

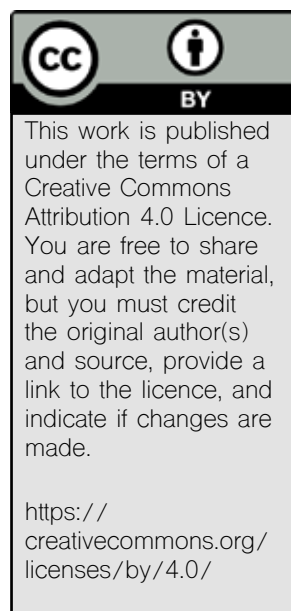
Critical Pedagogies in Student Textbook Tasks: A Politico-Communicative Inquiry

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Abstract

This critical inquiry begins with the exposition of the social mission of textbooks and the prescribed student tasks contained therein in achieving the pedagogical goal of reflective, dialectical, and transformative learning praxis. Employing the critical tradition, this study sought to surface the potential of student tasks in the media and information literacy instructional materials to possess and embody the attributes of critical pedagogies. As a set of pedagogical counter-imperatives, critical pedagogies fulfill the politico-ideological objectives of exposing, examining, and interrogating the orthodoxies and hegemonies in the instructional task design as well as the broader educational ecology. Specifically, this study privileged the authors' critical voices and pedagogies that seek to challenge and change the prevailing social structures and social relations. In the process of conducting thematic analysis, the following mutually inclusive and reinforcing critical pedagogies emerged: critical self-reflectivity, critical potentiality, critical history, critical contextualization, critical interdisciplinarity, critical creativity, critical emotion, and critical solidarity.

Keywords: critical pedagogies, critical task analysis, pedagogical counter-imperatives



Introduction

As a value-oriented instrument, the textbook task section is a strategic academic resource employed and deployed by media educators to facilitate, induce, concretize, activate, and extend learning. The task section, common to many textbooks, also introduces, represents, and communicates various social and sociological themes through a diverse set of complementing as well as contrasting pedagogies,

precepts, and practices. However, this qualitative inquiry deliberately centered on co-orienting critical pedagogies and how such critical synergy contributes to the objective of advancing reflective, dialectical, and transformative media education.

Within this context, critical pedagogies are defined as approaches in media literacy education which develop the critical thinking skills of learners through the perceptive evaluation of media information and sources, analytical exposition of the power relations between social groups, and coherent application and critical harmonization of pedagogical counter-imperatives.

According to Apple, the textbook is a “site of struggle” and as an extension of the state-rendered curriculum it cannot be claimed to be a “neutral form of knowledge”. He also pointed out that the textbook as a cultural artifact “legitimizes selective forms of knowledge and culture” (Apple, 1990, p.17). Correspondingly, this also applies in critically apprehending textbook tasks and learning activities. Apple (1990) further argues that scant attention is being paid to the textbook despite its “defining role whose culture is taught” (p.17).

Little recognition has been accorded to textbook tasks as integral components of this instructional material, especially in the context of surfacing and interrogating their politico-ideological and socio-pedagogical embodiments and expressions. The focus of the existing studies that deal with textbook tasks is limited to the pedagogical dimension viewed predominantly from the positivist and functionalist lenses. There are none, thus far, that examine textbook tasks from an alternative critico-pedagogical perspective. Moreover, the common subject areas of inquiry are mainly about Science (Bakken & Andersson-Bakken, 2021; Andersson-Bakken, Jegstad, & Bakken, 2020), Math (O’keeffe, 2013), and Languages (Bakken & Andersson-Bakken, 2021; Humphries, Miyakoshi, & Miyoshi, 2014; Na & Lee, 2019), among others, and none thus far on media and information literacy (MIL) education. Conceivably, this limitation in terms of subject coverage can be attributed to the comparably recent emergence of MIL as a field of research in relation to the more established subject areas. Add to this the fact that as a relatively younger area of study, media and information literacy, given its composite and complex set of covered competencies, is still in the process of developing a distinct task culture.

Course issues and challenges

As a core subject in the Philippines Senior High School (SHS) curriculum, it was only relatively recent that the composite concept of media and information literacy was officially introduced and offered to basic education through the Philippine Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12) curriculum. Thus far, this is the most significant effort in

mainstreaming MIL in the Philippine education landscape (Bautista, 2021). However, despite the advances in institutionalizing media and information literacy education, challenges in terms of application and delivery remain. A critical aspect of this policy implementation issue is the “seeming inadequacy in teacher training in MIL and MIL pedagogies” (Bautista, 2021, p.23). Given the relatively recent encounter with this field of study, Alagaran (2013) also pointed out that MIL is narrowly perceived as the exclusive preserve of educators in the communication field. He added that it is also regarded by other subject areas as a mere strategy to “enliven discussions in the classroom” (p.268). This wrong notion about media and information literacy necessitates a shift in framework and assessment where critical pedagogy is an essential element and consideration.

It has also been observed that, in general, media literacy education “exists on the margins of formal education” (Mihailidis, 2018, p.5). In many other countries, the incorporation of media education in the formal curriculum is also met with ambivalence. For instance, media education is perceived as “too frivolous” to warrant a creation of a separate subject, yet in one way or another “too academic” to be construed merely as “vocational” (Buckingham, 2005, cited in Kozakowska, 2010, p.113).

As an academic resource, textbooks are confronted with problems and issues that pertain to usefulness and adaptability, especially in view of the demand for more interactive student involvement. The fast-changing media and communication landscape necessitates instructional materials that are able to keep pace in order to remain comprehensive, integrated, and relevant – content- and pedagogy-wise. Moreover, the plurality, multidimensionality, and complexity of (converging and at times conflicting) sectoral and pedagogical agendas also tend to saturate what have already been considered as congested curricula and instructional materials. This, however, does not come as a surprise considering the high stakes that various groups place on media and education. It is within this context that textbook production requires sustained multistakeholder engagement and collaboration with “youth and adults, teaching professionals, non-governmental organizations, and government ministries” (Braesel & Karg, 2017, p.5).

