

14 principles for Media and Information Education (MIE)

Principle 1

Media and Information education is citizenship education. It requires the right to information for everybody, respect for freedom of expression and pluralism of opinions.

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the General Assembly of the UN in Paris on 10 December 1948 declared « Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers. »

‘We live in a world where media are omnipresent: an increasing number of people spend a great deal of time watching television, reading newspapers and magazines, playing records and listening to the radio. In some countries, for example, children already spend more time watching television than they do attending school. ‘Rather than condemn or endorse the undoubted power of the media, we need to accept their significant impact and penetration throughout the world as an established fact, and also appreciate their importance as an element of culture in today’s world. The role of communication and media in the process of development should not be underestimated, nor the function of media as instruments for the citizen’s active participation in society. Political and educational systems need to recognize their obligations to promote in their citizens a critical understanding of the phenomena of communication.’ Grunewald Declaration, UNESCO, 1982

Citizens educated on media and information, using quality traditional and modern media are constituent parts of democracy and good governance.

QUIZ 1

Question 1.

Education on media and information is citizenship education: true/ false?

Answer: true

Question 2.

According to UNESCO:

- Citizens educated on the media are enough to establish a democratic state
- Only quality media guarantees a democratic state
- Pluralism is not necessary in a democratic state

Answer: b

Question 3.

What does pluralism of opinion mean?

- That everyone can say what they want, when they want and where they want.
- That expressing different thoughts and opinions is possible in dictatorial states
- That democratic states, the media and individuals have the right to freely express different opinions.

Answer: c

Principle 2

The UNESCO MIE program and its skills framework bring together two distinct fields, that of education on media and that of mastering information, under one common name: Media and Information Education

This idea integrates elements relating to both fields and carries the aims and objectives of MIE

Key elements of media and information education

1. Mastering information

Definition and composition of information needs	Locating and accessing information	Information education	Organisation of information	Ethical use of information	Communication and information	Use of ICT skills to process information
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2. Media education

Understanding the role and function of media in democratic societies	Understanding the conditions in which the media fill their functions	Evaluation and criticism of media content in light of media functions	Use of the media to help individual expression and democratic participation	Evaluation of necessary skills (including ITC) to produce content as an Internet user
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QUIZ 2

Question 1.

Media and information education includes both education on the media and mastering information

Answer: true

Question 2.

Mastering information today includes

- Understanding information needs
- The ethical use of information
- Use of ITC skills

Answer: a, b, c

Question 3.

Speaking about media education today, would you say that:

- It contributes to understanding the role and functions of the media in democratic societies
- It helps support individual expression and allows participation in democratic life
- It doesn't help critical evaluation of media content

Answer: a,b

Principle 3

MIE allows everybody to master media practices making them free and responsible for their own personal choices

The UNESCO declaration, adopted in Alexandria (Egypt, 9 November 2005) states that « Information Literacy lies at the core of lifelong learning. It empowers people in all walks of life to seek, evaluate, use and create information effectively to achieve their personal, social, occupational and educational goals. It is a basic human right in a digital world and promotes social inclusion of all nations.

Lifelong learning enables individuals, communities and nations to attain their goals and to take advantage of emerging opportunities in the evolving global environment for shared benefit. It assists them and their institutions to meet technological, economic and social challenges, to redress disadvantage and to advance the well being of all. »

If media must act as a support for democracy, it is necessary for citizens to understand how to use the media with a critical eye, and know how to interpret the information that they receive, including the use of metaphors, irony, and the partial way in which stories and events are presented. As citizens, people need specific skills to get the most from the media and, in the long term, to master the political process and governance. They also need to appropriately use the resources supplied by media, libraries, archives and other ways of providing information. Media and information provides a set of necessary skills for the 21st century.

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QUIZ 3

Question 1.

Training ourselves on MIE is continual and for our whole lives: true/ false

Answer: true

Question 2.

What are the main issues for media and information education?

- It is necessary to be able to make independent judgements
- It teaches how to filter, evaluate and organise information
- It develops vigilance and a critical spirit

Answer: a, b, c

Question 3.

Do you think that MIE...

- Is only for children and youths
- Is only done through non-formal education
- Can be part of formal education and non-formal education and is for children, youths and adults.

