, librarians, and technical staff in providing learner support for accessing and organizing information resources.

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Some Policy and Action Agenda

- This will encourage self-direction to achieve the learner's educational and personal goals. An orientation on the management and use of these resources online should also be provided.

Conclusion

- Media and information literacy enables learners, tutors, facilitators and administrators to be more responsible and ethical in the conduct and management of distance learning programs. It is our passport to lifelong learning. Whatever we do now with media and Internet will surely reflect how we use and manage information in our daily lives. Let us then learn how to locate, evaluate, use, produce, and communicate information properly to achieve a meaningful life that we all deserve.