The increasing trend within the education sector towards learner-centered and learning-centered pedagogies necessitates longer time allocation for prescribed tasks that promote active student involvement and hence lesser duration of the conventional lectures and other teacher-dominated instructional strategies. The emphasis given by the K-12 curriculum on “student-centered instruction” requires the textbook writers to develop learning activities that will fulfill this pressing pedagogical need (Department of Education,

2019). This therefore necessitates broader and more considered selection of textbook tasks, that are not only conceptually sound, but are also self-reflective, socially relevant, critical, collaborative, and community-oriented. Such interanimating attributes of textbook tasks are facilitative of a kind of learning that is promotive of stock-taking, position-taking, and, ultimately, action-taking.

Textbook tasks: potentials and pitfalls

Conventionally, textbooks are perceived as authoritative sources of information and knowledge. This frame of mind is brought about by various but interrelated social factors and circumstances. Firstly, textbooks are authored by individuals who are believed to be experts in their respective academic fields. Secondly, textbooks traditionally undergo a rigorous process of editing, vetting, and revision. And lastly, textbooks are prescribed by academics, academic administrators, and sometimes even by state officials.

As critical components of the teaching-learning praxis, textbook tasks cannot be ignored and put aside in instructional materials evaluation. Imbued with pedagogical values and biases, textbook tasks are too important to be left unexamined, especially if they are to be viewed and apprehended from the socio-normative lens. This meta-assessment (or assessment of the assessment tool) is a crucial intervention in the education praxis, particularly along the line of scrutinizing textbook tasks as politico-communicative texts. Worryingly, both uncritical familiarity with and outright neglect of the textbook by some education stakeholders render them blinded and oblivious to these assessment instruments' potentials and pitfalls. Bakken and Andersson-Bakken (2021) cite previous research works that attribute poorly developed textbook tasks to the failure of the authors and publishers to base the conceptualization according to "any informed, systematic, and well-articulated plan" (Armbruster & Ostertag, 1989, p.10). In the same vein, Solihati and Hikmat (2018) associated the lack of success of textbook tasks to elicit critical thinking skills to the "textbook writers' lack of creativity in designing tasks" (p.6).

As a pedagogical device, textbooks encompass "teaching, learning and workbooks and a range of tasks and assignments" (Fuchs & Henne, 2018, p.25). However, textbook knowledge is a unique attribute that distinguishes textbooks from other forms of media, and this can be explained by their "didactic structure", with instruction and learning as the foremost social objectives (Fuchs & Henne, 2018, p.25).

Theoretico-methodological approach

This politico-communicative inquiry works on the main premise that given the inherent contradictions within and between the academe,

the media sector, and the other social forces in the broader development community, media scholars and educators as concurrent members of these sectoral formations tend to manifest subjectivities through the clashing pedagogical imperatives and counter-imperatives that they espouse and practice. Within the parameters of this study, however, the voice that shall be privileged is the co-orienting set of critical pedagogies that surfaced from the corpus of prescribed textbook tasks in the MIL instructional materials. Taking into account the contexts, complexities, and interconnectedness of these fundamental realities and considerations, thematic analysis along the critical tradition was adopted as the appropriate methodological approach for this social inquiry.

This textbook task discourse analysis sought to mainstream critical media pedagogies in basic education and fulfill MIL's role in achieving a fully functioning (i.e., not fictional) democracy. As primary stakeholders in media and information literacy education, students (and their interlocutors) stand to benefit from this critical textbook research by improving their learning experiences and outcomes through the enhancement of textbook task design in terms of criticality, creativity, and community viability.

In the context of this research, pedagogical imperatives pertain to the teaching methods or practices that have been traditionally imposed upon education stakeholders and that have contentiously (mis)guided the process of conventional learning. Pedagogical counter-imperatives, on the other hand, refer to the progressive conceptions of how learning should alternatively proceed and be carried out, taking stock of the need to challenge the hegemonies and orthodoxies in education as a social practice. For instance, critical media literacy scholars Kellner and Share (2007), pointed out how the widely adopted media arts education approach tend to focus heavily on design and style at the expense of examining pressing social issues and training learners to apply thoroughgoing political and cultural criticism. Moreover, the common pattern of dealing with media pathologies through the level of individual responsibility (e.g., self-regulation and self-protection) becomes fragmentary and restricting when stakeholders fail to realize the need for structural and systemic solutions and to elevate the strategy to the degree of collective responsibility (Mihailidis, 2018). When adopted as pedagogical counter-imperatives, textbook then becomes a transgressive political and communication artifact and an empowering living document at that.

Based on the potentialities of textbooks as political and communication artifacts, these two research questions were proposed: What are the viable attributes that textbook tasks must possess in embodying critical media pedagogies? Corollary to this, what co-orienting

critical media pedagogies are espoused and expounded by the textbook task authors that can serve as bases for broader, deeper, and more thoroughgoing transformation in media and information literacy education?

The communication component of interest examined in this study is the message and this particularly comes in the form of textbook tasks conceptualized and formulated by the authors as media producers. The primary data source and unit of analysis for this instructional communication research covered the student tasks featured in the seven selected commercially available Media and Information Literacy textbooks. This list of textbook titles and authors covers the following: *Media and Information Literacy* (Zarate, 2016, Rex Bookstore); *From Cave to Cloud: Media and Information Literacy for Today* (Campos, 2016, Phoenix Publishing); *Media and Information Literacy* (Liquigan, 2016, Diwa); *Media and Information Literacy* (Cantor, 2019, Vibal Group); *Media and Information Literacy: Being a B.E.S.T. Digital Citizen for Senior High School* (Yuvienco, 2017, C&E Publishing); *Media and Information Literacy: Empowering the Discerning Audiences* (Alagaran, 2019, Abiva Publishing House); and *Media and Information Literacy: Enhancing Education through Effective Communication* (Magpile, 2016, Intelligente Publishing).