Answer: c

Principle 4

The acquisition of knowledge and skills for MIE is done in coordination with different teaching disciplines.

Teachers must acquire for themselves and develop in the students a set of skills (knowledge, skills and attitudes), which allow them to obtain, understand, adapt, store, and present information so that problems can be analysed and decisions taken. These skills apply to all teaching and learning environments.

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Teachers are more likely to adopt an MIE program if it is linked to pedagogical strategies improving the way that they teach their subject.

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The basic skills for teachers

1. To understand the role of the media and information in a democracy, the functions of the media and other methods of providing information and their importance for citizens to make informed decisions.
2. To understand media content and its uses (understanding the uses of media, the relationship between citizens and media content, the use of media for various different aims)
3. To be able to access information efficiently (knowing how to determine what type of information is necessary for a specific task)
4. To critically evaluate the information and its source
5. To be able to use traditional media formats (written paper press, radio, TV, cinema...) and new media (digital media, social networks, total players, radio, TV and online press...)
6. To be able to put media content within the socio-cultural context
7. To promote MIE amongst students and manage the necessary changes in the school environment

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QUIZ 4

Question 1.

Disciplinary teaching can integrate MIE: True/ false

Answer: True

Question 2.

Amongst the necessary skills for teachers who want to practice MIE, do you think that they must be able to...

- a. Use different media, both traditional and new
- b. Understand and critically evaluate information
- c. Put media content into the socio-cultural context

Answer: a, b, c

Question 3.

Media and Information education for students must help...

- a. To analyse the issues
- b. To take decisions
- c. To develop a critical spirit

Answer: a, b, c

Principle 5

The production of media messages whose economic, human and technical context are an important part of MIE. They are constantly changing.

The issue of ownership and control of media for communication is crucial. In our modern world private media (commercial), media under the ownership or control of a government, public service media (such as public broadcasting companies) all mix together with community media. Because of the growing geographical complexity of the media landscape, media flow is not only oriented North-South but also South-North, and South-South. Influential regional media consequently change the configuration of the international media system.

In the majority of the world, media institutions are private business companies. Others are private but not commercial like those managed by non-governmental organisations, whereas others are public and controlled by the government. In broadcasting, the public service model for broadcasting offers alternatives to commercial media and to media under the strict control of the government. While the growing popularity of community media, which involves local communities in the creation of content and gives a voice to marginalised sectors of society, can be considered as a positive development.

The monopolised ownership of media such as control by the State can represent a serious threat to diversity and pluralism, and as a result freedom of expression. Regulating competition allows the limitation of monopolies in a similar way to guaranteeing professionalism and the independence of journalists. Diversity of points of view is also based on the variety of forms of ownership and of types of media (written press, radio, television, Internet, etc.)

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If economic models of traditional media have been significantly weakened today (lower advertising revenue, lower number of readers and listeners), digital media is also struggling to find new economic blueprints (payment on computer, financial participation of web giants like Google, 100% free, 100% paying, etc.). These economic difficulties lead to a lower number of journalists, even to the loss of a large number of titles from the traditional press of certain countries.

Training for interns CLEMI/ academy of Montpellier, 2013-2014

QUIZ 5

Question 1

Study of the production of media messages is part of media education

True/ false

Answer: true

Question 2

Do you think that press companies...

- Are companies which aim to make profit
- Are significantly reducing the number journalists
- Are experiencing lower advertising revenue

Answer: a, b, c

Question 3

To respect diversity of points of view, it is necessary for media...

- To be whole under State control
- To be dependant only on big private businesses
- To have a variety of ownership and distribution forms

Answer: c

Principle 6

Critical evaluation of information and its trustworthiness, within its production context, constitutes one of the fundamental elements of MIE. To understand this the systematic study of sources is crucial.

Before producing a report or publishing a piece of news, the journalist must find verified sources and corroborate their information.

Four types of traditional sources

- Dispatches, info graphs, photos and videos from press agencies. Press agencies occupy a strategic position between the event and the media, thanks to their multifaceted function: collecting information, sorting, verifying, formatting the news, and delivering it to media outlets and other clients.

