All good things come in three
To navigate our way through the information jungle needs conscious media consumption

It has never been easier to be informed than in today’s world. As the result of the digitalized world information floods us every day. Information are available twenty-four-seven on almost all electronic devices.

This significant advantage is also a challenge in the same time. Being informed does not depend on the quantity of the used media but it presupposes a conscious use of information gained from the media.

Today’s media consumers must filter input from various sources quickly and be cautious of acting without verifying the validity of what they are seeing.

Now, more than ever, we are asking questions like: Has the photo been manipulated? Is the headline overblown? Is this fact or opinion? Is this information true or fake?

False or manipulated information appear credible at first glance. In order to expose them, it is necessary

1. to inform yourself - "Do serious media also write about the event?"

2. to question the information - "What is wrong with the information?"

3. to check the sources - "Who has this report written and published?"

Even very good fake news can be checked for credibility through these three steps.
MEWB: What is your organisation’s mission in regard to media education?

AOF: Social transformation is the challenge of each social organization. However, every society is transformed every day as a natural process by the set of relationships between people and the environment. As a social entity, we have the challenge of being an active part of this daily transformation, offering the best guarantees of well-being that benefit as many people as possible. One of these guarantees is information, which is transformed into beliefs, emotions, and behaviors.

Media education is facilitated when the information offered is as truthful as possible, respectful and responsible. The entity’s mission is directed in this context, creating media content that offers validity to beliefs and expands the concept that human rights include all people, all relationships and all circumstances.

Media expansion has facilitated the internationalization of beliefs and attitudes based on hate. The current limits of freedom of expression and hate speech now show strong historical inequalities. The entity’s responsibility is to offer tools and resources that offer objective information where the critical reflection is included, but especially that insist and work that the responsibility belongs to each person, but in turn remember that freedom is needed to take responsibility and that real freedom is not as standardized as we are led to believe.

MEBW: What do you exactly teach people about the media?

AOF: The entity works with groups of adults and young people about how to detect stereotypes and prejudices and how to deal with them, through informative and training content, infographics, testimonial videos or professionals on YouTube.

Media contents are also developed that addresses and offer truthful information about false news, especially in social media and in direct collaboration with the mass media.

It is also in the day to day, the whole team, in each of the actions and activities of the entity, contents, messages, and meanings are created, and you have to work in a critical and responsible way, being part of the awareness and critical vision that is offered and requested.

MEWB: According to your opinion, who should do what (politics, education, media, society, NGOs, etc.) to be able to equip people with competences on critical media consumption?
**AOF:** The social public service management bodies (politicians) must guarantee the rights for all people in each area, including media and each exchange of communication, connections, and relationships.

The sociocultural, educational and formative development bodies (formal and non-formal education) must guarantee the necessary information and training, the conscious development of people, the critical vision and the ability of people to be part of a society, currently an increasingly interconnected and media-zed society.

The spaces of exchange, relationships, complementation and structured transformations (social entities, companies, etc.): must make real and fair relations between people and between societies and reflect it in all facts and in media.

Media is a reflection of society and how relationships are established, how meanings are expressed, how rights are covered, how abilities have been developed, and how exchanges and complementarity are configured in small relationships or large scale.

However, the main question could more useful be focusing on Intentions, Responsibility, and Decisions (choosing).

It may be that in these axes lies the common link or the disagreements.

If bodies, institutions, formal and informal social spaces, and all the people who compose it have different Intentions and Elections, expecting the best common solutions is unreal.

In this context, critical media consumption and critical content creation are based on many intentions and many Decisions (choices) at the same time. Raising awareness about this fact and about the own Intentions and Responsibility of each person in their life, in common life and in the media can be the key, meaning to choose.

**MEWB:** Thank you Alicia for the interview.
Bertrand teaches German as a foreign language for doctoral and post-doctoral students at Bielefeld University. He furthermore teaches German for refugees and people with a migration background in the literacy courses.

Bertrand comes from Cameroon, where he studied German philology and has worked as a German teacher for over 10 years. In addition to teaching in Bielefeld, he is currently writing his doctoral thesis at the Bielefeld University. MEWB spoke to Bertrand about the role of the media in his teaching.

