



Media and Information Literacy in the Prescribed Curriculum: A Systematic Review on its Integration

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Abstract

The curricular integration of Media and Information Literacy (MIL) is crucial for cultivating informed, critical, and engaged citizens in contemporary society. It assists in addressing the challenges of the digital era and capitalizing on the opportunities presented by the ever-changing media landscape. Thus, the present systematic literature review uses the PRISMA guidelines to examine three dimensions in the process of integration of Media and Information Literacy (MIL) in the prescribed curriculum: formulation, implementation, and evaluation and challenges. Starting with the search criteria, 131 studies were found in the Web of Science, Scopus, ERIC, Dialnet and Google Scholar databases, published between January, 2013, and March, 2023, written in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Turkish. The findings suggest that the will of the political sphere and the activism of the triad composed by passionate teachers, civil society, and academia, are key factors for promoting the introduction of MIL in formal education. Likewise, it is underlined that the evaluation of this education policy requires special attention, in order to guarantee the analysis of its reach, effectiveness, and capacity to adapt against the challenges that emerge in the media ecosystem. Thus, the intention is to provide up-to-date information for the creation of policies, research studies, and curricular content on this subject.

Keywords Media literacy · Media education · Curriculum · Curriculum integration · Literature review

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1 Introduction

Being a competent citizen on matters of media and information requires more than just learning to operate an array of devices and programs. This educational endeavor needs to accept that our students and professors live in a world that is increasingly mediatized and uncertain, which demands the renovation of the strategies necessary to subsist within it (Sivrić, 2022). Media and information literacy (MIL), defined as a series of survival tactics, conceives the imperative development of protection, evaluation, and participation skills to face the challenges and phenomena that emerge from this new media ecosystem (García-Ruiz, 2014). However, many of these tactics are not translated into education systems, despite the fact that one of the factors that promotes curricular change is the obligation to satisfy the needs of those who are to be educated. For fundamental elements such as media and creativity to become important in the prescribed curricula, the effective coordination between research, politics, and practice is indispensable (Henriksen et al., 2016).

Nevertheless, some states and experts act by following a narrow view that prioritizes technology in search of progress and modernity, at the same time that it ignores the analysis of the media culture of the learners (Mateus et al., 2019), and the dual role played by content consumers and producers in digital environments. In this context, it is important to create a social and political consensus that allows the reassessment of MIL as an indispensable right for civic practice (Francisco-Amat et al., 2022). In this way, the introduction of MIL in formal education is an opportunity for cultivating the critical sense against the contents, the functions and structure of media –traditional and emerging–, and for promoting creativity with respect to the possibilities of self-expression and self-representation they offer for (future) citizens (Bozdağ et al., 2022). More specifically, this task requires making advances in the creation of policies that guarantee their presence in formal education contexts, promote research, and teacher training in this area, as well as the dialogue among professionals of the education-communication interface, with other key entities (De-Pablos-Pons & Ball-esta-Pagán, 2018). Thus, the purpose of the present work is to examine the process of integration of MIL in the prescribed curriculum, to obtain a general overview about the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of this education policy.

2 Previous studies

The historical description by Fedorov (2014) indicates that the state of media education is contingent upon the historical and sociocultural conditions of each nation. In their work “Curricula for Media Literacy Education According to International Experts”, Fedorov et al. (2016) identified diverse obstacles that make their implementation difficult, among which we find the resistance from public administrations, the overload in the study plans, and the lack of teacher training. On the other hand, László Hartai (2013), in his dissertation entitled “Media education in formal education”, examines the findings from the project European Media Literacy Education Study (EMEDUS) to determine how the teaching of media in

national curricula from the European Union member states was addressed. In this context, the author points the existence of a trend in which MIL is incorporated as a tool for the education of responsible, critical, and creative citizens.

The systematic review conducted by Zhang et al. (2020) analyzes the objectives, types of integration, and ways to assess MIL in the curricula of nine European countries and China, through the evaluation of 98 articles published between 1990 and 2011. The authors pointed out some discrepancies between the legislative definitions formulated for this type of education, and underlined that the cross-cutting approach was the predominant model of integration in these countries. As for Latin America, the most current systematic review shows that specific MIL courses do not exist in that region. However, it is revealed that the detection of dimensions of media competence in the curriculum texts is one of the objects of study that prevails in scientific production (Rojas-Estrada et al., 2023a).

On the other hand, the report by Kajimoto et al. (2020) on MIL policies and practices in the Asian context, indicates that the media panorama, the infrastructure, and the legal frameworks related to media, have an effect in the manner in which it is discussed, integrated, and taught. Another substantial report on the subject, the one by Cunliffe-Jones et al. (2021) analyzes the curricula from seven countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, focusing on the skills necessary to deal with information disorder. Among the findings, it was underlined that despite the worry expressed by the political sphere related with “fake news” and their effects on society, the principles of media education were hardly observed in the curriculum texts. Based on the studies described, there is evidence that there is an increasing interest on the integration of MIL in formal education. However, there is a need for the precise systematic description of the processes that have been implemented for their inclusion in the prescribed curricula, which summarizes the objectives and aspirations of the education system, so that the actors responsible for this endeavor have up-to-date information.

3 Methodology

To examine the process of MIL integration into the prescribed curriculum, a systematic literature review was performed, a method that allows identifying, analyzing, and interpreting scientific production in a specific field determined by systematic processes (García-Peñalvo, 2022). The protocol utilized followed the PRISMA declaration guidelines 2020 (Page et al., 2021) and was divided into five phases: “research questions, eligibility criteria and sources of information, search strategy, study selection process, and coding and data synthesis” (Valverde-Berrocoso et al., 2022, p. 100–101). To guarantee transparency and access, the review and analysis protocol were registered at Figshare (Rojas-Estrada et al., 2023b).