- The address book of the journalist or editor

- Institutional sources: « the tour » (police stations, the police in general, the justice system, national education) and communication services

- The individual, the participant, the witness, or the victim of the event

To traditional sources we now add

- Data sources (data journalism)

- « Crowd sourcing »

And very frequently social networks: Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, LinkedIn...

Intern training CLEMI, academy of Montpellier, 2013-2014

New ways to verify information, « fact checking »

Appearing in the USA a few years ago, 'fact checking' has become a new popular trend in journalism around the world.

A decisive swing for these « checkers » who screen the declarations and promises of politicians and become attached to checking facts, was when the prestigious Pulitzer Prize was given in 2009 to *PolitiFact*, which had followed the American presidential campaign of 2008 between Barack Obama and John McCain. Since then the model has spread across America and abroad. The *Washington Post* gives up to four « Pinocchio »s to the biggest liars. *FactCheckEU* specialises in European issues and gives marks going from « True » to « Almost » to « Pants on fire ». *AfricaCheck*, was the first African site to check facts and was launched through a competition of the AFP foundation, and has studied topics like the economic data of Nigeria. »

Washington AFP.

QUIZ 6

Question 1

« Fact checking » is a way of ensuring facts are correct: true/false

Answer: true

Question 2

Information is trustworthy if...

- It comes from several sources
- The journalist has checked it

Answer: a and b

Question 3

Do you think that...

- Big media outlets are all subscribed to one or several press agencies
- There is only one agency considered as a world class press agency
- National press agencies are not very numerous

Answer: a

Principle 7

Reading, analysing, and understanding the construction of media messages and the language used are all components of MIE

The first important stage in becoming an information and media expert is to understand how information, ideas and meaning are communicated through and by various forms of media and other methods of providing information.

Each form of media possess its own « language » which works to transmit meaning in a unique way. The « language » in this framework covers the technical and symbolic components of the codes and conventions that the information and media professionals choose to use. They use them when communicating ideas, information and knowledge or to transmit a certain meaning. The technical codes include sound, camera angles, types of plans and lighting. The symbolic codes include the language, the clothes, the actions of the people or the easily understood iconic symbols. Media language can also include the repeated use of certain words, expressions or images, also known as verbal or visual language. Knowledge of media languages allows an understanding of the ways in which information and messages can be transmitted. It shows the links between interpretations of information and messages and the language used.

Pedagogical approaches and activities

- Identify and list the technical and symbolic codes and conventions used in different media productions: TV series, films, documentaries, political messages, etc.
- Analyse the messages and information conveyed in codes
- Analyse the codes and conventions which can be found in the coverage of the same event on television, radio and in the press.
- Evaluate the way in which each form of media, with its specific codes and conventions, can shape the message conveyed
- Evaluate the information which is broadcast by a particular media outlet

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QUIZ 7

Question 1

All media messages are constructed true/ false

Answer: true

Question 2

Media language...

- Is not made of technical elements
- Does not use symbolic shapes
- Makes use of codes and conventions

Answer: c

Question 3

By observing different forms of media messages on different platforms (television, paper press, radio, web, etc...) do you think that we can say...

- a. That each media uses its own language
- b. That media professionals can chose to use technical codes or particular symbols
- c. That different people can have different interpretations of the same text or the same piece of information

Answer: a, b, c

Principle 8

Media and information education involves decoding the constructed representations found in the media. These representations are linked to the production context as well as the economic, social and cultural context.

Media and other information providers work in a specific social context and are social actors in said context. Media is influenced by society and it influences society in turn. We have to study more deeply the specific national context in which media functions.

Representation in the media can take several forms. We live in an image based culture and we are daily surrounded by media representations on websites, television, in feature films, in reports and in books. Reporters, authors, moviemakers, presenters, advertisers, and editors use images, audio and written messages to transmit information on an event, a story or a subject. They are usually restricted by time, space, and resource constraints and by other editorial limitations to produce these stories and present them to the public. Also, depending on the story told or the message conveyed, it is often necessary to represent situations or events by referring to characteristics like, the origin, the gender, the sexuality, the age or the social class. By force, those working in the media must make a choice in the content presented to the public. This choice is not free from subjectivity and sometimes leads to stereotypical and simplistic representations, which can be used to justify negative beliefs or behaviour. This might or might not be intentional on the part of the author or journalist. This sometimes comes from the interpretations of the receiver (watcher, reader, listener).