MEWB: How important are media in your everyday teaching?
BT: It depends on whether we are talking about the media as a tool or communication channel or about media as a source of information. But in both cases, media play a very important role in my teaching.

MEWB: What is the importance of new media as a tool in your teaching?
BT: German classes without new media are no longer conceivable. I basically work with digital versions of textbooks. These digital textbooks fit perfectly in the literacy courses, because everyone can see at the same time on the blackboard or on the wall what we are currently doing in the class and everyone can follow the teaching material. In addition to using beamer, there are also many learning apps that I use in my class.

MEWB: How is the use of new media in the classroom accepted by the participants?
BT: Although the majority of my course participants are 50+ in the literacy courses, for example working with learning app on a mobile phone is very much accepted. My experience is that many people like to use their cell phones in everyday life because they keep in touch with the family and communicate with them. So, if you use the cell phone as a resource for teaching, I think it is very well received. The great challenge for the teachers is that they then have to adapt to the learning behavior of the participants, since on the other hand it is also a motivating factor.

MEWB: What does such a learning situation look like with an app?
BT: Apps are very suitable for literacy courses. For example, when our aim is to extend the vocabulary, many apps offer the opportunity to assign for example words to the correct pictures or the apps allow, instead of reading long texts, to work with audio contributions or pictures. Which app is used, however, depends on what you want to achieve as a learning objective and how far the language skills of the participants are developed. But in all cases, apps are well received by the participants: They are happy to finally do something different than reading a book or writing a text. So, you can also use the cell phone meaningful for classroom teaching and it is really a motivating factor.

MEWB: However, the use of new media requires that the teachers have the appropriate skills to use the digital media and to prepare the content for the digital teaching methodically and didactically appropriately.
BT: Yes, that's right. But the media landscape is evolving every day. What I learned in my training as a teacher is no longer up to date. Cassettes were used 20 years ago. Today you no longer work with cassettes. In training, you learn something about the role of the media, the importance of the media for teaching, but you have to learn the concrete implementation of media by yourself.

Technologies, when they are new on the market, usually come after our formal training at the university. Of course, different actors provide different further trainings but you have to participate in it. I personally like to take part when I have time.

On the other hand, you also have to know where your deficits are, what you would like to use or do to reflect on or improve your teaching. The constant process of reflection is part of the teacher's everyday life. It is important to identify where there are weaknesses of your own or to think about possibilities, to improve your own lessons - so that your students are more motivated and the learning outcomes are better. These are the questions that accompany me every day and lead me to always ask, what do I still have to learn, how can I use this or that for my lessons.

Especially, if the employer, for example a language school, is already equipped with media such as projectors, tablets or the Internet, the prerequisite is that the teacher can use it in the classroom. Whether and to what extent these media are used by others it can vary, since the teachers themselves assess the relevance of this media and deal with it accordingly.

However, there are internal training courses or exchanges of experience with colleagues about the use of the media in the classroom, where you can get inspiration.

MEWB: Now we come to media as a source of information. To what extent do media content play a role in your classroom teaching and in the participants’ life?
BT: The situation with the Corona pandemic shows best the relevance and handling of media content of my participants.

The encounter with the participants from Syria, Iraq, Iran or Afghanistan in my lessons enables me to change my perspective on daily reporting in the German media. An example: When the German media reported about the development of the Corona virus in China, Italy or Germany, I could find out in my courses that many people in the Arab countries had already tested positive for Covid19.

I learned this from the participants in the classroom, who continue to monitor the situation in their countries event their live in Germany now. Or another case: participants show me videos of the war in their countries or what people experience there.

So, when I hear in the German media that, for example, there was a demonstration in Iraq a few months ago, my participants could better explain to me what's really going on. I had a completely different perspective than the one that the German media wrote.

MEWB: How do you rate it, do your participants read or listen news in the German media?
BT: Definitely. I come back to the example of the Corona pandemic. When this Corona pandemic began, I noticed that some of the participants in the class reported about the situation in China every day and talked about the seriousness of the situation. Then, as a teacher, I had to reflect with the participants about this information and I had to try to put the negative information into perspective. The participants always bring information into the classroom that they have learned from the media but you cannot leave them without being able to reflect on the consequences.