3.1 Research questions

The six research questions (Table 1) that guided this review were divided into three dimensions: (1) Formulation, it analyzes the origin of the proposal, the interest

Table 1 Dimensions and research questions. *Source:* Developed by the authors

| Dimension | Research Question |
|---------------------------|--|
| Formulation | Q1 Where did the proposal to integrate MIL into the prescribed curriculum emerge? |
| | Q2 Who are the actors involved in the curricular integration of MIL and through what actions? |
| Implementation | Q3 Under what modality has MIL been integrated in the prescribed curriculum? |
| | Q4 What resources have been created for its implementation? |
| Evaluation and challenges | Q5 What systems of evaluation were extracted from the literature with respect to the process of curricular integration of MIL? |
| | Q6 What challenges were detected in the literature with respect to the curricular integration of MIL? |

groups involved in the process of integration, and their actions, (2) Implementation, it determines the modalities and resources created for its execution in school centers, and (3) Evaluation and challenges, it detects the processes of evaluation on the implementation of MIL, as well as the challenges around key actors, the integration process, the content, the approach, and other factors.

3.2 Search strategy, eligibility criteria and sources of information

Appendix A shows a general overview of the search process (date, string, and domains selected) conducted in the search engine Google Scholar and four databases: Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus, acknowledged for indexing publications of high-quality and impact; ERIC (ProQuest), a specialized reference source in the educational field; and Dialnet (Plus), renowned for its extensive collection of studies published in the Ibero-American context. The search was executed using a scheme of two sets of terms with Boolean operators: «Media literacy» OR «Media Education» OR «Media Competence» OR «Media and Information literacy» OR Educommunication AND «Curriculum».

The inclusion criteria for the present review were the following: (1) theoretical or empirical articles, books, book chapters and meeting proceedings in which the descriptors defined are found in the title, abstract, or keywords; (2) which address the integration of MIL in the prescribed curricula in any country; and (3) published between January, 2013, and March, 2023, in English, Spanish, Portuguese, or Turkish. The objective of this selection is to broaden the geographical coverage of the research, enabling the inclusion of studies that explore the Turkish experience, and those from Ibero-America, a region distinguished by its deeply rooted tradition in the field of media education (De-Oliveira-Soares, 2019). Notably, these regions have not been addressed in previous reviews. Through this strategic integration, it is intended to explore the possibilities and challenges enabled by implementing this policy across distinct political, cultural, and educational contexts.

On the other hand, the articles excluded (Table 2) were related with studies on: (1) specific subjects, such as the curricular integration of digital literacy or digital

Table 2 Examples of exclusion by criteria. *Source:* Developed by the authors

| Dimension | Bibliography | Reason |
|-----------------------|--|---------------------------|
| By subject | Suwarto, D. H., Setiawan, B., & Machmiyah, S. (2022). Developing digital literacy practices in Yogyakarta elementary schools. <i>Electronic Journal of E-Learning</i> , 20(2), 101–111. https://doi.org/10.34190/ejel.20.2.2602 | Subject: Digital literacy |
| By type of curriculum | Sekarasih, L., Scharrer, E., Olson, C., Onut, G., & Lanthorn, K. (2019). Effectiveness of a school-based media literacy curriculum in encouraging critical attitudes about advertising content and forms among boys and girls. <i>Journal of Advertising</i> , 47(4), 362–377. https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2018.1545269 | Type: Curricular proposal |
| By level | Meehan, J., Ray, B., Walker, A., Wells, S., & Schwarz, G. (2015). Media literacy in teacher education: A good fit across the curriculum. <i>Journal of Media Literacy Education</i> , 7(2), 81–86. https://doi.org/10.23860/jmle-7-2-9 | Level: Teacher training |

knowledge (exclusion by subject), (2) the design or evaluation of curricular proposals that integrate MIL (exclusion by type of curriculum), and (3) the embedding of MIL in the curriculum in higher education, teacher training, or adult education (exclusion by level).

3.3 Study selection process coding and data synthesis

Figure 1 shows the initial literature search, which identified 2896 studies. After the elimination of 406 duplicates, the remaining studies were examined in two stages: (1) the first stage was comprised by a systematic reading of the titles and abstracts of 2490 publications, which resulted in the exclusion of 2305 records, and (2) the second stage consisted on the complete reading of 156 manuscripts, which resulted in the exclusion, by consensus, of 34 records. Posteriorly, the application of the snow-ball method of the citations from the studies identified in the databases allowed the shaping of the final sample ($n=131$). Lastly, the chosen texts were exported from EndNote to a spreadsheet, and an analysis worksheet was created that included seven categories (Appendix B) for the collection of data.

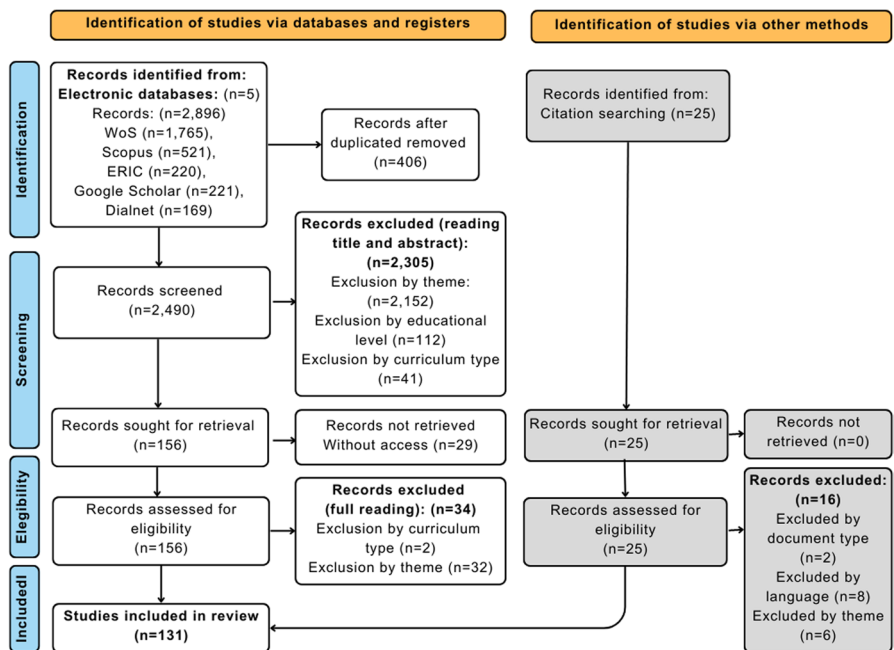


Fig. 1 Flow diagram of the search process with the PRISMA protocol. *Source:* Developed by the authors

