

EDUMEDIAtest

RECOMMENDATIONS regarding Media Literacy in Education based on the EduMediaTest Project Results



The EduMediaTest project is partially funded by the European Commission

Recommendations

regarding Media Literacy in Education

Based on the EduMediaTest Project Results

(Grant Agreement No. Connect /
2019/4222166)

The EduMediaTest is an online questionnaire that provides an initial assessment of the media literacy skills of pupils aged 14 to 18, as well as being useful for improving their media skills, based on the results obtained, using free, open educational training materials (Media Literacy Kit). The questionnaire assesses media literacy based on six dimensions: Language, Technology, Production and Diffusion, Ideology, Reception, and Aesthetics (Ferrés and Piscitelli, 2012). The EduMediaTest's questions focus on how pupils interact with broadcast and social media, as well as evaluating the critical and aesthetic approach they take when they receive media messages, their ability to express themselves via technology and the development of personal independence regarding user-generated content when consuming the media.

The results obtained from the EduMediaTest questionnaire are not individual but an analysis of the whole school group's skills and knowledge regarding media literacy. The aim of the questions is to diagnose the pupils' cognitive and technical skills related to the six dimensions and then to use especially designed training materials in the way deemed most appropriate by the teacher.

The EduMediaTest has been developed throughout 2020-2021 as part of the European Commission's Preparatory Action Media Literacy for All (Grant agreement no. Connect/2019/4244166), with partners from seven countries, comprising university experts, media regulators and media literacy institutions in Catalonia, Croatia, France, Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Slovakia. The project coordinator is the Catalan Audiovisual Council - CAC and the partner institutions were as follows: Universitat Pompeu Fabra (Catalonia), Portuguese Regulatory Authority for the Media (Portugal), Agency for Electronic Media, (Croatia), Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission (Slovakia), Dublin West Education Centre (Ireland), National Centre of Audiovisual Media & Communication (Greece), and Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel – CSA (France). The EduMediaTest tool is available in ten different languages at www.edumediatest.eu.

Almost nine thousand pupils used the EduMediaTest in all seven countries during the school year of 2020-2021. According to a statistical analysis of the results, there is still a great need to improve media literacy skills among young people. More specifically, the EduMediaTest consortium presents the followings conclusions and recommendations:

Recommendation No. 1: Students have adequate digital literacy in terms of their technical skills (access to content, content management, web surfing). This is strongly indicated by the dimension of Technology, the dimension in which pupils achieved the highest score overall. This highlights the contradiction of schools reducing media literacy to merely a digital skill (essentially its instrumental dimension). In other words, schools tend to offer most of their training in the only dimension in which their pupils are already skilled. It is therefore vital to continue improving pupils' digital skills through educational schemes that focus on digital transformation, as this is necessary for blended learning models such as the flipped classroom and remote school education.

Recommendation No. 2: The Aesthetics dimension was second in terms of scores, its aim being to assess the pupils' ability to relate media productions to other artistic works and detect mutual influences. It is also used to evaluate their sensitivity to aesthetics and creativity. It is vital for aesthetics courses (the importance of design, the meaning of music, colours, etc.) to be continued and enhanced for pupils of all ages, with more national and intercultural references.

Recommendation No. 3: The Ideology dimension came third in terms of the pupils' score. The Ideology questions explore how media representations structure the pupils' perception of reality, paying special attention to the power of visual communication. This dimension involves questions about distinguishing the truth from false information and also explores disinformation. It is therefore important to enhance the school curriculum with more themes related to the ideological conception of how the media operate and impact the audience (in terms of fake news).

Recommendation No. 4: The most challenging dimensions were the other three; namely Production & Diffusion, Reception, and Language. The Production & diffusion questions focus on exploring the ability to share and disseminate information through traditional media and social networks, improving the visibility of messages, in interaction with increasingly larger communities. Reception was about assessing the pupils' knowledge regarding the concept of audience, audience studies, its goals and limitations, as well as highlighting the importance of understanding the mental processes that are activated when a message is received, especially in the emotional sphere. The Language dimension evaluated the pupils' ability to modify existing products, giving them new meaning and values, as well as their mastery of expressive codes. Low scores for these three dimensions suggest that pupils are not familiar with how media organisations and content platforms operate, how media messages are produced according to certain rules, and the fact that agenda setting answers to interests and influences in public opinion. These cognitive abilities should therefore be reinforced to help pupils become better researchers and analysts of media meaning and production. Given that the lowest scores occurred in the Production & Diffusion dimension, it is also recommended that additional programmes be designed and funds provided to encourage schools and school media groups to create media content, as well as to strengthen cooperation between schools and the media, so that children can gain more direct insight into media production and improve their skills and understanding of media content production and how the different media work.

Recommendation No. 5: The study revealed a correlation between the score, the age of the pupils and the time they spent carrying out the test. The older the pupils, the better the score (i.e. those aged 15-17 years). This indicates that more media-related classes are required for younger pupils. In terms of the time invested, older pupils tend to be online more and the longer a pupil spent answering the test, the better score he or she got. It is therefore recommended to ensure enough time is provided to explain and carry out the questionnaire (approximately 1 hour), especially for assessment projects such as the EduMediaTest which are based on the participant's own experience and knowledge. The pupils were willing to complete the questionnaire and explore the dimensions but they didn't have enough time.

Recommendation No. 6: The survey has proved useful in assessing media literacy and also in raising awareness of the need for improvement and, therefore, of working on media education in the classroom. Consequently, in addition to media education, it would also be useful to give the pupils the same questionnaire again at a later stage, or to give them other similar assessments.

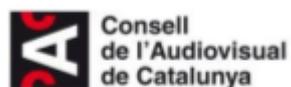
Recommendation No. 7: In terms of access to the questionnaire, the study showed that 72.9% accessed via a PC and 27.1% via a tablet/smartphone except in one country, where this ratio was almost 50:50. The schools involved were public and private institutions from both urban and rural communities. This indicates that the schools have the necessary technical equipment for interactive education. However, it needs improvement, especially in countries where problems have been identified regarding a lack of IT equipment and internet connections.

Recommendation No. 8: The study showed that schools tend to respond to the need for innovation resulting from technological evolution but not to needs related to neurological reactions, regarding how the brain works when interacting with technology. This is a new but as yet unresolved challenge for media literacy education that needs to be taken seriously into consideration, using psychometric studies.

Recommendation No. 9: The results of the EduMediaTest indicate a correlation between the degree of media literacy of the pupils and the level of education of their mothers. Consequently, lifelong learning in media literacy should be encouraged, providing people of all ages with practical opportunities to acquire the skills required to understand and work in a highly complex media communication landscape. For this reason, it is important for schools to provide the parents with training and advice regarding these issues and to carry out collaborative projects together with the parents. It should also be noted that, assuming this trend remains the same, special emphasis should be placed on the gender perspective in schools, so that girls can help to reverse inequalities once they become mothers themselves.

The EduMediaTest is accessible at the following website: www.edumediatest.eu

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