MEWB: What is the situation in your class with doctoral and post-doctoral students? What information from the media is reflected in your class?
BT: It is particularly good to promote communicative competence when you discuss what interest you or what you are familiar with. The doctoral and post-doctoral students are familiar with their own research and with what happening in everyday life and what is happening in their countries. Depending on what we scheduled in the class, there is a sequence in my course where everyday life is discussed or we take up topics that are present in the headlines.
For example, the course currently deals with the topic of online shopping. There are many teaching opportunities on this subject. On this topic, you can not only talk about the texts in the book, you also have to talk about your own experience with the topic. It is important that I, as a teacher, combine the learning content with everyday life so that the participants understand better what the class is about.

MEBW: What are the central information channels for your participants?
BT: It's hard to say. But I think it's mostly social media (Facebook) and the Internet in general. The participants of the literacy courses mostly read information on the Internet in their mother tongue because they can better understand what is happening in the world. But those who are primarily illiterate, i.e. those who can neither write nor read another language, learn the news from social media or even through their relatives. Most of the participants have a cell phone, which means that even if they cannot read German, they can still read messages in their mother tongue or listen to media audio files.

MEBW: What do you think, does critical handling of the media play an important role for your participants?
BT: You can't say it in general. I take the example again with the participant who got more and more worried every day because of the Corona news. I tried to get him to view this information and data critically. But not only me, as a teacher, but also other course participants encouraged him to see this information more critically. But a critical attitude towards the media depends on the people themselves, regardless of whether they have a migration background or not.

MEBW: It is often said that people who come from countries with restricted media are less critical. Do you agree with this statement?
BT: You also have to say that in the countries where the media say that people are not allowed to criticize, there is also an opposition.

In these countries there are also people who have a completely different voice than the official one. The problem is that the media don't offer these people occasions where they can perhaps criticize something. There are also many people who do not believe everything privately even if they do not officially question the government's opinion.

I also come from a country where the teachers have already been put in prison because they wanted to promote critical competence among the students and asked some questions that would have resulted in reflecting on what the government is doing.

The government says there is an official mindset and you shouldn't question it. But it doesn't mean that everyone agrees. The fact that the government says you shouldn't criticize doesn't mean that some people don't privately question the government's mindset.

MEBW: Finally, we would be interested to know what your advice would be for future teachers who want to work in the field of media education. How can you best prepare for this task?
BT: I would say that they should do everything they can to ensure that the participants are motivated and committed to participate in the class. The teaching context should be adapted to the media they use, so they learn better. It is important for the teachers: to keep up with everyday developments. Teaching is part of life, learning is part of life. It is also important to use the media that you use in everyday life in your class. Because in many cases the content from the media is more up-to-date than the content from the textbook. There are many good learning apps that are developed to make our lives and learning easier. It makes sense to inform yourself in this sense, to educate yourself and to use these media effectively.

MEWB: Thank you Bertrand for the interview!

These are our guidelines for sustainable media education within the European Project “In Medias Res – Education without borders”. Together with professionals from Media and Education sector from Germany, Hungary, Spain and Ireland we aim to create innovative and attractive training offers on media education for teachers in various school and youth.

The content of this publication does not reflect the official opinion of the European Union. Responsibility for the information and views expressed in this publication lies entirely with the author(s) of the 2018-1-DE02-KA202-005184 Project.

Greetings from Dublin!

The MEWB Project team

The focus of our transnational project meeting in Dublin was on finalizing the content of the e-learning courses on media education.

You will have the opportunity to get trained on the following topics:

1. Media studies
2. Media ethics
3. Social media
4. Conscious media consumption
5. Smart internet usage
6. Media law and regulation

Thank you for our media partner NEAR FM from Dublin for hosting this meeting. Big thanks go also to all partners from Germany, Hungary and Spain who contributed to the success of this course and shared valuable information and good practices related to media education.