4 Results

4.1 Where did the proposal to integrate MIL into the prescribed curriculum emerge?

After the analysis of the MIL integration process in the prescribed curriculum, it was observed that these processes were subject to a series of interrelated economic, political, and cultural conditions. Nevertheless, four key aspects were found, related with the origin of the diverse proposals studied:

1. The lobbying by civil organizations, “passionate teachers” or scholars. Most of the studies ($n=101$) pointed to the transcendental role of the professors-civil society-academic community triad for forming lobby groups able to have an influence on decision makers through the prudent exercise of activism and the identification, with scientific foundations, of the media challenges within the frame of education. The groups directed by ecclesiastical representatives, educators, experts in media education, and community leaders, represent the first attempts to establish MIL as a curricular activity in the United States of America (Prykhodkina, 2020), Australia (Dezuanni, 2019), Czech Republic (Junová, 2016; Römer, 2021), France (Jehel, 2019), Israel (Turin & Friedman, 2019), Hungary (Neag, 2016), South Korea (Yoon et al., 2019), United Kingdom (Buckingham, 2015), India (Jayachandran, 2018), Poland (Ptaszek & Lysik, 2019), Ireland (O’Neill, 2019); Croatia (Kanižaj, 2019), and Canada (Hoechsmann & Wilson, 2019). Also, the review showed that these types of groups worked as a “lever” to generate political will, open spaces for dialogue, and place the need to embed MIL in the education system into the public agenda.
2. The political will to create spaces of dialogue and/or specialized organizations. Almost three quarters of the sample ($n=87$) placed the arrival of new public administrations as strategic moments for mobilizing or guaranteeing the presence of MIL in curriculum texts. In this context, the studies pointed to the importance of spaces for dialogue that seek to coordinate efforts between the political sphere and other interest groups to formulate public policies in matters of media and information (e.g., Hipfl, 2019; Karaduman, 2013; Ptaszek & Lysik, 2019; Silajdžić et al., 2022; Supa et al., 2021). More specifically, many Turkish authors (Asrak-Hasdemir, 2016; Cakmak & Tuzel, 2015; Kazan & Balkin, 2018; Untila-Kaplan, 2019) pointed out, as the starting point of the process of integration, the organization of an event by the Radio and Television Supreme Council [Radyo ve Televizyon Üst Kurulu- RTÜK) to debate basic matters of press, radio, television, and internet. In light of this space, and the activism of scholars, the RTÜK became the main promoter of media education under a process (Table 3) that included the signing of a cooperation protocol with the Ministry of Education [Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı- MEB] in 2006 (Untila-Kaplan, 2019).

In addition, the authors underlined the importance of establishing public entities, departments, or organizations that include the active promotion of MIL within their functions, such as the cases of the Office of Communications (Ofcom) in the United Kingdom (Buckingham, 2015); the Municipal Secretariats in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, with their projects Media Education and Educommunication,

Table 3 Process of curricular integration of MIL in Türkiye. *Source:* Developed by the authors with information from Untila-Kaplan (2019)

| Phase | Year | Activity |
|-------|-----------|--|
| 1 | 2003–2005 | Period of preparation that included a series of simultaneous activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Media awareness campaign about the importance of MIL - Celebration of international panels with experts and interest groups - Research conducted at the national level about this field |
| 2 | 2006–2009 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Signing of the agreement between the RTÜK and the MEB - Development of a legislative definition of MIL, a curriculum, and didactic materials |

respectively (De-Oliveira-Soares, 2018); or the National Radio Broadcasting Council [Krajowa Rada Radiofonii i Telewizji–KRRiT] in Poland, in charge of organizing campaigns and courses on MIL for different audiences (Brosch, 2017).

3. The adoption of legal materials, recommendations and instruments from the European Union. More than half of the studies ($n=79$) recognized the impact of the European Union (EU) in the development of integration processes. Specifically, Slovakia (Šupšáková, 2016), Poland (Ptaszek & Lysik, 2019), Hungary (Schleicher & Rétfalvi, 2015), the Czech Republic (Jirák & Zezulkova, 2019), Finland (Palsa & Salomaa, 2020), Türkiye (Cakmak & Tuzel, 2015), Georgia (Levitskaya & Seliverstova, 2020), Montenegro (Ružić, 2016), Ireland (O'Neill, 2019), and Ukraine (Lokshyna & Prykhodkina, 2020) coincided in that the political instruments emitted by the EU for its members and candidate countries persuaded the public policy makers with respect of the curricular inclusion of media education. Among them, they particularly recognized the following: Recommendation 2006/962/EC which focuses on key competences for lifelong learning. The document entitled “A European approach to media literacy in the digital environment”.

Directive 2007/65/CE, which recognizes the MIL educational activities conducted by member states.

The Bologna European Process that prompted the adaptations of education systems to European education standards.

Along the same line, Spain, which has recently incorporated MIL in the primary education, secondary education, and baccalaureate curriculum (i.e., Royal Decree 217/2022, Royal Decree 157/2022, Royal Decree 243/2022) and within the framework of reference of teacher's competence in digital matters (i.e., Resolution from May 4th, 2020), has also demonstrated the influence of this organization (Ramírez-García et al., 2014c).