A stereotype is a kind of representation by the media, which uses known characteristics to identify members of a social or cultural group. It can have positive or negative connotations.

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Gender equality, diversity and representation

Dealing with gender equality is becoming increasingly important in the development strategies of governments, international organisations and civil society. In 1995 the Beijing declaration and platform for action, adopted during the fourth conference of the United Nations on women, insisted on the key role of the media in promoting equality of the sexes in all fields. All stakeholders were called to bring together their strengths to combat « stereotypes of women and inequality in women's participation in all communication systems, particularly the media. »

The question of women and the media, including other information providers can be considered from two angles:

- The status of women working in the media and other information providers
- Coverage of the image of women in the media and in other sources of information

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QUIZ 8

Question 1

A stereotype is an old type of printing machine: True/ False

Answer: False

Question 2

Can we say that the representation of women in the media....

- Is in perfect agreement with their representation in society
- Doesn't leave any room for sexism
- Is balanced and that we see women more often than men as experts on television

Answer: all false

Question 3

In your opinion, a citizen educated in media and information must be able to...

- Observe and analyse the representations of diversity in the media
- Evaluate in what measure rules and regulations on diversity are respected

Answer: a and b

Principle 9

Advertising promotes a message, service, or product by paying for media space. MIE works to differentiate commercial advertising from messages of public interest, institutional communication, news and propaganda.

News information: communication of information on current events through print, broadcasting, digital media or by word-of-mouth to a third party or to a mass public.

Public interest messages: messages from the government or public interest bodies to reach a specific objective of public policy (public health and culture campaigns),

Advertising: group of practices and techniques, which draw the attention of the consumer to products and services with the aim of persuading them to buy.

Propaganda: a form of communication, which aims to influence the attitude of a community towards a cause or position.

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Advertising relies on paying the media to get time or space to promote a message, service or product. There are two types of advertising:

- Commercial advertising, which involves the promotion of a person, product, service or company in order to generate sales (clothing, drinks, films...)
- Public service announcements sometimes called social marketing which benefit everyone (health and safety messages, literacy promotion...)

These two forms of advertising represent the main source of revenue for traditional and new media.

Without the revenue generated by advertising, the majority of private media companies could not survive.

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QUIZ 9

Question 1

Propaganda in the media only exists during times of conflict: True/ False

Answer: False

Question 2

Media education works on developing analytical skills

- a. For advertising messages
- b. For current events information
- c. For institutional communication and public interest messages

Answer: a, b, c

Question 3

Identify the elements, which do not belong in the field of commercial advertising

- a. TV presenters
- b. Advertising agencies
- c. Journalist associations

Answer: c

Principle 10

Knowledge and analysis of the ways consumers use media and the changes in their practices are part of MIE. It involves various audiences.

The usage and reception of media varies a lot depending on the individual

These days children and adults spend a significant part of their time in media and communication activities. There are two main ways to study media audiences:

- By considering the consumers of media products, those that the media and communication industry describe as the « targeted public »
- Through reception theory, where audiences are considered as active participants in reading and interpreting media and information

Even if we are considered as a target audience for media, each time we watch or hear a media

text, we react with out individual social conscience and our own experiences. When we receive messages or information from the media, we interpret them with our own ideology and personal values.

The study of audiences helps to explain how different people see certain subjects based on their sex, age, or social group. It also helps to understand the relationship between the creator of the media message and their pubic, and how the creator maintains influence on a particular reader. It helps to understand how youths give meaning to media texts in and out of school.

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The research of Blumer and Kartz (1974) identified that audiences choose between a media text for one or several of the following reasons:

- Entertainment: to escape daily life
- Personal relationships: they see themselves connected to a person or a television ‘family’
- Personal identity: they identify and learn from the behaviour, attitudes or values reflected by media texts.
- Monitoring: they learn what is happening around the world and get useful information for daily life.

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QUIZ 10

Question 1

Children are part of the targeted public for traditional media and the Internet: True/ false

Answer: True

Question 2

Do you think that when we receive a media message...