Through the critical pedagogical assessment of the corpus of collated instructional materials, the researcher also sought to generate new and alternative insights and perspectives in reimagining and redesigning media education textbook tasks that will deviate from the prevailing pedagogical conventions. Corollary to this, it is also the objective of this critical inquiry to complement and reinforce the encouraging potential of the seven instructional materials as counter-pedagogical precursors in advancing and mainstreaming alternative pedagogical paradigms and practices in media and information literacy education.

Co-orienting critical pedagogies

Discourse analyst Kozakowska (2010) asserted that it is not enough to mainstream media education in formal instructions because there is also a pressing need to consciously “design a sufficiently critical pedagogy to implement it” (p. 113). Consistent with this assertion, the following mutually reinforcing critical pedagogies were identified and examined.

Pedagogy of critical self-reflectivity

As a vital element in achieving critical media literacy, learners need to develop the skill of critical self-reflectivity (or self-reflexivity). An application of this crucial first stage in critical praxis (McLaren & Crawford, 2010) is assessing whether the students consider

themselves as active or passive media consumers. Active media consumption pertains to the critical, purposive, and discerning kind with the principal goal of acquiring and applying relevant and useful set of information, contrary to the unproductive, indiscriminate, and passive consumption. However, the term reflexivity itself must also be problematized. Communication scholar van Ruler (2018) prefers to use the term reflectivity as a conscious act instead of reflexivity because of the “psychological and behavioral connotation” of the latter which “suggests a rather routine action of reflex”. Moreover, van Ruler (2018) pointed out that “reflexive is more of a state whereas reflective refers to an on-going process” (p.371).

In the initial chapters of most textbooks, tasks normally begin with activities that ascertain the learner’s media knowledge (cognitive), media attitude (affective), and media experience (psychomotor). This pedagogical approach is crucial in identifying and mapping the students’ level of media exposure and understanding and, according to media scholar Buckingham (2019), this media education practice is proven to be “engaging and effective” (p.71). He also added that making students “document, analyze and reflect” about their media lifestyle and habit is a crucial first step in critical media education praxis (Buckingham 2019, p.71). In this way, establishing prior knowledge is essential in evaluating the students’ tacit and situated knowledge which is foundational in their contextualized education. The wisdom behind this task design is being able to “describe the learners’ media and information literacy levels coming from the learners’ themselves” (Talusán, 2019, p.3).

From the critical standpoint, self-reflectivity also allows the students to examine their own ideological position in relation to other stakeholders in the community. As interposed by Media and Information Literacy textbook author Zarate (2016, p.125) in the textbook task below, an application of this self-awareness is knowing how learners make sense and make meaning of the politically charged word “radical” and then comparing this with the appreciation and interpretation of their co-learners.

How do you see the word radical in your evaluation? Is what is radical to you the same for your co-learners? (Zarate, 2016, p.125)

Etymologically speaking, the term “radical” comes from the Latin word “radix” which means “roots”. Radical thinking within this parameter necessitates exploring the phenomenon or the problem under scrutiny at the very root. Invoking media and culture scholar Atton (2001), Zarate (2016, p.125) asked the students to interpret and evaluate his contention that alternative media must possess “radical content – political or cultural” as well as “strong aesthetic

form”. In this way, radical is conceived as a sharp departure from the convention and a profound transformation at the very core. This pronouncement of Atton (2001 as cited in Zarate, 2016) runs parallel with what social scientist Simbulan (2018: 226) proposed that social activism must not only proceed “serving the people with commitment” (i.e., “radical content”) but also with “style and sophistication” (i.e., “strong aesthetic form”), underscoring the mutuality and complementarity of content and form. Both assertions of Atton (2001) and Simbulan (2018) become practicable when adopted and applied in critical media literacy, considering this media education approach’s mutually defining attributes of vigilance, creativity, competency, criticality, and integration (Kellner & Share, 2007).

Achieving critical self-reflectivity also enables the students to contemplate about the values and voices that they privilege (or silence) and, according to *From Cave to Cloud: Media and Information Literacy for Today* textbook author Campos (2016), this is an important point of reflection when producing their own media content.

Critical self-reflectivity does not only foster self-mastery among learners, because it also develops them into becoming ethical and empathic individuals in their interaction with other social groups, especially the vulnerable and disenfranchised. Beyond providing them with training in technological and technical competencies, textbook tasks and learning activities also need to teach students social skills and moral values, say in conducting an interview, that are essential in fulfilling the socio-civic mission of media education literacy, such as the one instantiated by *Media and Information Literacy* textbook Cantor (2019).

Was I ethical in the way I conducted the interview, or did I step over some boundaries? (Cantor, 2019, p.269)

The prospective set of answers to the textbook question below regarding the learner’s topics of preference can already communicate and establish a wealth of information about how to make the teaching-learning praxis of media and information literacy more grounded and responsive to the students’ aspirations and interests. In actual practice, this deep-seated interest of the students about something can be an effective jumping-off point to critical learning, thoroughgoing investigation, and sustained inquiry.

In what way can your focused interest in something encourage the pursuit of investigation and consequently the gaining of long-lasting knowledge? (Campos, 2016, p.159)

For instance, if the student in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) or Humanities and Social Sciences

(HUMSS) strand taking media and information literacy happens to be interested in the policies and politics of sustainable seeds, then, as a follow through, the classroom teacher can possibly suggest related and relevant topics and advocacies such as community seed banks, local seed exchanges, indigenous seed practices, and seed freedom movements, among others, to enrich and sharpen the learning experience.

Being conscious of the implications of the media content that one creates and circulates is a hallmark of maturity and is, in fact, a laudable social practice consistent with the process of border crossing elucidated by Giroux (1991). In fact, at the very core of the reflection question of Campos below (2016, p.105) about how people perceive themselves and each other is the social construct of border pedagogy (Giroux, 1991), especially when this is situated in the context of his instantiated task of participatory media production.