4. The execution of large scale projects promoted and/or financed by foreign entities. This category implies a reduced number of studies ($n=39$) that recognize the support from international entities for consolidating projects that include in their objectives the development of critical skills associated with communication media. Table 4 specifically shows the process of integration of three countries that reflect the extent of this synergy: (1) Mon-

Table 4 Process of curricular integration of MIL in Montenegro, Georgia and Ukraine. *Source:* Developed by the authors with information from Levitskaya and Seliverstova (2020), Ružić (2016), Lokshyna and Prykhodkina (2020)

| Country | Phase | Year | Activity |
|------------|-----------------|------|--|
| Montenegro | 1 st | 2006 | Design of a curriculum and creation of didactic materials |
| | 2 nd | 2007 | Pilot study: Teaching of the optional class “Media Literacy in the general baccalaureates in the cities of Budva and Kotor |
| Georgia | 3 rd | 2008 | Approval of the introduction of MIL by the General Education Council |
| | 1 st | 2018 | Establishment of the “Department of Media Literacy” in charge of its promotion and evaluation |
| | 2 nd | 2019 | Pilot: 50 schools |
| | | | Improvement of the technological infrastructure with the support from <i>Microsoft</i> and the <i>Tallinn University</i> from Estonia |
| Ukraine | 1 st | 2011 | Experimental phase: Introduction of the optional class “Media Culture” in 10 th grade |
| | | | Update of the legislative definition of MIL |
| | 2 nd | 2017 | Pilot: Teaching of MIL as a cross-cutting component in schools |
| | | | Promotion of media competence with university educators and students who were enrolled in degrees related with pedagogy and psychology |
| | 3 rd | 2018 | Inclusion of MIL in the State Standards of Primary Education |

tenegro, which obtained funding from the Foundation Open Society Institute (Perović, 2015), (2) Ukraine, whose model of integration was designed within the framework of the Learn and Distinguish initiative promoted by the International Research Exchanges Board (IREX), in coordination with the Ministry of Education and Science (Lokshyna & Prykhodkina, 2020), and (3) Georgia, which envisages the support from the Microsoft corporation to improve the technological infrastructure in classrooms within the curricular reform framework from the “New School Model” (Levitskaya & Seliverstova, 2020).

Lastly, the countries that did not include a specific course or that do not explicitly mention MIL in their study plans showed two key aspects that represent opportunities for its integration:

- The influence of principles and materials created by the UNESCO, found in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Silajdžić et al., 2022), different Latin American (Saez, 2019), and Asian (Lin et al., 2013) countries, and Francophone countries from Western Africa such as Cameroon, Togo, Senegal, Burkina Faso and the Ivory Coast (Corroy & Apo, 2019).
- The identification of public policies on media and information matters that allow working on projects and initiatives with respect to operational, social, and critical skills that define media competence, such as the case in Argentina with the section “Education, New technologies, and Media” of the National Education Law, which points out the importance of providing new education strategies based on the use of different media (Saez, 2019); Ecuador, with article 74 about common responsibilities in Organic Law on Communication, which dictates the promotion of educommunication (Andrade-Vargas et al., 2019); Portugal, with the publication of a new national policy on digital citizenship that includes MIL as an essential element (Tomé & De-Abreu, 2019); or the Republic of Cyprus, with article 18D from the Law on the Corporation of Radio Broadcasting that allows the Radio and Television Authority to implement education programs to improve the levels of MIL (Themistokleous, 2023).

4.2 Who are the actors involved in the curricular integration of MIL and through what actions?

As for the key actors, we refer to political, social, and civil entities that perform individual or coordinated actions, to integrate MIL into curriculum texts. The following were identified after the analysis:

1. Political actors. In first place, we find the council and bodies associated with communications, which include, among their functions, the active promotion of MIL and the coordination of work with other state entities in this area. The predominant actions identified in the group of interest were: to promote campaigns

whose objective is to increase MIL in the population; to provide didactic and digital materials to educators; to provide support to activities promoted by other groups; and to prepare the training of teachers in this area (Cakmak & Tuzel, 2015; Jiráček & Zezulková, 2019; Neag & Koltay, 2019; O'Neill, 2019; Themistokleous, 2023).

In second place, we find that the ministries of education in countries such as Iran (Azizi et al., 2021), the Czech Republic (Jiráček & Zezulková, 2019) and the Philippines (Labangon & Zabala, 2018) are the main custodians of MIL; while in others, they are in charge of coordinating efforts with other key actors with respect to the distribution of didactic material and training of teachers in this field (Cicha et al., 2021; Hipfl, 2019). Likewise, we find political entities such as the European Commission and specialized organizations such as the UNESCO, which promote initiatives and provide documentation related to the curricular integration of MIL (Bautista, 2021; Perović, 2015; Römer, 2021). Lastly, in Singapore, which has a recent history with MIL, we find the creation of a Media Literacy Council, composed by representatives of different interest groups (experts, educators, civil servants, etc.), dedicated to promoting MIL and the cybernetic well-being of citizens (Weninger, 2017).

2. *Passionate teachers.* Many authors (Jehel, 2019; Kanižaj, 2019; Ptaszek & Lysik, 2019; Tsvietkova et al., 2020; Turin & Friedman, 2019) consider that the role of “passionate professors” in the process of curricular integration of MIL must be seen as an example of social activism, given that without teacher’s training, didactic materials, or governmental support, they have fought to introduce media into the curriculum, and inspired school communities. In this sense, David Buckingham defends their actions, when he states that “media educators have always had to fight to establish what today is still being seen as a dangerously new field” (Buckingham, 2015, p. 83).

3. *Academia and experts in media education.* Other social actors identified include faculties and research centers that have been created specifically for this field, which, aside from promoting the introduction of MIL in schools, made sure to provide methodological support, research techniques, and advice to other key authors (Chen et al., 2018; Cheung & Xu, 2016; Kanižaj, 2019; Vrabec, 2016). Likewise, in this category, we find the contributions of media education experts, such as László Hartai, who led the movement that achieved the integration of this class subject in Hungary (Neag, 2015), and professor Jan Jiráček, who along with his colleagues, organized a series of meetings to encourage the public administration to play a coordinated role in favor of MIL (Römer, 2021; Sloboda, 2018; Supa et al., 2021).