- a. We receive it in the same way no matter what our culture
- b. Our age is a significant factor in its reception
- c. We interpret without interference from our own ideology

Answer: b

Question 3

We can be interested in a media document because...

- a. It provides information that is useful for our daily lives
- b. It distracts us
- c. It speaks about subjects that involve our personal identity

Answer: a, b, c

Principle 11

Media and information education questions the precision, professionalism, and transparency of the way news is reported in the media. It observes good practices and the application of professional ethics codes.

In the 'information age' journalists, information professionals and news media (old and new) play a central role. They give access to elements well above our immediate experience and facilitate the participation of citizens in good governance and in the development of open and democratic societies.

Ethical codes, good practices and common values, put down in writing, can be studied in different countries through a comparison with international rules. They can also be studied through a comparison of those practices of the countries of origin with other media. It is the same for journalistic ethics in the collection and treatment of information and working practices: ethics committees, mediators, independent press councils, press complaints commissions, etc.

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The Declaration of the rights and obligations of journalists (Munich, 1971) adopted by the international federation of journalists (IFJ), the International organisation of journalists (IOJ) and the majority of journalist trade unions, states in its forward that:

« The right to information, to freedom of expression and criticism is one of the fundamental rights of man.

All rights and duties of a journalist originate from this right of the public to be informed on events and opinions.

The journalists' responsibility towards the public excels any other responsibility, particularly towards employers and public authorities.

The mission of information necessarily includes restrictions, which journalists spontaneously impose on themselves...

A journalist, however, can respect these duties while exercising his profession only if conditions of independence and professional dignity effectively exist. »

Map of press freedom around the world, Reporters without Borders.



QUIZ 11

Question 1

Journalists mission to inform others includes obligations but also rights: True/ False

Answer: True

Question 2

Ethical codes for journalists...

- Can influence the practices of media and information professionals
- Encourage transparency and precision in information
- Establish the responsibility of information professionals when receiving, dealing with and publishing information.

Answer: a, b, c

Question 3

When producing the information, the journalist must

- Speak in a way that is inconsiderate for people's private lives
- Refuse all outside pressure
- Make defamatory and insulting statements

Answer: b

Principle 12

For the citizen that receives, produces and spreads, thanks to new technologies, more and more content both in quantity and variety, media and information education is also an education on their rights

MIE must strengthen independence, particularly in children and youths, and educate them on being aware of risks

New technologies and getting together play a role in broadening the participation of citizens in social, economic and political life. Traditional media have changed moving towards new digital or electronic formats (online news, blogs, Wikipedia, YouTube, social network applications, video games, etc.) and this encourages wider access to information and knowledge, improving freedom of expression, good governance and participation in the democratic process.

Citizens are no longer happy to consume information but want to participate actively in its production and circulation.

So, new media and meeting technologies create new spaces for individual expression and participation in public debate for a wide range of social, economic and political issues.

The challenges and risks of using the Internet for youths (inappropriate content for age, inciting to put themselves into danger, violation of the Rights of the child and human rights...) as well as the situations in which they are likely to occur are numerous. It is therefore necessary to commit to developing youth education that increases their independence and ability to use the Internet responsibly.

It requires that the trainers and teachers have a good knowledge of the practices and interests of youths and the way it changes quickly (social networks, blogs, messaging service, instant photos...). They must also research codes of conduct and existing regulations on private life in relation to Internet usage and be aware of the possibilities, challenges and risks linked to them.

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QUIZ 12

Question 1

Information and media education is also education on rights: True/ False

Answer: True

Question 2

In countries where taking images and sounds involving private life are regulated, do you think that we can....

- Publish on a blog any picture taken in the street
- Publish a photo of someone in a private space with their authorisation
- Object to having a photo taken if we want to

Answer: b, c

Question 3

In the production and spread of information on the Internet, we can educate youths on their responsibilities...

- a. By encouraging them to take the time to read general usage conditions before joining a social network
- b. By asking them to moderate their content on blogs, forums, Facebook 'walls', and in 'Tweets'
- c. By asking them how to know about the regulations and laws of a country

Answer: a, b, c

Principle 13

The pedagogy of the project is a specialised approach for media and information education. It is an active pedagogy: co-construction, questioning and production

The teaching methods put in place provide room for multiple and varied activities based on local and national contexts.