How will our media message affect the way we see others and ourselves or the way others will see us and themselves?
(Campos, 2016, p.105)

Campos (2016) pointed out that media literacy allows individuals and institutions to question their motivation behind every media content that they produce and disseminate. For instance, with reference to an intensely contested social issue such as election-related disinformation or COVID-19-related vaccine hesitancy, the following questions raised by Campos (2016) serve as effective guideposts in making the students become prudent in their communication-related decisions and actions, to wit:

Will I hold myself responsible and accountable for the media message that I am constructing and the values I am promoting/censuring? (Campos, 2016, p.82)

What values am I promoting? Whose voices am I amplifying, and whose voice am I muting? (Campos, 2016, p.83)

The questions above also promote the culture of self-reflectivity and accountability among the students by enabling them to become conscious of the values and voices that they privilege (or subdue) in their social practice of media production and dissemination.

A very profound hypothetical and philosophical question based on Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* that Campos (2016) forwarded is if a learner is to be part of a "wilderness community that memorizes, embodies, and mediates books" (p.11) what particular book would he/she choose and represent. The novel is situated in a distant future where books are outlawed and burned, whereby memorizing

books and imbibing their messages are the only means possible to memorialize their legacies and, correspondingly, revive knowledge and rebuild society. This well-thought-out textbook task by Campos (2016) enables the students to inquire deeply into their philosophy and aspirations based on their social circumstances and as reflected by their prospective book choice.

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)

The pedagogy of critical self-reflectivity promotes the active process of examining one's positionality and intentionality in relation to one's own media production and consumption habit. Likewise, it helps individuals to make critical sense of how these personal and social circumstances define and influence their overall media experience. This involves seriously reflecting on one's social milieu, personal capacity, and even individual limitation. The critical dimension of self-reflectivity is demonstrated when it is employed in apprehending how one's social position and disposition is similar with (or different from) the marginalized and then making sense of how these qualities can serve as starting points in settling social differences, forging critical solidarity, and mobilizing their ranks into political action.

Pedagogy of critical potentiality

Relatedly, the lineup of introspective questions below by Campos (2016) benefits the students by allowing them to reflect on their individual interests and learning styles as well as come to terms with their personal constraints – which are all-important considerations in becoming reflective scholars and practitioners. The self-reflective questions will also enable the learners to (1) develop their self-mastery, (2) apprehend the underlying basis and interconnection of their multi-faceted interests, and (3) internalize how these personal inclinations can bring about new possibilities in terms of academic life, professional career, and significant contributions to the society. Within this context, self-awareness is conceived to bring about immense possibilities and potentialities. In this way, what was initially perceived to be a mere personal interest can eventually proceed into becoming a life-long profession and/or advocacy.

In which learning directions can your interest lead you, beyond your usual comfort zone? Can your interest in games lead you into studying military history? Can your interest in food lead you into studying a foreign culture? Can your interest in horror stories lead you into anthropology? (Campos, 2016, p.158)

By starting with this set of queries about student interests, the textbook authors can then proceed asking learners perhaps in the subsequent chapters about how MIL knowledge, skills and values can be effectively employed to promote and mainstream the generally undersubscribed but critical, empowering, and transformative counterparts of the fields of interest instantiated above such as critical history, critical cross-cultural studies, critical anthropology, critical cinema/third cinema, critical architecture, alternative/developmental lawyering, and critical information ethics, among others. Similar with what was previously pointed out about the identification of personal inclination, self-reflective questions of this nature can make students recognize the fields that they are good at and committed to learning and honing further.

The pedagogy of critical potentiality therefore necessitates self-understanding to identify, map, and interrogate one's interests and inclinations. Within this context, the opportunity for self-discovery afforded by critical media education contributes to the process of bringing out students' latent abilities. Consistent with the critical tradition, these promising attributes by the learner can be mobilized in (1) performing community-oriented tasks, (2) carrying out social advocacies for the disadvantaged, and (3) choosing a future career and profession along the same socially committed path. In ensuring student engagement and in realizing these human potentialities, the learning activities need to incite interest, excitement, hope, vigilance, and the ethics of care among the students in both capacities as scholars and citizen-critics.

Pedagogy of critical history

The critical apprehension of the present and the critical anticipation of the future rest on the critical discernment of the past. Within this context, the critical understanding of contemporary development issues will only be possible by invoking critical history and learning from its valuable lessons. The first entry in the textbook tasks below requires the students to develop a timeline of technological evolution based on available historical sources and with the second entry instructing the learner to conduct an in-depth interview about media and democracy. The last entry asks the learners to critically compare the past and the present media landscapes to determine if any qualitative change ever materialized and developed over time.

As you read the chapter, do your own research, and create your own timeline of major technology inventions and innovations. Begin with the printing press and end with Web 2.0. (Campos, 2016, p.25)

Interview a history teacher in your school about instances in Philippine history where media had a major role in the

preservation of democracy and democratic processes in the Philippines. (Liquigan, 2016. p.27)

If you have access to Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism's assessments of 1990s and 2000s Philippine media, compare if their findings and observations are still true today. (Campos, 2016, p.69)

Aside from the default elements, i.e., the people (who), place (where), and time (when), this research on critical media literacy and pedagogy argues that the timeline also needs to include the contradictions and struggles in the history of mass media. As such, the equally important elements of narrative and interpretation (or the why's and how's) must likewise be incorporated as critical dimensions of the socio-historical inquiry. Corollary to this, the proposed timeline by the students therefore must not only center on technological changes but should also cover the accompanying socio-political and socio-cultural shifts and continuities. Within the context of the Global South's media history, for instance, the alternative timeline must therefore cover and feature the following complex and contentious issues that defined and shaped it, i.e., colonial media, media repression, media censorship, media monopoly, media decadence, and media corruption, among others.

