RESEARCH ON MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY IN CHINA

based on the UNESCO Global Media and Information Literacy Assessment Framework: Country Readiness and Competencies

By Zhang Kai

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RESEARCH OBJECTIVES
Review and analyze media literacy education practices in the current educational ecology of China.

Map the Chinese media literacy education by completing a field research on various current media literacy practices.

Analyze first-hand data and identify advantages and disadvantages, from which we can figure out the where China’s MIL practice is according to UNESCO Assessment Framework.

Analyze the main factors, operation mechanism, potential difficulties and needs of their practices.

Think about how and why to localize the Assessment Framework according to Chinese educational and cultural context.
Research areas
We have already selected the following schools as research objects, about 2198 people in total:

- Beijing Heizhima Hutong Primary School
- Communication University of China Primary School
- Zhejing Hangzhou Xiayan Middle School
- Guangdong Foshan Experimental Middle School
- Shandong Heze Normal College
- Sichuan two middle schools and three primary schools
- Guangzhou City Children’ Palace
RESEARCH METHODS
- Literature review:

- Interviewing method

- Questionnaire method
RESEARCH FINDINGS

About students
### Students:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours spent online per day (hour)</th>
<th>Sample size</th>
<th>minimum</th>
<th>maximum</th>
<th>average</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1070</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>1.6397</td>
<td>1.49472</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
91% students navigate internet at home
6.4% students use the network at schools
0.9% students navigate internet at internet bars
Students: Media usage

- 83.2%
- 51.0%
- 37.8%
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chat with friends after school or when finish homework</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>50.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chat with strangers</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play digital games without let parents know</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post some information that they don’t want parents and teachers to know</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>总计</strong></td>
<td>996</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students:
Primary level media literacy ability is well-prepared
Middle & advanced level media literacy abilities are uneven
Regional Difference on MIL

- Difference on Students Group
  - Individual Competency Difference
  - Students in East scores higher than West
  - Students in North scores higher than South

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>South-West China</th>
<th>South China</th>
<th>North China (Beijing)</th>
<th>South-East China</th>
<th>East China</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MIL</td>
<td>30.98</td>
<td>30.07</td>
<td>33.29</td>
<td>32.73</td>
<td>31.43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total scores: 40
RESEARCH FINDINGS

About Parents
Parents:
Occupations of young female parents

- 31-40 years old
- Post 1980s
- Company client,
  Civil servant,
  Self-employed
Parents’ understanding of media

- **27.5%** “Digital media is beneficial to children’s study.”
- **5%** “Digital media is detrimental to children’s study.”
- **56.3%** “It depends.”
Parents: Confusing attitude to media and media literacy

- 32% - “I don’t know what my children do with digital media”

- 47.5% - “I don’t know what’s the influence of media literacy courses.”
Lack of the ability to evaluate different information

Your judgment based on which of the following evidence?
Regional Difference on MIL

**Difference on Parent Group**

- **Parents Monitoring on children’s media use**
- **Above 60% parents know well of children’s media use**
- **Parents in East China do not know students’ media use(for their children are college students)**
- **Parents’ knowledge on Media Literacy**
  
  Only parents in north China (Beijing) knows better about children’s media literacy courses
  
  Most parents in all regions does not know media literacy well

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you know well of your children’s media use</th>
<th>Regions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South-East China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't care</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RESEARCH FINDINGS

About Teachers
Teachers: access to digital equipment & Internet
Teachers: different understandings remain among teachers from urban and rural areas
Teachers: Lack capability of using info-technology
Teachers: interpersonal communication

Face-to-face communication & Making phone call

OR

Social Media
### Regional Difference on MIL

#### Difference on Teaching Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Facility</th>
<th>training</th>
<th>textbook</th>
<th>assessment</th>
<th>Focus on MIL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North China (Beijing)</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>Technical use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-East China (Ji Lin province)</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>Critical thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South China (Foshan City)</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>Critical thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South China (Guangzhou City)</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>Critical thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East China (Shandong province)</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>Technical use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-East China (Zhe Jiang province)</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>Critical thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-West China (Si Chuan province)</td>
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<td>✔</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>Critical thinking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

√: “have”; ○: “have not”
Regional Difference on MIL

- Difference on Teaching Activities
  - all schools have basic equipment for teaching
  - Almost all schools lacks scientific assessment method
  - Textbook is another problem
  - Training is not systematic, teachers who received training are only based on special help from some universities or their internal communication (即使有培训也是依赖于个别专家和内部交流)
Regional Difference on MIL

Difference on Teacher’s understanding on MIL
From our interview on teachers, we concluded that:

☑️ Teachers in North and East China tend to focus on technical use in teaching
☑️ Teachers in North-east and South East China tend to focus on critical thinking on information, specifically some focus on teaching methods in identifying fake news, some on aesthetical appreciation on information
☑️ No teachers focus on social participation, creation and communication of information
RESEARCH FINDINGS

About Media Education in China
Curriculum development is regionally unbalanced
Confusing understanding and attitudes about media literacy

- Critical thinking v.s. Utilization and Creation
- 89% Parents don’t know what is Media Literacy
- 30% Students think that media literacy course is not necessary.
- 67.2% Parents have no idea what media literacy course is.
MIL educational practice lacks sustainability

- School as a shareholder considers more about its own benefits.
- School principal and others from management group decide the destiny of media literacy courses.
Students ask for innovative and appealing teaching methods and daily and pragmatic teaching contents.

- 50% students think media literacy courses attractive.
- 45% students think media literacy courses unappealing.

Absence of standardized textbook for media literacy courses
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

based on the UNESCO *Global Media and Information Literacy Assessment Framework*
Problems in China

- MIL Education Practice lacks practical standards
- MIL Education Practice lacks government supports.
- MIL Education Practice lacks multiple impetus from bottom.
- Divergent understandings of MIL
Thinking about the problems: country readiness (tier one)

Access and Use: Very favorable

MIL Supply: Less favorable

MIL Policy: favorable

MIL Education: Less favorable
## Competency (tier two)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MIL component</th>
<th>MIL subject matter</th>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Performance criteria</th>
<th>Proficiency level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. Need more work in MIL component: definition, access, understanding, assessment, participant, creation
2. Lack the performance criteria
3. Crying for teachers’ training and professional training institutions
4. In China, only “comprehensive practical activities” in basic education curriculum relates to MIL courses.
5. People is not very much able to determine and articulate the nature, role and scope of media content.
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<tr>
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<th>MIL subject matters</th>
<th>MIL Competency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Recognizing the demand for, being able to search for, being able to access and retrieve information and media content</td>
<td>1.1. Definition and articulation of a need for information</td>
<td>1. Determine and articulate the nature, role and scope of the information and media (content) through a variety of resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.2. Search and location of information and media content</td>
<td>2. Search and locate information and media content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.3. Access to information, media content and media and information providers</td>
<td>3. Access needed information and media content effectively, efficiently and ethically as well as media and information providers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.4. Retrieval and holding / storage / retention of information and media content</td>
<td>4. Retrieve and temporally hold information and media content using a variety of methods and tools.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>