Pedagogies in the teaching and learning of MIE

The « Issue-research » approach is a learning approach focused on the student where the main research uses issues linked to Media and information education in contemporary society. It is a program that teaches about research, problem solving and taking decisions on which the students acquire new knowledge and skills.

Learning through problems is a learning program and method, which develops students' interdisciplinary knowledge, as well as their critical thinking and strategies for resolving problems.

Scientific study refers to a group of techniques, which uses science to explore the natural world and offer explanations based on the evidence they find. Students must make observations, ask questions, verify what they already knew, plan the research, use tools, analyse and interpret the data, offer explanations and communicate the results.

Case study involves examining, in depth, one situation or event. It is used intensively at Harvard Business School, where the students use events taken from real life to see how theoretical knowledge can be applied in real situations.

Cooperative learning refers to a teaching approach, which makes students work together to reach common objectives. It can be simple work in twos through to more complex methods such as learning through a project, through puzzles, through guided questioning by the pairs or reciprocal teaching.

Textual analysis students learn to carry out a textual analysis by identifying the codes and conventions of different media genres. This semiotic analysis leads to a deeper understanding of key concepts.

Contextual analysis. Students are shown how to carry out a basic contextual analysis by making use of the key concepts of institutions and technologies, but also through a group of theoretical approaches.

Rewriting. This teaching approach can take different forms and can be used for a variety of media channels.

Simulations

Trainers use a simulation to show students what media learning involves

Production

This approach involves learning how to put skills into practice, which is a significant dimension of learning in the 21st century. Production of media and information content offers students the opportunity to get involved in learning through discovery and practice. Through the production of media texts (e.g. audio, video and/or print), students can discover their own creativity and express their own opinions, ideas and perspectives...

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QUIZ 13

Question 1

The pedagogy is at the heart of media and information education: True/ False

Answer: True

Question 2

Which of the following pedagogical approaches can be used in MIE?

- a. Learning through problems
- b. Textual and contextual analysis of media messages
- c. Cooperative learning

Answer: a, b, c

Question 3

Do you think that producing media as part of the youth school environment:

- a. Is not at all useful for them to study
- b. Increases their sense of responsibility and independence
- c. Doesn't teach them to live together
- d. Teaches them how to get informed, publish and exchange through the Internet and social networks

Answer: b, d

Principle 14

Media and information education requires taking into account the official education programs and instruction guidelines of a country. Teachers must be regularly trained.

Training for MIE is first carried out for teachers and is one of the key strategies to help achieve a sustained transfer from teachers to students and then to society as a whole

Media and Information Education in formal education

France

The Centre for liaison between teaching and information media (CLEMI) created in 1983 by the Ministry of National Education had its mission confirmed by a decree in 2007. It is responsible for media education in the whole of the education system. It has the mission to promote, through training sessions at both at a national level and in schools, the pluralist use of information sources in teaching. This is to help students better understand the world around them by developing their critical thinking...'. For the past 25 years the Center has organised an annual Week of the press and media in schools in partnership with French media. Media and Information education has, since July 2013, been part of the orientation and programming law to reorganize the School of the Republic...

Argentina

The Education Minister developed the program « Media and School » which brings together two basic partners: media associations (including TV channels, newspapers, cinemas, and magazines from all over the country) and private businesses from the world of communication and media advertising. These partnerships are essential to help develop a series of initiatives and training for teachers, activities for students, and awareness campaigns for the wider community

Finland

The Finnish government put in place two policies: the Governmental program for the information society and the program for the well-being of children, youths and families which developed objectives and measures based on the safety of the media environment, media and information education, and online services.

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QUIZ 14

Question 1

Developing media and information education in a country includes putting it into the scholastic curriculum: True/ False

Answer: True

Question 2

To develop policies and strategies for media and information education in a country it is important to...

- Create independent bodies to regulate the media
- Preserve documentary heritage
- Develop the media and communication of the country

Answer: a, b, c

Question 3

So that teachers can include MIE in their teaching...

- It is important that teachers are trained in media education
- It is important that these training sessions are regularly updated
- MIE must be taken into account in the scholastic programs.

Answer: a, b and c