Socio-historical consciousness is a vital element in critical media education. It affords learners the opportunity to critically understand how institutions, systems, and societies came into existence and how they went through the process of complex and dialectical change. Complementarily, critical media and information literacies have key roles to play in upholding historical truth and in defending it from being distorted, manipulated, and weaponized by those who wield power. Through the reflective question below, for instance, Campos (2016, p.27) seeks to make the student perceptively realize that distorting history is "a means of controlling the present and the future", and hence the nation's being and becoming.

In the novel, it was important for the state leader, Big Brother, and his ruling party to control the past—that is to (re)write the history that people will believe in. In what way is the manipulation of history a means of controlling the present and the future? (Campos, 2016, p.27)

The pedagogy of critical history provides the learner with the chronological and thematic contexts of the past to make sense of the present condition and the prospective future. As such, a critical apprehension of the problematic present must bring us to the critical study of the past. Pointing this out, Goswami, et al. (2014) argued that "critical history therefore is in the first instance history that is

based on a moral and political standpoint in the present, on a reasoned dissatisfaction with life as it is currently lived and an attempt to reflect on that dissatisfaction by means of historical investigation” (p.2). By critically historicizing the development of media, learners will be able to apprehend how the powerful political and economic social forces shaped and dominated the present configuration of media systems and structures.

Pedagogy of critical contextualization

Taking into serious consideration the complex relationship of the textbook users’ localized knowledge and the broader global milieu, media educators need to develop the learner’s analytical skills in making critical sense of the commonalities and differences of the social phenomena in the international context vis-à-vis their respective national settings and frames of reference, and vice versa. Media and Information Literacy textbook author Yuvienco (2017), for instance, presented that “television and newspapers are the largest factors driving crime perceptions in the UK” (p.42). Based on this factual claim, he then asked the students if the pattern is different in their respective local contexts. This rendering of critical contextualization allows the student to understand and apply the skill of perceptive comparison within the political climate of an interconnected (but also highly polarized and stratified) social world. However, apart from mapping the similarities and distinctions between the global and local contexts, students must also be trained to identify and apprehend the complex nexus between the two.

A meaningful and interesting social practice in the creative industry is the communicative act of dubbing foreign television programs in Filipino. In a textbook task set by Zarate (2016, p.53), she sought to problematize this by asking students about “certain nuances that Filipino-produced telenovelas might not have” as well as the “elements in the Philippine telenovelas that are absent in Koreanovela”. The same goes with the need to analyze franchised global television formats (e.g., Big Brother) and the manner whereby the “local Filipino elements are foregrounded” (Zarate, 2016, p.57). In such socio-cultural encounters where translation (in the case of dubbing) and glocalization (in the case of franchising) are involved, it is important that both social practices (i.e., translation and glocalization) are understood as shaped and influenced also by the prevailing and interacting power configurations in the global and local levels.

Learning from the above-cited activities, authors therefore must refrain from conceptualizing textbook tasks that only employ homogenous, one-size-fits-all, and contextless approach. This traditional format foregoes the opportunity of providing the students with a locally situated and culturally diverse learning experience. Tasks that are haphazardly constructed and totally devoid of social context

are problematic since they do not encourage situated, grounded, and culturally rooted analysis. The particularities of the classroom, the campus, the family, the community, and the broader international setting are important considerations in conceptualizing and developing textbook tasks and learning assessments. Within this context, the textbook authors need to understand the different types and structures of these social institutions across cultures and societies. For instance, considering the varying levels of exposure of students to rural political economy, Campos (2016) advises them to conduct preliminary reading about the specific sector, segment, and setting of the instantiated case studies as part of their contextualized learning, to wit:

Read up on who the Lumad are. What is their particular situation as people of Mindanao, being non-Muslims and non-Christians? Research also on how they are being displaced by land-grabbing, illegal mining, and the militarization of their home places. (Campos, 2016, p.115)

Adopting the pedagogy of critical contextualization makes the learning experience of students situated, sensible, and meaningful. When learners are trained how to localize, they will be able to ground poverty, for instance, in its various contexts and dimensions, i.e., lowland poverty, coastal poverty, upland poverty, rural poverty, urban poverty, food poverty, fuel poverty, water poverty, income poverty, and time poverty, among others. By contextualizing learning in multiple settings, students will also be able to better apprehend the different dimensions and levels of analysis of the specific social and sectoral issues under scrutiny. In connection with this counter-pedagogy, situated knowledge is framed along Haraway's politico-philosophical conceptualization of foregrounding social asymmetries, making sense of people's varying standpoints, and asserting this form of localized knowledge as a potentially transformative force (Woods, 2000).

Pedagogy of critical interdisciplinarity

One of the key attributes of interdisciplinarity is cross-curricular learning, i.e., "cross-connecting" (Yuvienco, 2017) with other subject areas aimed at fostering the complementarity, correspondence, and interconnectedness of knowledge. This learning framework is anchored on the fundamental premise that holistic learning must be integrative and transcending.

As a pedagogical device, media and information literacy serves as an effective and viable platform to apply interdisciplinarity within the existing Philippine K-12 Senior High School curriculum. This can be attributed to the already cross-disciplinary character of the subject area. Through the adoption of interdisciplinarity in the

conceptualization of textbook tasks, media and information literacy education will be able to maximize the vast potential of engaging different individuals, institutions, and sectors in the learning process. Strategically, Yuvienco's textbook (2017) employed critical interdisciplinarity in enhancing and enriching the theoretical and practical knowledge learned by the students from other fields of inquiry by intertwining them with the know-what and know-how drawn from media and information literacy. The substantive areas encompass the human sciences and the humanities as well as the theoretical and the applied fields. This learning strategy involves the conscious and sustained effort in making knowledge, skills, and values acquisition coherent, complementary, and synergistic. As such, this can be considered as a sharp departure from the orthodox learning culture characterized by counterproductive turfing and compartmentalization which are all-too-common in the academic realm.