4. *Civil society.* The projects, events, and courses promoted by this link for education models, compensate for the slow process of curricular updates that allow the introduction of MIL, and the lack of teacher training on this subject (Neag & Koltay, 2019; O'Neill, 2019; Rek, 2019). Also, they contribute with the creation of didactic materials, awareness campaigns directed to the general population, public policy projects, and curricular proposals that integrate the use and analysis of media (Levitskaya & Seliverstova, 2020), as well as the funding of edumunication projects (Ružić, 2016).

5. *The media industry.* We also found that media and advertising companies joined together to advocate for MIL through campaigns, projects, and online courses

that sought to mostly: i) foster internet security and the understanding of specific phenomena (disinformation, internet bullying, digital fraud, etc.), such as SingTel in Singapore (Sze & Sun, 2019); and ii) promote the critical analysis of media objects (Jehel, 2019; Voráč & Kopecký, 2021).

4.3 Under what modality has MIL been integrated in the prescribed curriculum?

After the analysis of the literature, five modalities of curricular integration of MIL were found, as shown in Fig. 2. This figure provides a general overview of the different modalities according to country, to improve its visualization. The note under the figures provides a link that can be used to access additional information.

1. Cross-cutting component. The experience of the Czech Republic (Jiráč & Zezulková, 2019), Slovakia (Kačínová, 2018), Georgia (Levitskaya & Seliverstova, 2020), Ireland (O'Neill, 2019), Austria (Hörmann et al., 2023) and Ukraine (Kosheliuk et al., 2021) shows that MIL under this modality can be taught as: (1) a project (management of a school radio or newspaper), (2) a seminar or related academic activity, (3) a set of themes that are addressed in different school subjects, and (4) a combination of the previous options. For Jiráč and Zezulková (2019) the strength of this model is the fact that educators are able to flexibly react to the challenges of the media ecosystem. While the study by Cheung and Xu (2016) highlights the importance of clearly communicating the objectives in the courses into which it is embedded, as well as in the MIL course, to help

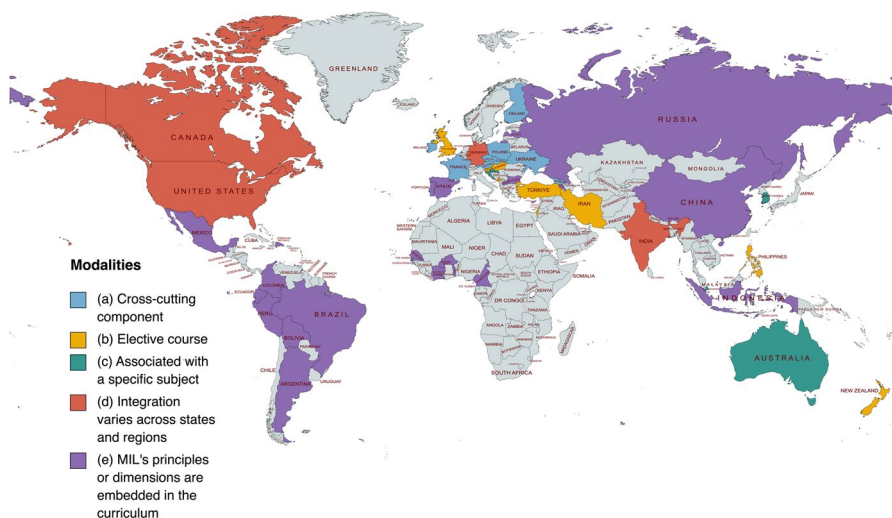


Fig. 2 Map of the MIL curricular integration modalities. *Source:* Developed by the authors. To improve the visualization and to consult the interactive elements of the map that include additional information of each modality (name of the courses and school grades in which it is implemented), please click the following link: <http://bitly.ws/E6D4>

educators understand that it is not simply a combination of two domains of knowledge. However, Hipfl (2019) warns that its implementation as a school project can result in the mistake of only teaching students how to create media objects, but not how to examine them critically.

On the other hand, it was identified that the curricular texts from Ontario (Ryan, 2020) and Finland (Kupiainen, 2019) planned the cross-cutting integration of MIL under umbrella term multiliteracy, a movement that conceives a greater closeness to the communication realities experienced by students, to give way to practices in agreement with the technological and diverse societies in which they live.

2. Optional class. According to the data collected, this modality is presently found in secondary education and/or middle school education in nine countries: Türkiye, Montenegro, Philippines, Israel, Hungary, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Iran, and Slovenia. Despite this proposal making it possible for students to identify and name MIL as a key concept (Mohebzadeh et al., 2020), its implementation comes with a series of challenges, as its independent status results in the students not being able to understand its connection and integration with other courses, while its optional character shortens its reach, as it is possible to traverse the system of formal education without having taken the course (Asrak-Hasdemir, 2016; Karaduman, 2013; Ružić, 2016; Schleicher & Rétfalvi, 2015). In a more specific manner, it was detected that in Hungary and Israel, MIL was also embedded as a cross-cutting component in primary education and the first years of secondary education (Neag & Koltay, 2019; Turin & Friedman, 2019). The challenge of this proposal, according to Neag (2015), is the loss of continuity in teaching, which leads to the transit from a cross-cutting approach, to an optional class.

3. Associated with a specific course. Delving into this modality, the integration of MIL principles into the content of specific subjects were revealed in four countries: Croatia (Kanižaj, 2019) and South Korea (Yoon et al., 2019) have associated it with the mother tongue; Singapore (Weninger, 2017) to the introduction of the English course; while Australia maintains its paradigmatic proposal of “media arts” (Dezuanni, 2019). Based on the experience in Singapore, Lin et al. (2013) warns that under this type of integration, there is risk that learners will not be aware that they are being taught to become media literate.

4. Each state or region works on MIL. In Canada, the United States of America (Hobbs et al., 2022; Mohebzadeh et al., 2020), Germany (Schulenkorf et al., 2021) and India (Jayachandran, 2018), each of the states and regions that compose them differentially define and include MIL in the curriculum. Nevertheless, the creation of documents that seek to provide consistency to education standards at the national level is observed, which maintain connections with the MIL principles and objectives, such as the “National Common Core Standard Curriculum” in the United States (Ey, 2017; Hoffman, 2014), or the Federal Standards for Digital Education developed by the “German Conference on Education Ministries and Cultural Affairs” (Schulenkorf et al., 2021). For Schleicher and Rétfalvi (2015) this situation

makes it possible for the content to be diversified, and for the possibilities to increase in the education terrain for media.

5. Principles or dimensions present in MIL in the curriculum, but without explicitly mentioning the concept. A third of the studies ($n=43$) had the objective of determining the presence of MIL in curricular texts through the detection of its dimensions, principles, or objectives. After analyzing these studies, conducted in 26 countries, it was observed that media competence was mostly associated with the contents in the following curricular areas:

- Language: strengthening communication skills and the ability to effectively read and write (Andrade-Vargas et al., 2019; Corroy & Apo, 2019; Lew-Starowicz, 2019; Pérez-Rodríguez & Sandoval-Romero, 2013; Portugal & Aguaded, 2019); Critical analysis of the information that is transmitted through the media, considering both the degree of reliability, and the interests and values implicit to them (Pérez-Rodríguez & Sandoval-Romero, 2013); ability to express messages through the use of different languages and digital formats (Anderson & Helmane, 2019; García-Leguizamón, 2018); and the analysis of audiovisual reproductions to recognize the cultural diversity present in societies as a valuable resource (Caldeiro-Pedreira, 2013; Ramírez-García et al., 2014c).
- Technology: resolution of problems through the efficient use of technology (Anderson & Helmane, 2019; De-Oliveira-Soares, 2018; Lew-Starowicz, 2019; Neag, 2015; Pérez-Ortega, 2016; Ramírez-García et al., 2014a); and the responsible use of media to interact with information and other social groups (Corroy & Apo, 2019; Mateus & Suárez-Guerrero, 2017).
- Citizenship and ethics: reflect on the value of media within freedom of expression, democratic processes, and the active and responsible exercise of citizen participation (Anderson & Helmane, 2019; Andrade-Vargas et al., 2019; Cheung, 2015; Corroy & Apo, 2019; De-Oliveira-Soares, 2018; Lew-Starowicz, 2019; Medina-Vidal et al., 2017; Polizzi, 2020; Saez, 2019; Tomé & De-Abreu, 2019).
- Foreign language: promotion of communication aptitudes and sociolinguistic ability (Andrade-Vargas et al., 2019; Ramírez-García et al., 2016).
- Art: use of media as tools for critically transmitting one's own culture, ideas, histories, and emotions (Andrade-Vargas et al., 2019; Medina-Vidal et al., 2017; Ramírez-García et al., 2016).
- Physical education: critical evaluation of the impact of media and social networks on the perception of one's body and personal identity, as well as the analysis of the particular effects such as sedentarism, stress, addiction to technologies, etc. (Cheung, 2015; Saez, 2019); and the promotion of an attitude of rejection towards unsportsmanlike gestures, signs, and symbols disseminated by the media (Ramírez-García et al., 2014c).

- Natural sciences: associating the content of the course with journalistic information about science and health subjects (Anderson & Helmane, 2019; Ramírez-García et al., 2014a; Saez, 2019).
- Mathematics: use of technological tools for the execution and verification of mathematical calculations, as well as reading, interpretation and critical analysis of figures and diagrams obtained from media objects (Andrade-Vargas et al., 2019; De-Oliveira-Soares, 2018; Ramírez-García et al., 2014b).

4.4 What resources have been created for its implementation?

The integration of MIL in countries with optional classes tend to be accompanied by textbooks to direct its execution within the classroom (i.e., Israel, the Czech Republic, Türkiye). Likewise, the creation of websites by governmental agencies was observed, to provide information on activities, events, documents related with MIL, and to create awareness of its importance, such as the website “Medya Okuryazarlığı” (medyaokuryazarligi.gov.tr) hosted by RTUK in Türkiye (Cakmak & Tuzel, 2015), or “Mediamanual” (mediamanual.at) created by the Federal Ministry of Education in Austria (Hipfl, 2019). In other countries, due to the lack of didactic materials, teachers have created Facebook groups to share strategies, documents, and good practices related with media and information (Bautista, 2021; Vrabec, 2016). The use of foreign materials is also interesting, such as the “MediaLit Kit” from the Center for Media Literacy used in Montenegro (Perović, 2015), or the Finnish book “Hello Ruby” which is part of the resources in the model from Georgia (Levitskaya & Seliverstova, 2020).

4.5 What systems of evaluation were extracted from the literature with respect to the process of curricular integration of MIL?

Despite the recommendations by Celot and Pérez-Tornero (2009) who suggested the constant evaluation of how MIL is taught, and its impact, the articles reviewed described the persistence of a lack of systems of evaluation and/or collection of proof. Thus, there is a lack of assurance and knowledge on the quality, strengths, weaknesses, and reach of MIL in the countries in which it has been integrated (Beseda et al., 2016; Jiráček & Zezulková, 2019; Kanižaj, 2019; Radunović, 2014; Turin & Friedman, 2019). Therefore, given the lack of agencies responsible for this task, the state of media education is explored and studied by other key actors, such as civil society and academia (Voráč & Kopecký, 2021). Nevertheless, Jiráček and Zezulková (2019) consider that it is difficult to know the impact of these studies on the political sphere to improve the implementation of MIL.

4.6 What challenges were detected in the literature with respect to the curricular integration of MIL?

The challenges identified in the processes of integration were divided into five categories and describe a number of aspects that must be considered during the formulation of proposals for the curricular integration of MIL.