As an area of study, media and information literacy is essentially interdisciplinary in orientation; however, Bautista (2021) pointed out in his research how the subject is being typecast as a field exclusive only to educators with background in Information Technology (IT) and Communication, which has implications to the academic load assignment of teachers. Conscious of its interdisciplinary attribute, Yuvienco (2017) initiated a good number of cross-disciplinary engagements with other subject areas through his prescribed textbook tasks. For instance, in cross-connecting with the subject Personality Development, Yuvienco (2017) posed a question to reflect on the personal and social circumstances of an individual who is predisposed to sharing "fake news" and how to deal with it if one is in the same predicament. It is also commendable when media and information literacy is complementarily employed in tandem with another socially relevant subject area to fulfill both fields' socio-civic mission. For instance, in another task below by Yuvienco, media and information literacy was cross-connected with disaster readiness and risk reduction (DRRR) in requiring learners to explore the content of the existing DRRR curriculum and to put up an online group featuring pertinent DRRR-related data and information for the promotion of disaster awareness, preparedness, and mitigation in the local community.

Look for the K-12 curriculum guide of disaster readiness and risk reduction...With your groupmates, explore the contents of the curriculum and put together for your locality a series of information texts that can be available online. You can create an FB group for this activity. (Yuvienco, 2017, p.100)

Consistent with the discourse of suspicion, critical interdisciplinarity interrogates the "very structure of knowledge to critique the way that

education and research are carved up into silos” (Rebus Community, n.d.), thereby allowing the learner to apprehend and challenge “how structures confine and control meaning” and, by extension, also define and restrict their sense-making and meaning-making experiences (De Rosa, 2022).

Through critical interdisciplinary approach in media literacy education, the social and sectoral issues associated with the thematic or dimensional focus of other subject areas can also be instantiated as possible topics for analysis and areas of intervention (e.g., gender-disaggregated disaster data analysis for DRRR, political analysis of election information-seeking behavior for Understanding Culture, Society and Politics). Ultimately, it is when various forms of knowledge become encompassing in the epistemological, disciplinary, and practical sense that they truly become mutually defining and reinforcing.

Pedagogy of critical creativity

The pedagogy of critical creativity integrates the attributes of criticality and creativity in fulfilling the objective of alternative media to produce progressive content with strong aesthetic form (Atton, 2001 as cited in Zarate, 2016). Invoking the discourse of suspicion, critical creativity is a necessary element and approach in bringing about alternative visions and narratives that will challenge the mainstream conceptions and storylines that dominate the culture industry.

As a subject area, media and information literacy is strongly and inherently associated with the idea and practice of producing work characterized by imaginativeness and inventiveness or, in essence, creativity. As such, it is quite common that media and information literacy is generally approached by some textbook authors and classroom teachers along the line of media arts education paradigm. The pedagogical challenge, therefore, is to elevate the discourse to achieve critical media literacy in the learning process by imbibing and mainstreaming “ideology critique”, “politics of representation”, and “alternative media production” (Keller & Share, 2007, p.4-5). A task requiring the students to develop a sequel of a particular work (i.e., book, film, or TV show) such as the one formulated by Cantor (2019) provides them with an excellent opportunity to enhance their information literacy and creative presentation. The learning activity specifically involves the task of developing a research plan to identify, locate, and study the required set of information for the assigned creative work.

A sequel is the next piece of content following an original piece. For a book or a film, you will write the second in the series. For the TV show, you will write the second episode. (Cantor, 2019, p.181)

Consistent with the rhetorics of “democratic and political creativity” and “creativity as a social good” and given their strong emphasis on the “social empowerment” of “disenfranchised communities and groups” (Banaji, Burn, & Buckingham, 2010), learners may also consider producing a countercultural version with an alternative and liberating twist. In this way, the sequel can be re-imagined as a critical counterpart of the original version. Within this context, creativity must be conceived as purposive, productive, and even transgressive, and not to be merely perceived as a design element or artistic rendering. Fusing criticality and creativity, McCormark and Titchen (2006) conceive “critical creativity” as the integration of “critical social science” with “the creative and ancient traditions and the natural world” for the consummate end-goal of “human flourishing”. Employing the popular in form and social in content discursive strategy, Storm and Magneto of the superhero animation and film series, for instance, can be re-imagined and re-presented as climate justice and national industrialization advocates, respectively, in the sequel of the (re)conceptualized task. This creative production can even be applied in a more critical, situated, and culturally-rooted rendering by re-imagining and re-presenting local myths and legends along the themes and sub-themes involving the people’s legitimate struggles against land-grabbing, mega-dam construction, transnational mining, mass tourism, sand quarrying, and other forms of development aggression.

Pedagogy of critical emotion

Recognizing the socio-emotional dimension of dealing with media and information is crucial in the holistic and reflective media literacy education. This outlook involves familiarization with a wide range of positive and negative emotions. However, there is also a need to problematize the diversity and complexity of emotions by making sense of their broader socio-systemic dimensions and tracing their structural bases, contrary to the default mode of merely apprehending them in the personal and psycho-behavioural level. From the critical perspective, for instance, Facebook use and the associated emotions of envy and depression can be attributed to structural realities such as the wider economic and cultural systems and the dysfunctions and disorders that they bring about and perpetuate. In the context of the well-framed task of Media and Information Literacy textbook author Alagaran (2019), it can be argued that the question reflects the study of Tandoc et al. (2015), in that it points out how envy predicts and mediates depression in relation to Facebook exposure, thereby providing a basis to problematize human emotion in the context of social media use.

Choose two Facebook posts: one from a close friend who you also get to see almost every day and one from a friend who

you met only online. Compare the posts. Are you envious?
Did you feel depressed? (Alagaran, 2019, p.158)

Within the context of the emotions identified in the following textbook tasks below, it is necessary to apprehend positive emotions such as hope as a transformative force (and not in its passive sense) and care as an act of active engagement and relatedness as well as a call for justice (and not as a sign of weakness and meekness). In the same vein, the range of negative emotions also needs to be problematized to understand how they can be even more disempowering or emasculating when not put into proper perspective and if the main sources of provocation (i.e., superordinate factors) are not dealt with and acted upon.

Does the public service announcement build on positive emotions, like hope and care? (Campos, 2016, p.99)

Does the public service announcement build on negative emotions, like fear and anger?(Campos, 2016, p.99)

Factoring emotion in the process of “border crossing” fosters solidarity with other social groups, especially the most vulnerable ones given the deep-seated anxieties and fears that they collectively bear. For instance, this is embodied in the act of sympathizing and forging solidarity with the Martial Law victims as commendably instantiated by Media and Information Literacy textbook author Magpile (2016) in her textbook task. Within the parameter of the critical tradition, emotion being “contextual, relational, and shifting” must be conceived as “deeply enmeshed in power relations” and that in relation to reason the two “are intertwined in all decision-making processes” and, essentially, this includes position-taking as well as interest articulation on pressing social and sectoral issues (Head & Tafakori, n.d.).

How did you feel after reading the experiences of the people who were tortured during Martial Law? (Magpile, 2016, p.72)

The psycho-emotional dimension of studying media and information literacy is seldom given sufficient focus considering the strong socio-cognitive bent of the field. To strike a balance, the pedagogy of critical emotion is crucial in enabling the learner to understand that various media content can give rise to a range of emotion and vice versa, and that developing emotional competence is important with respect to media production and reception.

Pedagogy of critical solidarity

An economic system that promotes cut-throat competition and that “rejects as weakness any measure of compassion, care, and trust”

cannot be relied on to engender public welfare and the associated values of community solidarity and alliance building (Giroux, 2012, p.64). These competitive and predatory attributes of the market model become even more pernicious and worrisome when extended and normalized in other realms of human affairs such as media and education.

In relation to solidarity, the associated constructs of “receptivity and relatedness” articulated by Mihailidis (2019) can only be expressed and embodied through civic-intentioned and community-oriented pedagogies and practices. Towards this end, a laudable practice of border pedagogy (Giroux, 1991) and critical solidarity (Kellner & Share, 2007) is Magpile’s (2016, p.72) letter writing task to the “surviving family of those who had a family member who had gone missing or have been found dead for being an activist during the time of Martial Law”. Part of the initial stage of border crossing is requiring the students to read an article by Rappler, a digital media company, titled “Never Again: Martial Law Stories Young People Need to Hear”. This pedagogical praxis helps the learner understand the struggle of social activists during that perilous historical period and its surrounding socio-political realities. Students are specifically instructed to state in the letter their committed support to the socio-political cause of “seeking justice and fighting for human rights”. The task exemplifies a strong self-reflective and action-oriented attribute quite similar with the human rights praxis being commendably interposed in a textbook task by Campos (2016) against the culture of impunity in media killings.

What can ordinary citizens like you do to show their support to the victims of human rights violation during Martial Law? (Magpile, 2016, p.72)

Why are journalists being killed in other places? Are these killings comparable to what happens in the Philippines? What should you do about this new information that you have learned? (Campos, 2016, p.187)

In highly stratified societies within the Global South, there is an even greater need for media literacy education to promote and practice the culture of “agency, care, critical consciousness, persistence, and emancipation” among its learners (Mihailidis, 2018, p.9-11). Such values serve as countervailing elements against monopoly, hegemony, false consciousness, passivity, and unfreedom that altogether circumscribe and characterize the lives and struggles of many vulnerable groups and communities in the underdeveloped regions. A total embodiment of these constructs is the context-based textbook exercise conceptualized by Liquigan (2016, p.163) assigning the student to assume the role of a “volunteer tutor for an international

humanitarian organization...to teach basic literacy skills to young children in urban centers” in Africa. The task instantiates the following contexts which learners must be able to factor in and deal with in developing the required instructional materials, i.e., (1) reality of widespread poverty and underdevelopment in the African continent, (2) educational poverty among the youth, (3) digital divide as a manifestation of social stratification, and (4) language barrier. This is a commendable task that applies critical media pedagogy in covering social and sectoral issues under a topic (i.e., visual media) which would have just been conventionally approached in a technical and/or aesthetic dimension only by traditional textbook authors. While the activity is intended only as a simulation exercise of sort, it can also be modified and adopted as a performance task that will involve actual local community integration.

You are a volunteer tutor/educator for an international humanitarian organization and you are assigned to teach basic literacy skills to young children in urban center in some countries in Africa. You must utilize your knowledge about visual information and media to come up with instructional materials for this purpose. (Liquigan, 2016, p.163).

Ethical consideration is an important dimension of the pedagogy and construct of care. Without this moral barometer, students will fail in ascertaining the rightness or wrongness of the media product and the processes involved in its creation and consumption. Undertaking media production must involve securing free and prior informed consent (FPIC) from their interlocutors and collaborators in the community. However, securing free and prior informed consent can, in fact, be a very contentious process especially in the context where the subjects of study/research are not in an empowered position to decide for themselves. This condition is brought about by the uneven power relations between the academe and the community in favor of the former. Within this context, it is important to seek permission from both the individuals and the community leaders in the locality and, more crucially, challenge this epistemic/symbolic power relation as well as the conditions that warrant it.

In a nation that is beset with complex development challenges and policy issues, the pedagogy of critical solidarity serves as a viable approach in consolidating diverse sectoral groups in united vision and action. If community mobilization, for instance, is to be based on common and unifying principles, it must be anchored on public values that the people collectively hold dear and are determined to assert and defend. As correctly pointed out by the philosopher Cook (2001), “ersatz solidarity now substitutes for the more authentic community of shared needs and interests” (p.92) and, through critical solidarity (Kellner & Share, 2007) and collective reflective

action (McLaren & Crawford, 2010), this flawed pattern of false and fleeting unity will be exposed, challenged, and transformed.