1. Integration into the education system. The analysis indicates that one of the challenges in the formulation of the proposal is to determine the modality of integration, the stage of education, type of school, and evaluation indicators. According to Borbás et al. (2016), media education must be taught continuously in the different stages of education. If the intention is to promote MIL in the upper levels of secondary education, or in baccalaureate studies, we must deal with the fact that students have already developed their own practices and perspectives with respect to the consumption and use of media. Also, the literature indicates that in the Czech Republic, Montenegro and Slovenia, MIL is not offered in technical or vocational schools, which contradicts the perspective that defines MIL as a fundamental right for every citizen (Rek, 2019). As for its evaluation, the experience in Türkiye and Hungary indicates that there are no specific evaluation mechanisms for this type of competence, which can decrease the student's interest (Karaduman, 2013; Schleicher & Rétfalvi, 2015). Other challenges identified in this category include:

- The ambiguity about the MIL concept has resulted in an erroneous conception of its objectives and reach (Azizi et al., 2021; Brosch, 2017; Neag, 2015), which has led to educators seeking to develop the communication strategies of the learners through the improvement of their body language of mimicry (Avci, 2015), or students choosing this class subject thinking that it is focused on journalism or advertising (Perović, 2015).
- The technological infrastructure and materials for executing the classes are limited to the conditions found in schools (Azizi et al., 2021; Junová, 2016; Perović, 2015; Saei et al., 2021).
- The techno-determinist view has led many politicians and experts to sustain the myth that the “digital citizens” need more equipment, rather than critical education (Supa et al., 2021). This perspective results in MIL being subsumed under digital literacy, which leads to the prioritization of the teaching of how to use devices, and considering the media as simple didactic support (Bautista, 2021; Cakmak & Tuzel, 2015; Hoechsmann & Wilson, 2019; Jehel, 2019; Mathew, 2018; Schleicher & Rétfalvi, 2015; Tibaldo, 2022).

2. Educators. For Perović (2015) it is crucial to understand that a positive change in education systems require educommunicators to become agents of change of the education system, and for this to take place, they need quality training and to be more critical. In this sense, the following challenges are detected:

- The lack of teacher training promotes improvisation and impedes the curricular materialization of MIL (Azizi et al., 2021; Bautista, 2021; Junová, 2016; Karaduman, 2013; Mathew, 2018; Neag, 2015; Ružić, 2016; Schulenkorf et al., 2021; Sloboda, 2018).
- The slow progress of universities for the incorporation of programs on the media/education interface, in higher and graduate education (Cakmak & Tuzel, 2015; Hipfl, 2019; Kazan & Balkin, 2018). In this sense, the literature centered on the China context reveals that the limited implementation of university programs focused on media education, and the lack of specialized professors, have contributed towards the low popularity of this type of education in lower levels of education (Cheung, 2015; Cheung & Xu, 2016; Han, 2022).
- The lack of collaboration networks between professors and schools to exchange ideas, good practices, and collaboration among peers (Perović, 2015; Römer, 2021; Ružić, 2016).

3. Approach and content. In this category, we identified that the protectionist approach around media has extended to official documents and the public discourse, through the arguments that have been created about their harmful effects on the younger population (Avci, 2015; Cakmak & Tuzel, 2015; Mohebzadeh et al., 2020; Schleicher & Rétfalvi, 2015). On the other hand, the rigidity of the curriculum and the traditional rationale of the education systems impede updating of contents in line with the changes raised in the media ecosystem (Beseda et al., 2016; Schleicher & Rétfalvi, 2015; Sezgin, 2015; Neag & Koltay, 2019; Untila-Kaplan, 2019; Weninger, 2017). In this sense, the media education that is provided can become obsolete very rapidly, so that another challenge is the lack of relevant content that provides an answer to the communication realities experienced by students (Çarkıt, 2019; Perović, 2015; Schleicher & Rétfalvi, 2015), as well as the social discrimination of gender in digital territories (Friedman et al., 2021; Karaduman, 2013).

4. Key actors. Within this category, we find the lack of coordination between the education system and the activities of the State, the media industry, and civil sectors, to promote MIL, which is due to the low funding available and the low visibility of MIL (Kanižaj, 2019; Labaš & Marinčić, 2017; Schleicher & Rétfalvi, 2015; Šupšáková, 2016). Likewise, a low interest was observed of parents to improve this competence, which restricts their participation in crucial activities (Han, 2022; Kanižaj, 2019). These situations are specially relevant, given that, as pointed out by Hobbs et al. (2022), to achieve the effective curricular integration of MIL, it is essential to understand the school environment as a “complex adaptive system” that requires the early, systematic, and continuous commitment of all the interest groups in order to persist.

Another challenge detected was the “period of regression”, in which the public sphere repeals the public policies on MIL. Despite the long tradition in this area, and the important theoretical leaders such Len Mastermann, the decision

of British policymakers, and the new coalition that came to power in 2010, was to “discard” MIL (Wallis & Buckingham, 2021). This situation, largely illustrated in many studies (e.g., Lin et al., 2013; Ptaszek & Lysik, 2019) proposes the arrival of administrations that seek to “go back to basics” and to focus their attention on subjects such as literature and mathematics. Therein the importance of considering the political context in which these policies and the power dynamics are executed, and which have an influence on its construction.

5. External factors. The media system is one of the substantial areas regulated by laws that have an impact on media education, so it is important to address aspects such as the freedom of expression and the diversity of media. The experiences in Singapore (Weninger, 2017), and Hungary (Neag, 2015) describe the challenges of integrating MIL in public education under a context of strict media control, which could impinge the teaching of creative manners of expression.

5 Conclusions

Although the incorporation of MIL in formal education is influenced by multiple interrelated political, economic, historical, and cultural factors (Fedorov, 2014; Kajimoto et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2020), it is necessary to underline the importance of generating dialogue between the political sphere and other groups of interest as the starting point. Under this collaborative view, the analysis suggests that the conversation between both poles must propitiate: (1) the recognition of the flaws in the legislative work in this area, (2) the creation or activation of state agencies dedicated to promoting teaching of media education as a fundamental right, and (3) the detailed establishment of the process for its implementation in formal and informal contexts.

Another important observation from the present review is the activist actions performed by the triad composed by passionate professors, civil society, and academia, to integrate MIL into the curriculum. In this sense, the construction and edification of education policies seems to be an endeavor of education authorities, but in terms of media and information, this task tends to be promoted by social movements that include the intromission of media education experts into the public sphere, the methodological and research support by academia, and the projects formulated by civil society. Therefore, the formulation of policies and curricular proposals in this field demands a participative approach, in order to favor legitimacy in the making of decisions and to ensure long-term continuity.

Likewise, the analysis highlights that most of the countries examined did not follow a conventional modality, with respect to the inclusion of MIL in the curriculum. However, two types of integration were identified that differed

from those presented above (e.g., Kajimoto et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2020): (1) each state or region works on MIL, and (2) the presence of MIL principles and dimensions without explicitly mentioning the concept. Both proposals provide evidence that public policy makers recognize the importance of incorporating media and information in study plans. Nevertheless, the nature of the education system, and the lack of a legislative definition, are factors that influence their adoption. Also, it is important to highlight the initiative of researchers to identify the presence of media competence in curriculum texts. This allows obtaining a diagnostic of its current state, defining media education as a “pending subject”, and bringing possible applications in the classroom, in countries in which it is not explicitly included.

On the other hand, the evaluation of this education policy requires greater attention, as this missing factor could result in the lack of information about the quality, reach, strengths, and weaknesses of MIL in education systems into which it is integrated, as well as its capacity to adapt to new technologies and trends in the field of communication media. Despite civil society and academic taking on an active role in the exploration and analysis of its state, an entity must exist that becomes responsible for this endeavor, as suggested in the work by Hartai (2013). Also, the analysis of challenges let us glimpse that simply being aware of the importance of media education is not enough, as it is also crucial to establish the conditions necessary for its implementation at the level of teacher training, infrastructure, materials, and legislation. On the contrary, the specific actions taken to address these challenges, with respect to media and technology, will be reduced to simple expressions of concern, which will result in a growing divide between the curriculum used to educate (future) citizens, and the world in which they must navigate.

Although the study was able to examine the origin, modalities, key actors, and challenges associated to the integration processes, there are still aspects that cannot be explained by any of the categories we coded. In this case, future reviews could broaden the reach of research studies with respect to regulatory aspects of these types of policies, the qualifications of educators who teach class under the optional class modality, the object of study of research conducted in parallel to the process of integration, and the evaluation procedure. The decision of only including studies written in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Turkish, could have been as a limitation of the study, when considering the experiences in countries where another language is spoken.

Appendix A

Table 5 Summary of the search process in each database

| Database | Search date | Search string | Search domains |
|-----------------|-------------|---|--|
| Web of Science | 17/04/2023 | "Media literacy" OR "Media education" OR "Media and information literacy" OR Educommunication OR "Media Competenc*" AND Curricul* | Document type: Article, proceedings paper Publication year: 2013–2023 Subject area: Communication; education educational research; social sciences interdisciplinary; information science library; multidisciplinary sciences; humanities multidisciplinary Language: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Turkish |
| Scopus | 17/04/2023 | "Media literacy" OR "Media education" OR "Media and information literacy" OR Educommunication OR "Media Competenc*" AND Curricul* | Document types: Article, book, book chapter, conference paper Publication year: 2013–2023 Subject area: Social sciences, arts and humanities, computer science Language: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Turkish |
| ERIC (ProQuest) | 19/04/2023 | "Media literacy" OR "Media education" OR "Media and information literacy" OR Educommunication OR "Media Competenc*" AND Curricul* | Resource type: Scientific journals, presentations and proceedings, books Publication year: 2013–2023 Level of education: Secondary education, elementary education, high schools, middle schools, elementary secondary education, junior high schools, preschool education, primary education Dated between: 2013–2023 Language: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Turkish Without the words in the title: Teacher education, teacher training, higher education, university, college |
| Google Scholar | 19/04/2023 | "Media literacy" OR "Media education" OR "Media and information literacy" OR Educommunication OR "Media Competenc*" AND Curricul* | Date range: 2013–2023 Type of document: Journal article, book article |
| Dialnet | 20/04/2023 | "Alfabetización Mediática" OR "Educación Mediática" OR "Competencia Mediática" OR Educomunicación AND Curricul* | |

Appendix B

Table 6 General overview of the main variables found in the analysis worksheet

| Dimension | Category | Descriptor |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| Formulation | Origin of the proposal | Key factors that have promoted the integration processes are transcribed, with the page number in which they are found |
| | Key actors | The key actor is written verbatim (i.e., Civil society, ministry of education) under two closed categories: <i>political actors</i> and <i>social actors</i> |
| Implementation | Actions | The actions performed by the key actor are identified (verbs) |
| | Type of modality | Indicated with five closed categories: (1) optional class; (2) cross-cutting component; (3) associated to a specific class; (4) each state of region works on MIL; (5) principles or dimensions present in the curriculum but without explicitly mentioning or defining the concept |
| | Resources created for its implementation | Copied verbatim (i.e., textbook, web, scientific journal). If not identified, “not available” is written |
| | System of evaluation of the integration process | The system utilized to evaluate the MIL integration process is written verbatim (procedures and parties responsible). If not identified, “not available” is written |
| Evaluation and challenges | Challenges | Indicated verbatim under five closed categories: (1) <i>integration process</i> ; (2) <i>educators</i> ; (3) <i>approach and content</i> ; (4) <i>key actors</i> ; (5) <i>external factors</i> |

Author's contribution Elizabeth-Guadalupe Rojas-Estrada: Conceptualization; Literature search and Data analysis; Writing-original draft; Writing-Reviewing and Editing. Rosa García-Ruiz: Literature search and Data analysis; Writing-Reviewing and Editing; Supervision. Ignacio Aguaded: Data analysis; Supervision, Writing-Reviewing and Editing. All the authors revised and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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Data availability The dataset generated during the current study is available in Figshare Repository. <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.23614791>.

Declarations

Conflict of interest The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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