Consistent with the strong communication-oriented and value-based character of media and information literacy, the textbook tasks therefore need to be promotive of interactivity, feedback, and collaboration. Fundamentally, collaborative learning techniques allow the students to (1) enhance interpersonal communication, (2) engender solidarity and accountability, and (3) promote dialogic learning in acquiring as well as generating new knowledge.

Synthesis and conclusion

In order to be relevant, impactful, and empowering in the discursive and pedagogical sense, textbook tasks must not only cover social and sectoral issues as topics and themes but also strategically employ learning strategies that will promote critical inquiry, deliberative dialogue, and contextual application. To steer clear of the passive tendencies of mainstream media education, authors need to acknowledge first and foremost the potential of textbooks as politico-communicative instruments of “critical, relational, democratic, and visionary literacies” (North, 2009, p.1-7) or what can be collectively referred as “more-than-academic” education. In terms of pedagogical praxis, it can be argued that the featured textbook authors were heavily influenced by their positionalities as expressed and embodied in the following social situatedness, i.e., being products of a progressive state university in various levels of education (all of them), being formerly connected with broadcast media outfits (some of them), being multidisciplinary in training (some of them), being educators themselves (all of them), and being deeply committed to particular social advocacies (all of them).

In the teaching-learning praxis, alternative discourses cannot be engendered and concretized without the adoption of counterpart critical pedagogies. The critical appreciation and comprehension of alternative discourses only becomes possible when articulated, analyzed, and buttressed employing non-traditional pedagogical approaches. This parallel strategy allows critical media education to be consistent and coherent both in terms of its discursive (content) and pedagogical rendering (structure). In this sense, the counter-pedagogies that emerged from this study must also be understood as reciprocal and reinforcing. Complementarily, critical pedagogies such as critical self-reflectivity, critical potentiality, and critical emotion enable the students to profoundly examine themselves and use the process and the product of this introspection to achieve critical praxis. Mutually, critical creativity and critical interdisciplinarity afford the learners the opportunity to produce socially relevant media outputs from/with an interdisciplinary perspective. In tandem, critical history and critical contextuality

allows the students to perceptively ground and situate their analysis of and intervention in social and sectoral issues as case studies. And lastly, critical solidarity serves as the embodiment of the previous seven critical pedagogies in pursuing not just self-change but, more crucially, change in social conditions. Ultimately, the consummate pedagogical end-goal is to bring about a learning culture that challenges hegemonic knowledge regimes, dismantles knowledge hierarchies, and encourages the co-creation of inclusive and decentralized epistemic communities.

Recommendations

Given the potentials as well as limitations of the current media and information literacy instructional materials, the overarching challenge now is how it can be done more critically and creatively, i.e., in ways that is more action-based, accountability-driven, and community-oriented. Once already introduced or if already adopted such as the case of the featured textbook titles in this study, the even greater challenge to media education stakeholders is how to make this set of empowering philosophies, pedagogies, and practices the norm and standard in media and information literacy education. Hence, based on the foregoing, the following specific recommendations are earnestly proposed.

Further strengthen interdisciplinary inquiry

While it has been observed that interdisciplinarity is already being applied in the existing textbook task design, it is recommended that this practice is also adopted by other media and information literacy textbook authors and educators. And while media and information literacy has already shown openness to cross-connecting with other fields of inquiry, the pattern of relationship must be reciprocal. Science and Mathematics education, for instance, should also adopt and integrate media and information literacy in its pedagogical approach and this, in turn, can also serve as an agenda for future research.

Provide more diverse role assignments, social contexts, and pedagogical goals

As an educational resource, textbook tasks need to provide the students with a diverse learning encounter and experience. The application of media and information literacy in varied contexts broadens and enriches learning. In this regard, authors who employ different media platforms and provide diverse contexts of application are commendable. Diverse though this existing set of tasks maybe, the textbook authors and classroom educators however should not stop from continuously discovering new pedagogical approaches and techniques.

| Roles | Contexts | Goals |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| community organizer | upland community; dominance of industrial agriculture | Create a brochure that will promote agroecology and regenerative agriculture. |
| community communication practitioner | coastal village; ineffective disaster and emergency communication | Stage a community theater that will promote disaster risk and emergency communication. |
| librarian | local library; popularizing and re-imagining public libraries | Organize a symposium (online or face-to-face) to introduce the concept of a <i>human library</i> . |
| cooperative member | transport cooperative; spatial and transport injustice | Produce an infographic to promote sustainable and inclusive transportation. |
| market administrator | public market; chronic hunger and food injustice | Organize a mobile patrol team (MPT) to promote sustainable practices in reducing food wastage. |
| sport anthropologist | sports forum; gender inequality in sports | Organize an exhibit featuring 'sports, gender, and justice' as the theme. |
| agriculturist or nutritionist | food bazaar; dominance of unhealthy fast-food culture | Put up a booth promoting indigenous vegetables, ethno-nutrition, or slow food philosophy. |
| curator | local museum; historical distortion and denialism | Present a tableau in the museum lobby featuring an anti-dictatorship protest movement. |
| poet | school; development aggression, militarization, and ethnocide | Organize an open mic poetry (online or face-to-face) about the life and struggle of a social justice hero or martyr. |

Table 1: Proposed roles, contexts, and goals

In light of the critical pedagogies discussed, authors who design MIL tasks might consider adopting the following social roles, development contexts, and pedagogical goals (listed in the table above) to further diversify the conceptualization of the textbook tasks and to initiate a more issue-oriented and community-grounded learning experience.

In this politico-communicative inquiry, it has been argued that the eight critical pedagogies introduced are mutually defining and reinforcing in carrying out the roles of media and information literacy to foster critical imagination, civic engagement, and collective action among learners. By surfacing and advancing the co-orienting counter-pedagogies, learning media and information literacy then becomes a reflective, discursive, integrative, values-based, action-driven, and life-affirming experience not only for the students but also the other critical stakeholders in every campus, civic group, and community.

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